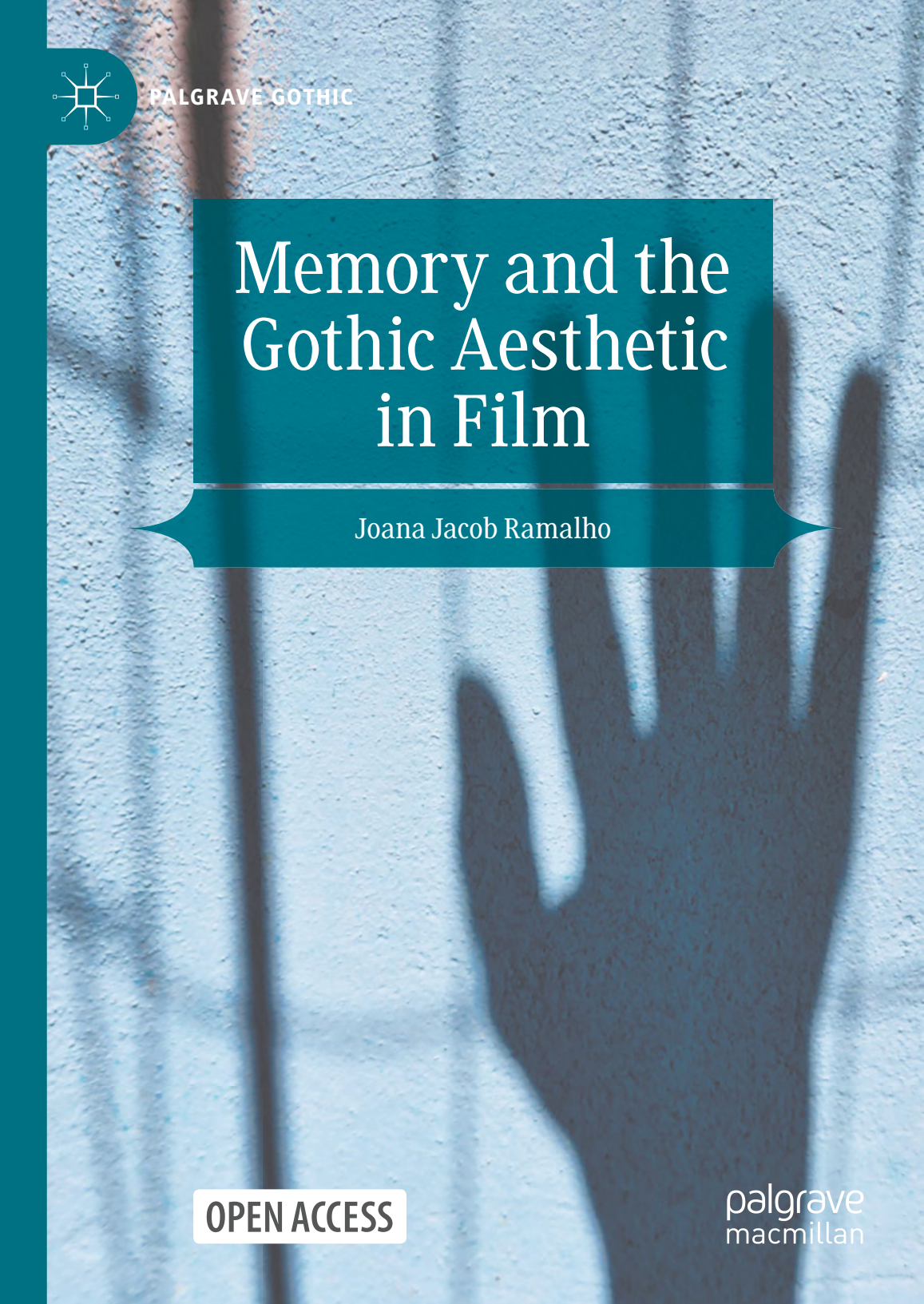
PALGRAVE GOTHIC
Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film
Joana Jacob Ramalho
OPEN ACCESS
palgrave macmillan

Palgrave Gothic

Series Editor
Clive Bloom
Middlesex University
London, UK

Dating back to the eighteenth century, the term 'gothic' began as a designation for an artistic movement when British antiquarians became dissatisfied with the taste for all things Italianate. By the twentieth century, the Gothic was a worldwide phenomenon influencing global cinema and the emergent film industries of Japan and Korea. Gothic influences are evident throughout contemporary culture: in detective fiction, television programmes, Cosplay events, fashion catwalks, music styles, musical theatre, ghostly tourism and video games, as well as being constantly reinvented online. It is no longer an antiquarian pursuit but the longest lasting influence in popular culture, reworked and re-experienced by each new generation. This series offers readers the very best in new international research and scholarship on the historical development, cultural meaning and diversity of gothic culture. While covering Gothic origins dating back to the eighteenth century, the *Palgrave Gothic* series also drives exciting new discussions on dystopian, urban and Anthropocene gothic sensibilities emerging in the twenty-first century. The Gothic shows no sign of obsolescence.

Joana Jacob Ramalho

Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film

palgrave
macmillan

Joana Jacob Ramalho
School of European Languages, Culture and Society / Centre for Multidisciplinary and Intercultural Inquiry
University College London
London, UK

This work was supported by University College London.

ISSN 2634-6214 ISSN 2634-6222 (electronic)
Palgrave Gothic
ISBN 978-3-031-73627-8 ISBN 978-3-031-73628-5 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-73628-5

Cover illustration: Getty Images / Kryssia Campos

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

For my parents, Maria de Lurdes Ramalho and Jorge Ramalho,
and my grandmother, Maria Jacob.
Convosco, tudo.

Acknowledgements

Somewhat fittingly, this project was haunted by displacement and illness. Yet, thanks to colleagues, friends, and family, the memories I keep from the years spent researching and writing this book are overwhelmingly positive. I will therefore indulge in a brief mnemonic exercise to express my gratitude to those who assisted me in making the completion of this manuscript such a rewarding experience.

I wish to thank the series editor, Clive Bloom, for his steadfast and enthusiastic shepherding of this project since its initial stages. Thank you also to the reviewer for the helpful comments and to my editor at Palgrave Macmillan, Lina Aboujieb. My unbounded thanks to Claire Lindsay and Deborah Martin at University College London, who offered vital support by commenting on a draft of the introduction, and whose tireless support and advice over the years have been of inestimable value. This book is freely available thanks to a UCL Gold Open Access grant, and I would like to thank the Head of Open Access Services, Catherine Sharp, for her support.

This book emerged out of a concern with the connections between memory, remembering, and migration, which I first explored in a PhD thesis in the Centre for Multidisciplinary and Intercultural Inquiry at UCL. For being the most generous supervisors I can imagine, my thanks go to María del Pilar Blanco and Lee Grieveson, who challenged me to think critically about cinema. Their expert guidance and warmth not only allowed me to grow as a researcher, but made me consider a career in academia in the first place. Lee's continued support in the ensuing years, whether over coffee or via email, always makes me feel that I am part of a

community of like-minded scholars in what can be a rather isolating environment at times. Thanks are also due to my doctoral examiners, Catherine Spooner and Timothy Mathews, for their intellectual probity and invaluable feedback.

I want to thank my colleagues at UCL, who have provided a thoroughly congenial, inclusive, and exciting atmosphere in which to teach and write. I am most grateful to Stephen Hart for believing in me and entrusting me with a teaching position that has proved vital to my development as a person and a lecturer. I would have never thought of teaching language and, fifteen years later, this has been one of the highlights of my life. Stephen has also since made it possible for me to embark on a new academic journey through the wonderful transnational lands of Comparative Literature, for which I will be forever indebted. I owe much to Jo Evans, who gave me the final push to submit a proposal for what would become this book and whose unwavering collegiality and insightful advice helped my confidence and my career in more ways than one. To Zoltán Biedermann, Alexander Samson, Ana Cláudia Suriani da Silva, and Gareth Wood for being models of academic humility, rigorous scholarship, and critical acumen. They have made the department of Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American Studies a home away from home and their kind encouragement of my research has meant the world to me. Special thanks to Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen and James Kneale, who have made doctoral supervision one of the most enjoyable and rewarding parts of my job. It has been a privilege to work with and learn from them (and from our supervisees), and our exchanges have informed my thinking throughout the writing of this book. Personally and professionally, I have profited immensely from the ongoing support, camaraderie, and general loveliness of Maria Chiara D'Argenio, Elettra Carbone, Diego Flores-Jaime, Marie Fournier, Anne Grydehøj, Isabel Pérez Lamigueiro, Helga Lúthersdóttir, Marga Navarrette, Mazal Oaknín, Dagmar Paulus, Christine Sas, and Ulrich Tiedau. Claire Thomson, as Head of the UCL School of European Languages, Culture, and Society, and Ruth Austin have been indispensable to the timely completion of this project, kindly and diligently helping me with the management and timetabling of my workload.

My thoughts on the Gothic have been formed in relation to the work of my gothic peers around the world. My deeply felt gratitude to the conference committees of the International Gothic Association, the Gothic Association of New Zealand and Australia, and the British Association of

Film, Television, and Screen Studies for the opportunity to present and test out ideas which have made their way into these pages.

Every teacher should be so fortunate to have students as kind, mature, and curious as I have had. My language students over the years, from *ab initio* to Advanced level, have maintained my enthusiasm for teaching, and I have learned so much from them in return. For countless stimulating discussions, including about some of the themes and texts that appear in this book, I extend my appreciation to my doctoral candidates, Devin Tupper and Caterina Liberace, and to the students in my Gothic Literature, Spanish Film, and Musical Satire modules.

Sincere gratitude to my friends of twenty years—Joana Cordeiro, Raquel Piçarra, Rita Piçarra, and Martha Punter, extraordinary and inspiring individuals whose faith in me has always been unwavering, even when my confidence faltered. Thank you for all the laughs and for not giving up on this 'foreigner'. Filipa Antunes, at the University of East Anglia, has offered help, guidance, and commiseration when most needed. From Lisbon to London and beyond, her selfless time and care, and our virtual coffees, have aided me in numerous ways. I am especially fortunate to have the ongoing friendship and support of Sara Bretes, who has been my lifeline in London, and whose unfailing generosity and strength are nothing short of inspirational.

For having sat with me through countless hours of (some rather obscure) films and making this long process so worthwhile, my family are to whom I owe the greatest debt of thanks. Without them, this project would never have seen its completion. Words cannot express how grateful I am to my parents, Maria de Lurdes Ramalho and Jorge Ramalho, and to my grandmother, Maria Jacob, for all the joy they have brought me and for nurturing all my passions, from reading to piano playing, music, painting, languages, and film. Much like the gothic houses I discuss in this book, my childhood home is a majestically cluttered abode of memories: photographs, canvases, keepsakes, CDs, VHS tapes, DVDs, and books, books, books. The happy memories of our summer travels, driving across Europe, sparked my wanderlust and my lifelong passion for different cultures and peoples, which is present in this book. For the heroic hours she spent dictating dozens of my handwritten (and often barely legible) notes for me to type on my laptop, patiently bearing with my anachronistic love for pen and paper, my mother deserves special recognition. Meanwhile, my father provided the soundtrack to my writing, filling my ears and heart with music, and also recorded a series of documentaries on émigré and

exile film composers that made me wish this book had a longer word count. My grandmother has always encouraged me to think in creative ways; her love, strength, and kindness have set a prodigious example. Heartfelt thanks to my brother and fellow researcher, João Jacob Ramalho, for the many FaceTime hugs and for being a constant source of emotional support, comfort, and professional inspiration. My love and appreciation also go to my sister-in-law, Renata Vieira de Sá, for her good-humoured and patient encouragement. Finally, to my nephews, Gonçalo and André, who have brought me unparalleled happiness—both born as this book took shape. Collectively, these cherished people are my anchors in life and have made this endeavour possible. Thank you for always being there in every possible way and for teaching me that *saudade* does not have to be sad, painful, or paralysing.

* * *

An earlier version of short passages of this book first appeared in Joana Rita Ramalho, 'The Aesthetics of the Tangible: Haptic Motifs and Sensory Contagion in Gothic Terror Films', *The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*, Vol. 15 (Autumn 2016), 96–112. I am grateful to the editors for permission to reproduce parts of the article here.

Contents

List of Figures

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: The Gothic Aesthetic

Towards the end of Terence Young's *Corridor of Mirrors* (1948), Paul Mangin, a lonely, controlling, and obsessive middle-aged man, decides to make the ultimate grand romantic gesture to prove his love and throws a majestic Venetian costume ball in honour of his lover, Mifanwy Conway. Heir to a long tradition of gothic anti-heroes haunted by the revenants of loves past, Paul believes Mifanwy to be the reincarnation of Venetia, a beautiful woman in a portrait he owns, and whom he is convinced of having loved (and murdered) in another life, four hundred years earlier. To prepare for the ball, he turns the grounds of his London mansion, modelled after a Renaissance *palazzo*, into a sumptuous recreation of fifteenth-century Venice, and has all the guests come dressed accordingly. He has spared no expense: fireworks light up the night sky and performers, from jesters to living statues, adorn the gardens to the delight of the masked guests. The grandeur and beauty of the spectacle call to mind Emily St Aubert's words about the fanciful processions in the Grand Canal, which 'appeared like the vision of a poet suddenly embodied' (Radcliffe [1794] 1836, 87). The scenery is set, the past is made at home, and Paul's beloved can at long last complete her journey and fully become the one he wants—and needs—her to be.

Shortly after Mifanwy arrives, they exchange pleasantries, talk for a while, and then walk towards a nearby gondola to enjoy a peaceful ride through the canals of Paul's fictitious Venice. As they approach the

J. Jacob Ramalho, *Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film*,
Palgrave Gothic, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-73628-5_1

canopied gondola with their backs to the camera, our vision is restricted by a traditional Venetian waterside pole in the foreground of the image, which temporarily bars the way forward and prevents the camera from trespassing on the couple's privacy. Following a slight rightwards movement, the camera maintains its distance from the pair, looking in from behind the pole. The absence of contrast lighting and the use of a long shot make it look as though the two protagonists are embarking on a doomed journey—two shadow-like, Dantean figures, barely distinguishable from their night-time surroundings, entering the fateful boat to the realm of the dead. Reinforcing the film's theme of temporal and spatial dis/connection, sharp colour contrasts create ominous visual patterns in the film's black-and-white photography: Paul, all in black, clashes with Mifanwy who wears a glistening white costume, her face half hidden by a sheer and floaty white veil. In a somewhat abrupt sonic transition, the ambient sounds and the laughter of the guests are superseded by the acousmatic voice of a baritone, who solemnly starts singing an old melancholy folk song—'Black is the Colour (of My True Love's Hair)'. This unusual Appalachian love ballad of Scottish origin rapidly takes over the whole sequence. The dulcet tones of the troubadour and the poignantly haunting melody, along with the slow undulating movements of the small boat, the sublime sound of the waves, the lingering two-shots of the lovers—with Paul's eyes alight on Mifanwy—and the play of light and shadow on their faces progressively transform what should have been a romantic rendezvous into a deeply disturbing cinematic moment. Mifanwy looks visibly distraught, her eyes restlessly canvassing her surroundings, as that deep, sorrowful voice, gently serenades them until the end of the ride. The source of the vocals remains hidden off-screen throughout, so that the melody straddles the line between the diegetic and the nondiegetic, the real and the phantasmatic—ever unsettling and liminal, much like the two characters and their Venetian carnival, caught suspended between reality and fantasy, the now and the long ago. The lugubrious tune contributes moreover not only to the atmospheric eeriness of the sequence, but its focus on hair foreshadows the re-enactment of the past in the present: like Robert Browning's Porphyria, the fair Venetia—legend has it—was strangled to death with her own hair, a macabre fate that will likewise befall one of Paul's guests during the masked ball.

Seemingly unfazed by the nautical delights of the romantic boat ride, the couple stand in opposition to their celebratory surroundings: isolated from the dullness of the everyday—in an elsewhere-elsewhen mock Venice

that intermingles love and murder, the past and its confabulatory reconstruction in the present—they appear utterly disconnected from reality and from one another, their curated costumes accentuating their outsiderdom. Such pervasive and wilful anachronism devolves into a dangerous condition of displacement, prompting the questions: Where is the real? Where is the dream? Where is now? Where is then?

There is a further layer to the 'where' and the issue of displacement here—one which concerns the film's production history. Unable to secure studio floor space in England, Apollo Films sent director Terence Young, with a small production unit and cast to film *Corridor of Mirrors* in Paris. Produced by the Rank organisation in association with the French company Globe Omnium Films ('An English Unit' 1947, 3, 9), this is an example of the international collaboration that had become common in the industry since the 1920s, and which, as I will argue, was instrumental to the creation of the gothic aesthetic.

Forms of representing the Gothic, be they cinematic or literary, invariably engage with questions of 'where': Where am I? Where are you? Where is home? Where am I going? Studying the Gothic is to study its many voyages—its translations from one medium and one cultural world into another and from one historical period into subsequent eras. It is also to study the myriad journeys that drive its fictional narratives. An ontological question of 'where' likewise frames my analysis in the present volume: where can we find the Gothic in film? The answer, I argue, requires a reassessment of how the cinematic Gothic works. *Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film* proposes that the Gothic—as a critical category and fiction mode—is marked by travels, migrations, and transactions, and investigates such movements through a consideration of memory and the sensory interactions of the characters with the spaces and objects around them.

Guided by three key concepts—memory, travelling, and touch—this book defines the cinematic Gothic as a transnational, transhistorical, and intergeneric aesthetics of memory, and suggests that it emerges in the exploration of carefully staged 'sensuous geographies' (Rodaway 1994). The taking up of this dialoguing triad has a threefold advantage: it encourages a reappraisal of traditional modes of reading the Gothic by redrawing its scope, retracing its origins, and refocusing attention on surfaces as sites of meaning. As the first sustained investigation of the complex ways in which these ubiquitous elements are connected and permeate each other on the screen, this study complicates histories of film aesthetics.

The sensuous geographies of *Corridor of Mirrors* become even more alluring after Paul and Mifanwy reach the shore. Once their boat journey is over, so is the magnificent party. Having suddenly become aware of a freezing cold, they quickly rush to enter the house and escape the unpleasant temperature. It is there, inside Paul's home, in the titular corridor of mirrors, saturated with anachronistic objects—vestigial traces of people and of people's pasts—that they take each other's hands and start to dance, almost recreating, in a rather sinister way, a nightclub scene earlier in the film. A flame-lit room devoid of human life where a nondiegetic waltz is faintly heard now replaces the crowded and lively nightclub where the lovers had first met. The music mounts, dramatic, growing higher and louder until it completely dominates the aural space as if forcing the couple into a dizzying, maddening dance. They abide. Interspersing full shots and medium shots, the scene alternates between a more stationary view of the pair, filmed indirectly through multiple mirror reflections, and a dynamic framing, with the camera smoothly panning left and right, in a way anticipating the better-known frantic ballroom scene in Vincente Minnelli's disenchanted *Madame Bovary* (1949)—only here the others in the room are not flesh and blood. The many flickering candles in the darkened room cast superimposing shadows onto the walls, adding to the soundtrack's crescendo of emotions. The looming shadows of the dancing bodies bring the walls to life in hallucinogenic frenzy, creating a multitude of menacing ghouls, ready to prey on the pitiful defencelessness of the unsuspecting lovers. Their striking dance, however, is momentarily contained through slow motion, which ever so slightly distorts time and etherealises the space of the room. The music follows suit, intensifying the visual slowing-down effect with a drop in tempo and pitch. This magical interlude is nonetheless short-lived, as the pace of the waltz quickly picks up again and the image returns to regular speed. As it does, the camera moves from eye level to a low angle, increasing the couple's perceived height, which is further elongated by the full-length mirrors, the various candelabra, Paul's black silken cloak, and Mifanwy's long-tail evening gown. The magnified shadows appear to engulf the characters, whose disconsolate faces we now observe in a medium close-up. The lack of perspectival depth, caused by the short distance between the camera and the protagonists, in conjunction with the sombre atmosphere of the mise-en-scène and Georges Auric's elegiac score, heightens the claustrophobic tension of a scene that, more than celebrate romance, seems to mourn it.

Shrouded in a darkness disturbed only by the lit candles, the whole setting resembles a wake. Paul forsakes the present and the future for an imagined past, while Mifanwy fights for the present and the future to the detriment of the past. By this point, Paul has lost all real sense of identity and chronology and has chosen to embrace a persona and a time that better suit his brooding disposition. Suffering from a 'catastrophic sense of belatedness' (Felleman 2006, 26), he derives his daily *joie de vivre* solely from the visual pleasures of admiring a mimetic representation—the portrait of Venetia—that he keeps in his living room as his most prized possession. Acquired in Italy while he was in hospital recovering from an injury sustained in World War I, the mysterious portrait becomes the object of Paul's obsessive, traumatic affection. From thereon in, he embarks on a re-collection journey, searching for and acquiring replicas of items from Venetia's lifetime in the hope of piecing together her past and keeping her memory alive. These indexical tokens of the other, which include a series of period costumes that Paul has had specially made, are dutifully stored in the mirrored cabinets that line the corridor of the title and are used, throughout the narrative, to stress Mifanwy's uncanny resemblance to Venetia, effectively materialising Paul's delirium. It is this lonely, pathological, object-based quest for the memories of a past which, in the end, cannot be recovered because it exists only in one's imagination that grounds my analyses in this book. Paul has exiled himself from the world and from the present; in the process, he has refashioned and othered his identity. Incidentally, going back to the waltzing couple, we realise, upon closer inspection, that they dance not just with each other, but with each other's doubles, for Mifanwy is then dressed as Venetia and Paul as Cesare Borgia, her Italian lover. The outdated costumes act as a second skin that semiotically signals the final metamorphoses of Paul into Cesare and Mifanwy into Venetia. The camera further enhances these haunting doubling and chronotopic effects by focusing on the imposing mirrors in the room, so that the reflections of the pair dancing anchor the scene for a moment, causing space, place, time, memory, and imagination to conflate and meld. In this context, Mifanwy's status in Paul's grand, lavish, and deluded reverie is extraordinarily fragile: she is allowed to be a part of his fantasies only so long as the emotionally broken Paul regards her as Venetia incarnate. Away from the dispersing partygoers, in that secluded, disturbing corridor of mirrors, Paul and Mifanwy carry on with the illusion. Yet, we know then, even as they go on dancing, that their dance has come to an end.

Such images of obsolescence and transience that promote the courting of death constitute the backbone of the Gothic. The veil Mifanwy dons adds to the enveloping sense of liminality, already pointing to the dissolution of the dream. In a long tradition of veiled gothic heroines, from M.G. Lewis's Antonia in *The Monk* (1796) to Edith's mother in Guillermo del Toro's *Crimson Peak* (2015), the veil renders 'the features of beauty […] more interesting by a partial concealment' (Radcliffe [1794] 1836, 79). Mifanwy's thin veil, which she keeps pushed back during the dance, combines 'the erotic appeal of innocence and death' (Lurie 2000, 256). Eve K. Sedgwick explains that the veil 'very often hides […] death or […] some cheat that means absence and substitution' (1986, 146). Mifanwy encapsulates both dimensions: she shifts from a 'beautiful woman to an unveiled figure of death' (146–47), *because* she is revealed as a 'cheat', a substitute for Venetia. Aware of her purely aesthetic role in Paul's world, Mifanwy—a precursor to independent, empowered gothic heroines—has had enough. Abruptly bringing their dance to a close, she leaves Paul-Cesare's arms and walks up to Venetia's portrait, declaring that 'it's all over'. Paul then hands her an engagement ring, a facsimile of the one Venetia wears in the portrait, but Mifanwy is done and maliciously proceeds to mock Paul's reincarnation fantasies, thereby voiding and exposing the anti-hero's fascination (146–47) and derisively turning his dream—his life—into a farce. Alongside gloves and pianos, rings constitute an example of what I shall call 'memory-objects', intensely haptic and mnemonic sites of affect. Mifanwy's rejection of Paul's token of love triggers a behavioural shift, leading Paul, at long last, to fully assume the identity of his supposed Italian alter ego. Enraged, he intimidates her by recounting how much 'he', Cesare, loved Venetia's hair and how he strangled her with it.

The two sequences from *Corridor of Mirrors*—the Venetian masquerade ball and the subsequent waltz inside the house—owe much to the way the gothic aesthetic re-invents onscreen space. The Gothic, Roger Luckhurst notes, 'has always temporalized its spaces, situating its obsessions […] in highly symbolic locales' (2018, 295), a point exemplified in the indulgent exoticism of Paul's faux Venice. His dangerous game of make-believe engenders a temporal slip that invokes a kind of nightmarish escapism, whose deliberate foreignness harks back to the remote, Southern European setting of various early gothic novels. With their intersecting flows of movement—through sounds, between memory and fancy, from place to place, and back and forth in time—gothic spaces rely on

mise-en-scène and sonic space as integral to the construction of the narrative, not as mere repositories of audiovisual embellishments that frame the action. To borrow Paul Frankl's comments about gothic architecture, these are not '*decorative*', but structural elements in a work of creative imagination (1960, 824). There is depth in gothic surfaces.

Throughout *Corridor of Mirrors*, the camera establishes a foundational bind between the bodies of the characters, the objects that surround them, and the choreographing of music, mise-en-scène, and plot. In so doing, it illustrates how style, themes, and tropes come together in a conspicuously intertextual and self-conscious display of the gothic aesthetic. The Renaissance, the visual and emotional excess, the Byronic anti-hero, the period costumes, the elaborately decadent décor, and the change in the weather at a pivotal narrative moment combine with the image of the corridor, the diegetic privileging of vehicles of doubling, such as portraits and mirrors, and the underlying themes of necrophilia, murder, trauma, and reincarnation (the concern with revenant history), anticipating Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, released ten years later. These thematic and tropic elements interact closely with the technical and technological specificities of the medium, including low-key ambient lighting, grotesque shadow-play, the careful editing of long shots and close-ups, the positioning of the camera in relation to characters and objects, the sparse dialogue juxtaposed and interrupted by diegetic sounds, the fluid camerawork, and Auric's score, a romantic theme with menacing undertones that recalls the one he composed for Jean Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête* (1946). All these elements combine to generate a thoroughly affective atmosphere—a funereal mood of terrifying uneasiness and sophisticated sensibility.

During their dance, the spinning bodies and almost expressionless faces of Paul and Mifanwy are in perfect synchrony with the rhythmic chords of the waltz, the absence of dialogue, and the contrast of light and darkness, which creates an overall sense of impending and inescapable danger. The corridor becomes a place of memory, a place where the self and the other co-exist and overlap, and where the frontiers between the present and the past blur. Paul's macabre utopia mobilises myriad journeys: temporal journeys through memories of a past that never was, recreated minutely in the present by the anti-hero's turmoiled mind; psychological journeys through postwar trauma and anxieties that displace the prototypical mental instability from the woman to the veteran *homme fatal*; haptic journeys through totem-like costumes and accoutrements that Paul obsessively hoards in hidden cabinets; spatial journeys through fairy tale and delusion in a

London-Venice that actualises an archetypally nightmarish landscape of foreboding, entrapping the couple in a chiaroscuro web of jealousy and madness. Space becomes warped, temporality uncertain, identity interrupted, and memory unreliable, impersonal, and transmissible.

Memory is understood, in the context of my work, as a dynamic process rather than a stable, fixed phenomenon—'as praxis rather than as doxis', to borrow from Mary Carruthers ([1990] 2008, 15). In this sense, the idea of dislocation informs my analysis of re-collection, conceived of as a spatial and psychological act, indissociable from sensory perception. Acts of re-membering are effected through haptic contact and mediated by the hand, which thus regains its ancient status as mnemonic symbol. Paul's re-collection of Venetia, as discussed, is performed through the acquisition of specific objects. Touch, I suggest, is the key mechanism through which people, space, and its contents become meaningful in gothic films. Cinematic representations of memory and processes of re-collection are by no means the province of the Gothic only. '[M]ost films', Berthold Hoeckner observes, 'invoke memory in some form' (2019, 1); the Gothic, I argue, does so explicitly, consistently, and unabashedly. It introduces memory as a core narrative element that invites us to conceive of subjectivity as something that moves beyond everyday experience. The gothic aesthetic is steeped in memory and haunted by a pathological obsession with re-membering. Theodor Adorno encounters in memory an 'infernal aspect' related to its fragile in-betweenness and paradoxical intricacies ([1951] 2005, 166). 'Precisely where they become controllable and objectified, where the subject believes himself entirely sure of them, memories fade like delicate wallpapers in bright sunlight', he writes. 'But where, protected by oblivion, they keep their strength, they are endangered like all that is alive' (166). It is this 'infernal' trait (memory's constitutive ephemerality and instability) that the Gothic emphasises, constructing memory as an oppressive force and re-membering as a dangerous endeavour. As I will argue, the omnipresence of memory in the films, and the way the camera choreographs it through the mise-en-scène of characters and objects, is a key contributing factor to the suffocating atmosphere characteristic of the aesthetic.

I employ the concept of travelling in relation to the understanding of memory as praxis and use it to examine flows of movement in two complementary ways: the travels of the filmmakers, on the one hand, and, on the other, travel as represented in their films. Travel to specific places is foregrounded in regard to those I call 'travelling directors', whereas travel

through mental or filmic space is studied with respect to the characters. While personal migration is not the same as fictional journeying, bringing the two together leads to a discussion of mobility on historical, aesthetic, formal, and narrative terms that has not been granted critical attention. Mobilising the idea of exile—a liminal condition of alienation and displacement—as integral to the workings of the films, my study exposes the implications of specific commercial and diasporic routes on the depiction of exilic wanderers and outcasts on the screen while proposing that the cinematic gothic aesthetic historically emerged from migratory and other cross-border movements.

The idea of home—of a fixed, safe, and cherished place of origin and return—is the crux of exilic life. Its disappearance prompts a utopian search for a lost archive of memories and for one's past. The concepts of memory and remembering thus assume an especially complex dimension in the works of émigré directors, and a uniquely tragic and debilitating quality in the films of the exiles. Home and homeland acquire an almost mythical status and become 'the focus of […] compensatory projections of former stability, coherence and happiness' (Lupton 2004, 36). By framing their stories as obsessive and essentially lonely journeys that pictorially and thematically emulate their own cross-border movements and resulting forlornness, the directors allow for metafictional readings that see the films as self-reflexive explorations of identity and uprootedness. In this sense, the films become an archive of mourning; the cinematic reflections of personal memory sifted through the realisation that the journey of return will never occur. While such failed journeys could have immersed the individual in the entropy that characterises nostalgia, they are instead counterposed with the fervency of a belief in the utopian possibility of return and the eventuality of happiness. From this perspective, memory, longing or imagination, and absence (the loss and unattainability of home) become productive and generative, rather than paralysing. Transposing this ardent belief in utopia to the screen, the directors sketch perennially discontent characters that are continually on the move, searching for home and identity, struggling against prevailing social structures, and obsessively striving towards tangible dreams. The compulsive tactile travelling of the characters, that is, their need to touch, hold, and grasp things, the impetus to collect and hoard, the drive to materialise ephemerality through painting, photography, or letter writing all indicate a desperate desire to preserve and cling onto the memories of people, places, and objects that have been, or might soon be, taken away. In other words, the loss of home and

identity that displacement causes in the real world is mimetically articulated, in the fictive narratives, through a generalised panic of estrangement and loss that the characters relentlessly try to counteract. These dynamics of memory, touch, and travelling, I will argue, define the gothic protagonist which becomes, in this regard, an avatar of a broken, postmodern selfhood, with its disjointed voices and fragmented personae.

My primary aim is to examine different modalities or permutations of the Gothic in relation to instances of re-membering and uprootedness in order to reassess the socio-political and historical context of the aesthetic's emergence, enable a complex reflection on how it operates, and broaden our sense of where it can be found in film. To accomplish this, I will develop a transnational and trans-periodic investigation and suggest that the Gothic, as a cinematic aesthetic, has evolved dialectically—through the coalescence of and interchanges between several, and sometimes seemingly disparate, genres, subgenres, styles, and European avant-garde phenomena, including Expressionism, Impressionism, Soviet montage, and poetic realism. Moving fluidly between filmic categories, geographical boundaries, and different decades, my work also advances current film and gothic scholarship by proposing alternative methodologies and heretofore overlooked critical avenues, which I will detail further along in this introduction.

Based primarily on a careful and nuanced formal-aesthetic analysis of selected case studies, each chapter probes the inextricable relationship between memory, travelling, and touch to show how their imbrication enhances our understanding of the cinematic language of the Gothic. My corpus ranges beyond films that have been widely studied, bringing together and reinterpreting both canonical and less-heralded productions. On the one hand, a novel way of investigating such films as Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940) helps to account for the consistent academic privileging of well-known texts. It also paves the way for a more sustained and incisive exploration of contemporary trends in mainstream culture which, through streaming platforms, reveal a strong commercial investment in myriad (post)modern iterations of the Gothic. On the other hand, while much scholarship engages exclusively with over-familiar narratives, this book constructs a coherent transnational canon of significant—but so far neglected—films that have been little studied or little studied in this context, and which encompass both major productions and low-budget films. Questioning the canon by introducing, among other productions, Henry Hathaway's *Peter Ibbetson* (1935), John Harlow's *While I Live*

(1947), and Marcel Carné's *Juliette, or Key of Dreams* (Juliette ou la clef des songes, 1951) will build a more comprehensive overview of the pervasive and influential role of the aesthetic.

The Timeframe

My choice to focus on the emergence and early development of a uniquely cinematic Gothic has limited the discussion that follows to a specific timeframe. The aesthetic's development will be investigated from the turn of the century, whereas I have chosen the 1920s as a starting point to my analysis of individual films, for this was a time when the medium had been firmly established as an artistic and commercial product. In the 1900 Paris Exposition, film is still categorised under 'Photography' (Toulet 1986, 180), but soon thereafter it begins to adopt modern narrative techniques. Charles Musser argues that the year 1907 marks the emergence of cinema as a new form of mass communication (1994, 142), in which a presentational framework, based on highly stylised performances, is superseded by a greater focus on verisimilitude (3). A distinctive aesthetic style creates an easily identifiable cinematic form, which now makes use of intertitles placed directly in the moving image, shot-reverse-shot techniques, and different camera angles and movements. The cinema is no longer a mere curiosity that presents everyday happenings or variety performances with a stationary camera: it gradually invents its own way of telling stories visually (Gunning 1991, 37–43). Tom Gunning famously calls this a change from a 'cinema of attractions' to a 'cinema of narrative integration' (2004, 47), which subordinates filmic discourse to storytelling and characterisation (1991, 6), rejecting earlier, antiquated, theatrical styles (1991, 37–38). Attesting to the growing interest and investment of capital in cinema, *Variety* publishes its first film review on 19 January 1907 and, later that year, Michel Carré directs Europe's first feature-length motion picture, *L'Enfant prodigue*, which opened in Paris on 20 June. In November, across the Atlantic, the businessman who would become the founder of MGM and the star system, Russian immigrant Louis B. Mayer, opens his first nickelodeon in Massachusetts. He is one of many entrepreneurs, directors, actors, writers, and technicians who, mostly for economic and professional reasons, left their home countries for American soil in the first decade of the twentieth century. Sound technologies, which would play a central role in gothic films, not solely because of the range of affective possibilities they bring about, but because of the cross-border travels they

engendered (explored in Chap. 2), register incredible progress at the time as well. In 1908, French Romantic composer Camille Saint-Saëns and Russian composer Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov write the first two original full scores for a film—*The Assassination of the Duke of Guise* and *Stenka Razin*, respectively.

The new approach to cinema is built on the principle of continuity editing or invisible style, as noted by David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson (1985), who explain that the classical narrative form derives from the interdependency of aesthetic decisions and advancements in the mode of production, namely the reorganisation of film production into hierarchical structures. Charlie Keil adds that one way the cinema changed from mere novelty to a more complex way of telling stories was by standardising the scriptwriting process (2001, 36–39). Thematically, many films turn to nineteenth-century gothic novels for inspiration, including Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831) and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). Between 1908 and 1910, the latter had already been adapted to film five times, in the United States, Britain, and Denmark. Similarly, between 1905 and 1911, there are at least three adaptations of Hugo's novel directed in the United States and France. Adaptations of gothic works and associated literary genres, such as crime and horror, are highly favoured as plot material at the time and enjoy growing success, so much so that by the mid-1920s, even before horror is consolidated as a genre, its basic visual grammar had been established (Dixon 2010, 17). The denomination included such productions as Arthur von Gerlach's *The Chronicles of the Gray House* (1925) and Rupert Julian's *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925).

Transposing literary works to the screen brings along new preoccupations and legislation, including the implementation of copyright laws for the film industry in the United States. The case of *Ben-Hur* (1907) is relevant for it stresses the connections between novelistic and film practices in early cinema, while also signalling the creation of rules by which the newly formed studios have to abide. In other words, the cinema starts to expand as both a business and an art form that has a very real economic, political, judicial, and social impact. As Lee Grieveson explains, 'the shaping of classicism […] was a consequence both of economic decisions internal to the film industry, and of a regulatory policing of the public sphere external to that industry', which means that 'the study of regulation enables us to think carefully about cinema as the confluence of aesthetics, commerce, and politics/power' (2004a, 123). As it happens, the

producers of *Ben-Hur* had failed to ask permission to film Lew Wallace's novel, leading the author's estate to file a suit against Kalem studios for copyright infringement. Four years later, in 1911, the Supreme Court decided against the film company and ruled that all motion picture companies should henceforth request permission to use previously published material. This would prove important in the case of F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922), an unauthorised adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), which culminated in a court-mandated order to destroy all negatives and prints of the film (Skal 2004, 98).

Further to film rights, the introduction of regulatory institutions for the cinema dates from 1907, when the Chicago City Council enacts the first movie censorship ordinance to protect audiences from immorality and obscenity (Stamp 2000, 42; Grieveson 2004b, 8, 22–26). With the establishment of the National Board of Censorship in 1909, supported by the Motion Picture Patents Company, the American film industry engages in self-censorship to avoid the harsher realities of legal censorship (Bowser 1990, 49; Gunning 1990, 338), which had been introduced on the local level in Germany as early as 1906 (Hansen 1990, 235). In 1912, the British Board of Film Censors is formed as part of a similar strategy to preempt government censorship and begins operating in 1913 (Brown 2012, 9). In the decades that follow, gothic horror films, such as Tod Browning's *Freaks* (1932) and Michael Curtiz's *Mystery of the Wax Museum* (1933), become especially vulnerable to this newfound 'censoring impulse' (Wittern-Keller 2008, 13), in a way echoing the fears surrounding gothic literature, attacked for promoting vice over virtue, 'invigorating unlicensed passions', and 'encouraging appetites for excitement' (Botting [1996] 2005, 3, 52). These regulations speak directly to the socio-cultural impact of the gothic aesthetic and its reception. In tandem with these efforts to control or influence what could be showcased, film techniques, storytelling, and production practices combine, from 1910 onwards, to present spectators with greater narrative clarity. By the end of the decade, the bases of the classical cinema were firmly in place (Thompson [1985] 2005, 246–47) and the industry had expanded to feature-length productions.

This book proposes the study of works from the early 1920s to the late 1950s, a timeframe wide enough for me to explore the creation of the onscreen Gothic, trace the transmutations it underwent as it travelled, and probe several of its distinctive inflections in roughly forty years of cinema history. On the other hand, this time interval is restricted enough to allow

for a sustained approach to and careful reflection on the 'image-language' the filmic Gothic created (Punter [1996] 2013b, 117). Amid the intense technical, technological, legal, and structural changes taking place in the film industry during first decade of the twentieth century, European filmmakers, Clive Bloom elucidates, give 'cinematography its own unique "voice"' (often dispensing with narrative linearity altogether) and create 'a visual language for the gothic' that is innately cinematic and 'manage[s] to turn the mundane objects of horror cinema into alienated and spectral substances' (2010, 174–76). It is precisely this 'voice' that concerns me in this book, this arresting 'visual language' of alienation and spectrality which emerged and developed as a product of movements of migration.

Gothic Cinema and Criticism

As a fiction mode, the Gothic has been around for over two and a half centuries. Originally thought of as locus-specific and strictly formulaic, its stories and preoccupations have been repeatedly adapted, retold, revised, and analysed according to changing cultural landscapes, social tensions, and technological advances. Borrowing from Frankl, 'the essence of Gothic has come into existence, developed, spread over whole nations, and merged with the essence of various lands and peoples' (1960, 830). To be sure, 'Gothic' has historically been a singularly elusive term that resists concision. I will not dwell here on the term's etymology nor detail the host of meanings it has absorbed as both a noun and an adjective, as that has been covered by many critics since the publication of Punter's seminal *The Literature of Terror* (1980).[1] What we learn from the Gothic's continued travels and transformations is that it 'is not a stable discourse' (Spooner 2017, 3, 6)—it is filled with antinomies and employed in regard to an increasingly wider variety of disciplines, modalities, and discourses. In effect, besides travelling geographically and trans-historically, the Gothic depends as well on flows of motion—on moving interfaces and exchanges—between texts, knowledge fields, media, and cultural practices. The second decade of the twenty-first century saw a significant proliferation of criticism on the Gothic which, '[l]ike a contagion' (Piatti-Farnell and Beville 2014, 1), extended into ever more diverse areas and media, including television, tourism, gaming, gastronomy, lifestyle, immersive theatre, and creepypasta. As Ian Conrich and Laura Sedgwick observe, 'the Gothic is becoming culturally illimitable' (2017, 2) and is nowadays so dispersed that interdisciplinarity seems to have become a

pre-requisite, or at least a staple methodology, for anyone interested in researching its narratives and imagery.

Part of an emergent publishing trend, gothic studies has benefited from the infusion of many new influences and trailblazing approaches, as demonstrated by the impressive range of essays in the three volumes that make up Clive Bloom's Palgrave Handbooks of the Gothic (2020–21) and the three-volume collection *The Cambridge History of the Gothic* (2020–21). Numerous other publications confirm the groundswell of attention afforded to multi- and interdisciplinarity in increasingly varied areas of gothic research, including the medical humanities (cf. Kremmel 2022; Pérez Edelman 2021; Wasson 2020; Subotsky 2020; Gasperini 2019); happy Gothic (cf. Spooner 2017); ecocriticism (cf. Blazan 2021; Hassall 2021; Tidwell and Soles 2021; Parker 2020; Edney 2020; Keetley and Sivils 2018); sound and music (cf. Spinetti 2021; O'Neil 2021; Battaglia 2019; van Elferen 2018); and tourism (cf. Bevan 2023; Passey 2020; Luckhurst 2017). The growing number of cutting-edge outputs reveals that even though its seemingly endless elasticity has made 'Gothic' notoriously difficult to define with precision, the polysemic way in which it has been understood has nonetheless brought about positive aspects, not the least of which is the perception of the Gothic as complex, layered, and multifaceted. In this respect, it is useful to think of 'Gothic' as a 'travelling concept' (Bal 2002) that migrated from history to architecture and art history, then to literature and literary criticism, and, finally, to film studies and beyond. Mieke Bal claims that 'tenuously established' concepts 'constitute the essence of the interdisciplinary study of culture […] because of their potential *intersubjectivity*. Not because they mean the same thing for everyone, but because they don't' (11). Gilda Williams addresses the amalgam of contradictions and anachronisms within the Gothic from a similarly positive standpoint, arguing that such terminological imprecision enriches the discussion and 'in no way damages the term, but in fact contributes to making it […] evocative and resilient' (2007, 13). While in agreement with Williams, I believe that the widespread usage of this travelling concept and its subsequent saturation has at times impeded critics from observing the uniqueness that the Gothic discloses on the screen, a uniqueness that stems directly from the foundational characteristics of the medium and from technical and technological advancements.

Academic publications in general concede special attention to literary forms of the Gothic with some analysing both media (cf. Conrich and Sedgwick 2017; Eljaiek-Rodríguez 2017; Mulvey-Roberts 2016; Beville

2014; Aldana Reyes 2014; Morgan 2002; Halberstam 1995), often via the lens of adaptation (cf. Hopkins 2005; Skal 2004; Kovacs 1999). Shifting the focus from literature to film, this book argues that gothic filmmaking is as worthy of serious scrutiny as its literary sibling. Gothic film has trodden its own eerie paths and recognising this offers new possibilities of pinning down how it works. Transposing the term 'Gothic' to the cinema without granting the latter the same critical scrutiny as the literary works might nevertheless mistakenly suggest that certain films would be categorised as 'gothic' simply because they are based on or inspired by gothic literature. That the filmic Gothic dialogues intimately and often self-reflexively with its literary ancestry is indisputable, and most films I explore in this volume reflect this. Acknowledging this direct linkage is therefore vital to produce any informed study of gothic formations. This is especially relevant to certain national traditions. As David Pirie explains, English Gothic cinema, more so than some of its European counterparts, derived from literary sources, so that 'in this instance literary comparison becomes not only illuminating but essential' ([2008] 2009, xiv). Accordingly, my analysis of *Rebecca* in Chap. 6 brings in du Maurier's prose at specific points to enrich my argument. This notwithstanding, one should not be boxed in by an understanding of gothic films as adapted versions of gothic novels and short stories. With Edwards and Höglund (2018, 2) and Aldana Reyes (2019, 396; 2020, 12), I concur that adaptations of gothic novels are not gothic per se, and with Laura Hubner, I too aim to 'uncover a cinematic gothic distinct from adaptation concerns' (2018, 3). As such, my research eschews a limiting view of gothic film as inescapably mediated by the gothic literary tradition and moves beyond tracing, comparing, and commenting on the adaptation of gothic fictions from book page to celluloid. In fact, the Gothic's many monsters, Aldana Reyes notes, owe more to folklore and superstition as represented in phantasmagorias, magic lantern projections, magic shows, and Grand Guignol than to gothic novels (2020, 45, 47). Gothic iconography, then, 'developed alongside the Gothic literary tradition, instead of strictly from it' (49), a point David Punter had already alerted us to, arguing that the history of the 'filmable Gothic' 'does not conform to the literary one' (2013, 103). In fact, canonical early gothic films, such as Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931) and James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931), were adaptations of the stage plays rather than the novels. Mary Shelley's and Bram Stoker's works therefore achieve their most memorable and successful cinematic representations via the theatre (Aldana Reyes 2020, 12), in a layered process of

transmedial travelling. Moreover, as Catherine Spooner elucidates, the Gothic is increasingly 'recognized and understood in visual terms that do not fully coincide with conventional literary definitions' (2017, 10). This has led to a greater scholarly preoccupation with medium-specific concerns involving film techniques and technological elements.

Important book-length studies that grant exclusive prominence to the cinematic Gothic include three edited collections: James Bell's *Gothic: The Dark Heart of Film* (2013), a companion to the BFI's Gothic season (October 2013–January 2014); Murray Leeder's *Cinematic Ghosts: Haunting and Spectrality from Silent Cinema to the Digital Era* (2015), where contributors broaden our understanding of a pivotal gothic trope—ghostly revenants—from early cinema to the post-millennium; and Justin D. Edwards and Johan Höglund's *B-Movie Gothic: International Perspectives* (2018), which analyses the impact of low-budget films on a diverse range of global film traditions. Monographs, in turn, tend not to venture outside generic sub/categories (cf. McDonald and Johnson 2021; Hubner 2018; Peirse 2013; Meehan 2011; Hanson 2007; Barefoot 2001) or national and regional contexts (cf. Troy et al. 2020; Curti 2015, 2017, 2019; Eljaiek-Rodríguez 2018; Rigby 2000, 2007, 2016, Forshaw 2013; Pirie 2008). One possible explanation for this might be that, unlike horror, Gothic is not recognised as an established genre (Kavka 2002, 209). Over the years, this may have contributed to restricting the number of publications on the subject while, at the same time, academic criticism on horror film has been rife for several decades. The treatment of Gothic and horror as interchangeable categories might have constituted an even greater obstacle to the consolidation of gothic cinema as an area of inquiry in its own right.

As Dennis L. White summarises, 'if a film has anything to do with the supernatural, cults, monsters, mad scientists, graveyards, old castles or uncharted islands it is classified as a work of horror. […] Any genre whose assumed characteristics are so superficial', he continues, 'is easy to affect and easy to abuse' (1971, 2). This statement highlights the pitfalls of rigid taxonomic models that equate Gothic with horror, or treat Gothic as a subgenre of horror, by looking solely at their visual vocabulary. Significantly, as Mark Jancovich (2009) explains, the gothic qualifier has been retrospectively applied to a series of productions that were, in the 1940s, categorised as 'horror'. Even today, distribution companies and streaming services use the 'horror' label to classify films as different as Alejandro Amenábar's *The Others* (2001) and Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chainsaw*

Massacre (1974). The close bond between the 'thrills and chills' (Jancovich 2009, 158) of Gothic and horror is indisputable, and the Gothic has from the start fed on horrifying imagery (Bloom 1998, 2, 9). Nonetheless, the uncanny, so often used to adjectivise gothic narratives, is not intrinsically horrific—nor, as Punter notes, are all horrifying films Gothic ([1996] 2013b, 96). The gothic imagination has consistently privileged terror—that is, an overall atmosphere of suspense, mystery, and dread which opens the mind, in Ann Radcliffe's oft-cited formulation (1826, 150)—over horror, which is 'noxious', sadistic, and threatening to one's bodily integrity, according to Edmund Burke's doctrine of the sublime (1757, 129). Another distinctive feature, echoed in the notion that Gothic conceals while horror reveals, concerns (somewhat surprisingly) issues of propriety and respectability. As Williams clarifies, the Gothic appears as the more refined and cultured of the two: horror 'is filthy, the Gothic merely cobwebbed and dusty' (2007, 14).

The separation between the two categories, however, is not as straightforward as the above may seem to imply: in gothic fiction, Fred Botting remarks, 'threats are spiced with thrills, terrors with delights, horrors with pleasures' ([1996] 2005, 6). Burke's own explication of the sublime uses both terms to define what we understand today, in Radcliffean fashion, as (gothic) terror: 'a sort of delightful horror, a sort of tranquility tinged with terror' (1757, 129). Aldana Reyes detects these blurred boundaries on the screen, reminding us that gothic films, such as *Crimson Peak*, are often graphic too, even though the Radcliffean tradition has been historically favoured to the detriment of bloodier imagery in the tradition of Matthew Gregory Lewis or Charles Maturin (2020, 10–11). This point, which the author examines at length in *Body Gothic* (2014), indicates that the intersections between these neighbouring film forms are more complex than much extant scholarship might indicate. The Gothic is certainly an aesthetic of violence, but seldom one of cannibalistic gore, even though films with a gothic aesthetic, both mainstream and independent, may include gory moments, from the chest-burster scene in Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979) to Painted Doll suddenly biting off and spitting out the ear of a new carny in Darren Lynn Bousman's punk musical *The Devil's Carnival* (2012). Read through this lens, the Gothic is primarily psychologically affective (which does not exclude a recurring reliance on disturbingly visceral imagery) and horror is defined through corporeal affect (Aldana Reyes 2020, 11; 2016). Grounding the distinction on affect alone seems nonetheless insufficient, as Spooner observes (2017, 28). Aldana

Reyes adds some nuance here and suggests that the Gothic's affectivity operates at the level of setting, narrative, and characters, and is sometimes 'governed by the elicitation of suspense' rather than fear (2020, 11–12). Moreover, while horror is not bound by setting or historical periodisation (25, 107), the Gothic is anachronistic and often transposes the mystic qualities of old Europe to a mythicised urban present, as in *Corridor of Mirrors*'s London-Venice, which might not be as immediately appealing to mainstream audiences. This means that terror is inextricably tied to specific narrative and spatio-temporal aspects, while horror is 'not bound to a certain type of landscape, setting or character' (11).

Richard J. Hand and Jay McRoy also stress affectivity but take this idea further, claiming that the Gothic 'is a way of arranging literary and cinematic elements to create a particular affect', thus hinting at the importance of both film form and technique (2020, 3). On this, T. S. Kord's detailed investigation of the topic is a helpful addition to the discussion, namely her argument that 'What the horror film wants from us is not fear but an admission of guilt' (2016, 7): through point-of-view camera angles, horror aligns the audience visually with the killer's perspective at crucial narrative moments, privileging the 'perp-spective' over the victim's position (8). This undermines our ethical allegiance with the victim, thereby precluding compassion—a feature of gothic films. 'Without compassion', Kord claims, 'fear is not an option' (182). She concludes that gothic productions (which the author calls 'suspense films') 'center on fear, declaring that it can be conquered', whereas 'horror movies focus on guilt and show that it can't' (10). Kord argues that a hopeful ending is the province of the Gothic, as is the centrality of the unknown. Horror, in turn, 'epitomize[s] predictability and repetitiveness' (11, 181). These points nicely complement Aldana Reyes's arguments, as they highlight not only setting, narrative, and theme, but also the deployment of film techniques, such as point-of-view shots, to heighten affect and distinguish between the screen languages of horror and Gothic.

The Gothic, in sum, dialogues and frequently overlaps with horror, but exceeds it and exists independent from it. In this way, categorising gothic cinema as a subgenre of horror exposes a key weakness in the conceptualisation of the subgenre it designates, for its frontiers seem extremely limited when considering the wide range of representations and styles that the Gothic has come to encompass. 'Gothic horror' is, more accurately, one of the manifold 'micro-Gothic' taxonomic labels the category has splintered into as a consequence of greater critical attention (Frank 2005, xiv).

Katharina Rein uses the term 'metagenre' to account for the Gothic's affinity with genres other than horror (2021, 13). The collapse of generic boundaries and their subsequent permeation has, in fact, been a part of the Gothic since its inception. Already in his preface to the second edition of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Walpole had declared that he intended to 'blend' or 'reconcile' two kinds of romance, 'the ancient and the modern' (1766, xiv), from the start positioning the Gothic as a mode of in-betweenness that thrives on generic hybridity. The Gothic in cinema could, indeed, be said to have evolved from the coalescence of several genres, not only the typical triad—horror, romance, and melodrama—but also fantasy, science fiction, burlesque, comedy, and musicals. Given its constitutive mobility, it would not be unwarranted to claim that the moniker 'gothic cinema' may thus become redundant—the films may be too different from one another to justify the cohesiveness and unity implied in that phrase. This notwithstanding, I believe that the term retains pertinence as a qualifier and that its openness does not nullify its usefulness. From this perspective, a gothic quality or sensibility can be discerned in British, American, and French melodramas, such as *Black Narcissus* (Powell and Pressburger, 1947), *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (Ophuls, 1948), and *Juliette, or Key of Dreams* (Carné, 1951); German expressionist productions, including *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (Wiene, 1919) and *The Testament of Dr Mabuse* (Lang, 1933); and the sci-fi horror of James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931) and *The Invisible Man* (1933). It is also apparent in Benjamin Christensen's maligned documentary-style film *Häxan: Witchcraft through the Ages* (1922); Jean Renoir's fairy tale *La Petite Marchande d'allumettes* (1928); Universal's monster pictures, such as *King Kong* (Cooper and Schoedsack, 1933); surrealist romances, namely Hathaway's *Peter Ibbetson* (1935); Eisenstein's Soviet historical drama *Ivan the Terrible* (1944, 1958); musicals, for example Powell and Pressburger's *The Red Shoes* (1948) and Vincente Minnelli's *Brigadoon* (1954); period dramas, including Thorold Dickinson's *The Queen of Spades* (1949); noir productions, for instance *Laura* (Preminger, 1944) and *The Woman in the Window* (Lang, 1944); and in a number of ghost romances, of which *Wuthering Heights* (Wyler, 1939), *The Ghost and Mrs Muir* (Mankiewicz, 1947), and *Portrait of Jennie* (Dieterle, 1948) are key examples.

Narrowly construed genre categories cannot accommodate such a wide array of works. The Gothic, then, 'work[s] less as a genre marker than as an aesthetic or thematic determiner', Aldana Reyes adroitly notes (2020,

17). In this respect, I echo Robert Miles's description of the Gothic as 'a site crossing the genres' (1993, 189) and Michael Gamer's claim that it is 'a site that *moves*, and that must be defined in part by its ability to transplant itself *across* forms and media' (2004, 4). Frederick S. Frank concurs that it is 'less a genre frozen in time than an impulse spanning cultures, nations, and historical periods' (2005, xiv). In short, the Gothic, also in its cinematic iteration, resists simple, unipolar definitions, and demands that its movements be tracked across space, time, and generic forms. Always a concoction of 'discordant ingredients' (Hogle 2019, 108), gothic films are 'repeatedly hybridising and mutating' (Conrich 1998, 76). The abjection Julia Kristeva theorises, defined as that which erases 'borders, positions, rules', disturbing 'identity, system, order' ([1980] 1982, 4), is a constitutive element of the Gothic, inherently impure and abject, open to contamination. Much like the hybridity of gothic architecture, whose character, John Ruskin describes, is 'inextricable or confused in appearance', 'entangled with many other foreign substances, itself perhaps in no place pure, or ever to be obtained or seen in purity for more than an instant' ([1851–1853] 1904, 182–83), so the filmic Gothic emerges as complex, hybrid, abject, and heterogenous.

In accordance with these perspectives, my research is situated alongside Valérie Palacios's *Le Cinéma gothique: un genre mutant* (2009), Xavier Aldana Reyes's *Gothic Cinema* (2020), Hand and McRoy's *Gothic Film: An Edinburgh Companion* (2020), and Rein's *Gothic Cinema: Eine Einführung* (2021). All four prioritise film and depart from a definition of the Gothic as an evolving and adaptable genre (Palacios; Rein) or aesthetic (Aldana Reyes; Hand and McRoy). Hand and McRoy's collection sets out to demonstrate the Gothic's impressive reach across genres and cultures. Palacios, Aldana Reyes, and Rein, in turn, offer a thematic survey of over one hundred years of gothic cinema, but each tackles the subject from a slightly different angle. Palacios focuses on the socio-cultural context of the films' production, Aldana Reyes privileges the technical and technological innovations contemporaneous with the development of gothic film, and Rein's historical account combines both approaches. Due to their stated purpose, structure, and target audience—the former intends to engage 'curious cinephiles' and 'gothic aficionados' (Palacios 2009, 18) and the latter two are guidebooks, aimed specifically at a student audience—these titles differ substantially from the work I develop in these pages. Significantly, extended analyses of individual films are beyond the remit of the volumes by Palacios and Aldana Reyes. Rein concludes her

study guide with three exemplary case studies, but only one concerns a feature film (*Crimson Peak*).

In contradistinction to such approaches, close formal analyses are the building blocks of the present investigation: what better way to examine and engage with the sublime and uncanny aesthetics of the Gothic than to explore the heightened visuality of its intricate imagery and some of the different ways it has been rendered on the screen? My lengthy opening example from *Corridor of Mirrors* dramatises that intention—to position close analysis as fundamental to a nuanced consideration of the cinematic Gothic.

The Gothic Aesthetic

Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film argues for the need to overcome unproductive genre-subgenre, gothic-horror semantic impasses, as well as the likewise convoluted task of identifying what Gothic '*is*', and follows instead Spooner's hypothesis (after Alexandra Warwick) that it is more interesting to explore what it '*does*'—'how it is deployed, what kind of cultural work it performs, what meanings it produces' (2010, xii; 2017, 10). One way to accomplish this is to work towards an investigation of its aesthetic: how it is created and used, and how it becomes cinematically and culturally meaningful.

So where exactly does the cinematic Gothic lie or, in other words, what does it *do*, how does it perform cultural work and produce meaning? In reading Mulligan's musical drama *Inside Daisy Clover* (1965) as 'new American Gothic', Stephen Farber suggests that the macabre exists primarily in style, rather than being restricted to genre, theme, or plot (1966, 22–27). My definition of the gothic aesthetic in film builds on Farber's ground-breaking observation, which has remained unexplored in gothic criticism on the cinema. This attention to the surface permits, for instance, an exploration of how cinematic style can gothicise thematic elements, setting, and narrative development. Writing three decades later, Punter addresses the relationship between theme and style, too. One idea of his that I want to complicate in relation to the cinema is his point that all gothic themes stipulate a style, meaning it is not possible to deal with terror 'in modes which have already been appropriated for other purposes' ([1996] 2013a 18). There are themes which are especially favoured in gothic works but, I suggest, there are no 'gothic themes' in and of themselves. *Inside Daisy Clover* is an exemplary case in this respect: as a

satire-drama about a tomboy turned Hollywood sensation, its themes and plot, punctuated with musical numbers, seem to have more in common with George Cukor's backstage musical melodrama *A Star is Born* (1954) than with anything traditionally classified as even remotely uncanny. Yet, Mulligan suffuses the film with oblique camera angles, stylised visuals that play on colour contrasts, expressionist sets with exaggerated shadows, and a disconcerting use of sound and silence. Its unnaturalistic style creates a suffocating atmosphere of imprisonment and madness, which is frantic and highly unsettling at times. A careful arrangement of cinematic techniques is what makes the film gothic in the first instance. Themes, I argue, do not dictate, or prescribe, a particular stylistic treatment. Plot and theme are often closely aligned with style, but a style travels: it exists outside narrative or thematic conventions.

In turn, the singularity that the Gothic displays on the screen is also more than the bringing together of a 'laundry list' of signifiers (Yang and Healey 2016, 3). Reading the Gothic through its tropes and 'visual codes' (Kavka 2002, 210), working from the principle of inclusion-exclusion (if such and such elements are present, then the film belongs in this or that category), requires working backwards—an excavatory work set on locating particular motifs to support a rigid taxonomical categorisation. The dangers of inductive reasoning—of extracting a general conclusion from a multitude of discrete observations—is that it is inherently faulty and can easily be taken apart: 'Gothic paraphernalia', Linda Bayer-Berenbaum explains, 'are only the trappings that may or may not be present' (1982, 20). Discrete elements, in other words, do not render a film gothic. Typologies help us recognise patterns, themes, and tropes, but a film may contain many such markers without adhering to a gothic aesthetic. Paraphrasing Ruskin's comprehensive study of gothic architecture, the sum of external qualities, which include pointed arches, grotesque sculptures, and vaulted roofs, does not suffice to designate a building 'Gothic' ([1851–1853] 1904, 182)—any more, I add, than disparate motifs, themes, and stock characters in films can. '[U]nless both the elements and the forms are there', Ruskin states, 'we have no right to call the style Gothic' (183). Ruskin thereby posits the interconnectedness of surface and depth, style and substance, or 'form' and 'power': 'It is not enough that it has the Form, if it have not also the power and life. It is not enough that it has the Power, if it have not the form' (183). He goes on to explain that the internal elements (the substance) that make up the Gothic are 'certain mental tendencies of the builders, legibly expressed in it' (183).

These personal 'tendencies' are thematic and involve, for instance, 'savageness', 'love of nature', and 'a disturbed imagination' (184). In an analogous manner, the gothic aesthetic in film must leverage both surface and depth, that is, aesthetics, inclusive of cinematic technique, such as camerawork, sound technologies, and 'photographic inventivenes' [*sic*] (Punter [1996] 2013b, 98), as well as thematic and tropic features. Neglecting this fact has been conducive to the development of critical discourses that analyse the films as one might the novels and whose main concern lies in outlining topical characteristics. Gothic films are first and foremost connected in the mind—and the eyes—of the viewers because they share a number of iconographic, formal, and thematic traits; this notwithstanding, describing the Gothic as a style that brings together certain themes and tropes is not enough to fully capture the subtleties and complexities of the cinematic Gothic as an aesthetic.

While Ruskin and Farber consider style a site of meaning, distinguishing between surface and superficiality, many authors since have ascribed little importance to that which is 'evident, perceptible, apprehensible', 'neither hidden nor hiding' (Best and Marcus 2009, 9). Instead, they have interpreted gothic fiction as allegorising, an interpretative viewpoint that has long captivated filmmakers, critics, and audiences alike. Attesting to this are the widespread psychoanalytic and socio-political approaches—the two main critical frameworks applied to gothic works. Both suggest the films be understood beyond their fantastic façade and analysed as masquerading crucial social issues, thereby facilitating a wider cultural discourse. This 'serious' dimension would validate and even forgive the Gothic's wild excesses and supernaturalism.

Positioning memory at the core of the cinematic Gothic may seem to prescribe a psychoanalytic methodology, especially considering the Gothic's attention to trauma, dreams, death, and desire. This focus has led much scholarship on the literary Gothic over the decades to turn to psychoanalysis as the indelible basis for investigation (Cameron 2010; Berthin 2010; Schneider 2004; Doane 1987; Wood and Lippe 1979). Since the emergence of post-structuralism and psychoanalytically inflected theories in the 1970s, and particularly after the publication of Laura Mulvey's landmark essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975) and Linda Williams's *Figures of Desire* (1981), gothic (and horror) films have also been dealt with primarily through a psychoanalytic lens. British novelist Patrick McGrath acknowledges the long history between the Gothic and psychoanalysis, reminding us that, in fact, 'the wealth of psychological

insight that the Gothic raised from the darkness of the unconscious […] was usurped by Freud'; 'before Freud', he continues, 'the Gothic had exclusive access to the workings of the disturbed psyche, and a monopoly on the depiction of strange and violent behaviour. […] Psychoanalysis has in [the twentieth century] largely fulfilled the traditional function of Gothic literature. Freud's case studies stand alongside the best of Poe' (1997, 156). This genealogical affinity and the value of the psychoanalytic model notwithstanding, it is my opinion that the over-reliance on psychoanalysis has, overall, restricted the Gothic's analytical potential by hindering the emergence of alternative approaches. Noël Carroll justifies his theoretical shift away from psychoanalysis to a more 'cognitively oriented approach' arguing that psychoanalytic interpretations, which had become the 'unavoidable' framework for understanding and commenting on both the literary and filmic facets of horror, did not afford a comprehensive theory of the genre (1987, 58; 1990, 168).

I follow in the footsteps of scholars who, like Carroll, found a straightforward psychoanalytic orientation to be unsatisfactory and widened the critical contexts in which the Gothic can be redressed. Feminism (cf. Horner and Zlosnik 2016; Hanson 2007; Heiland 2004; Hoeveler 1998; DeLamotte 1990) and queer studies (cf. Zigarovich 2018; Palmer 1999, 2012, 2016; Haefele-Thomas 2012; Fincher 2007; Halberstam 1995) have provided fertile ground for gothic scholars, as have cultural-historical readings (cf. Nelson 2013; Warner 2006; Clery 1995; Sage 1988) and postcolonial theories (cf. Lenhardt 2020; Khair 2009; Smith and Hughes 2003; Brogan 1998; Malchow 1996).

When we turn to memory studies, psychoanalysis has also been highly influential. The 'memory craze' of the 1990s and 2000s (Berliner 2005, 199, 203), which followed seminal publications by cultural historians Pierre Nora (1989; 1996–98), Jan Assmann (1995), and Andreas Huyssen (1995), led to an upsurge in contributions to the field. Freud's postulates about the repressed memories housed in an individual's psyche, which need to be brought back into the conscious to overcome trauma, found continuance in the development of trauma studies and Holocaust studies (cf. Felman and Laub 1992; Caruth 1995, 1996; Edkins 2003). This is reflected in numerous works in film studies (cf. Walker 2005; Lichtner 2008; Pakier 2013; Kobrynskyy and Bayer 2015). Research on memory in gothic scholarship is scarce. Maria Beville's refreshing historical stance in 'Gothic Memory and the Contested Past' (2014) is especially worthy of note, as are the essays in Simon Bacon and Katarzyna Bronk's *Undead*

Memory: Vampires and Human Memory in Popular Culture (2014), which focus on the figure of the vampire.

When it comes to scrutinising the Gothic via its socio-political stance, critics tend to downplay any escapist pretensions of the mode, stressing that it registers its host culture's crimes and social problems (Goddu 2007, 63). Heidi Kaye observes that gothic texts 'seem destined to be continually reborn to suit the fears and desires of each new period' (2012, 250), echoing Steven Bruhm's contention a decade earlier that the Gothic always mirrors 'the anxieties plaguing a certain culture at a particular moment in history' (2002, 260). Kamilla Elliott eloquently sums up standard academic commentary on the gothic cinema as follows:

> Gothic films are read as manifesting 'cultural anxieties' about World War I in the 1910s; xenophobia and immigration in the 1920s; American isolationism and the Great Depression in the 1930s; World War II in the 1940s; sexual repression, changing gender roles, communism and the Cold War in the 1950s; gay and women's liberation, civil rights, drugs, nuclear disarmament and the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 70s; new-wave feminism, alternative sexualities, AIDS, incest, sexual harassment and child abuse in the 1980s and 90s; and capitalism, consumerism, science and technology throughout the twentieth century into the twenty-first. (2007, 228)

This compelling way of theorising the Gothic, from which my own thinking has greatly benefited, has contributed to its undying appeal. Nonetheless, it often fails to grasp the medial specificities of the cinematic Gothic in dismissing the surface as collateral or as a hide camouflaging intellectually productive (symbolic) aspects. As such, the question of whether the Gothic is valuable only insofar as it is read as a metaphor—as a way to gauge political upheaval and social anxieties—begs reconsideration. David Bordwell once asked whether cinema is 'important and valuable solely as a barometer of broad-scale social changes' (2008, 30). While most scholars readily acquiesce in the need to answer that question affirmatively, namely as a means of validating underrated genres or research fields, I believe this view of cinema to be alarmingly myopic. Bordwell cautions us to be wary of such reflectionist criticism and its sometimes circular, uncompelling, spurious arguments (30–31). Accordingly, I would add, we should be mindful of the ever-tempting historical fallacy, whereby we assume that two events occurring at the same time are inevitably related to each other. We should be conscious of the historicity of the moments

we study, but move beyond a purely symptomatic reading of cinema in general, and the Gothic in particular, as necessarily embodying current national moods and fears—the 'true' meaning of the narratives and imagery hidden underneath layers of more or less covert symbolism. Instead, we should also investigate the Gothic on its own cinematic merits, that is, as a mobile aesthetic formation that needs no allegorical implications to claim its worth.

The psychoanalytic and socio-political approaches demonstrate that critics intent on explicating the essence of Gothic are usually 'impatient with its surfaces', hastily plunging 'to the thematics of depth' and associated psychologies, Eve K. Sedgwick remarks (1986, 140). In effect, Bayer-Berenbaum, for instance, affirms that the cyclical revival of gothic texts 'is not merely a whimsical fad unrelated to the tenor of our times, to the modern predicament', so 'we must look beneath the spiderwebs and trapdoors to the essence of the Gothic orientation' (1982, 12). I argue contrariwise that critics too hastily dismiss the significance of those 'spiderwebs and trapdoors', urging us to look for meaning 'beneath' them. My thinking is on this point aligned with Susan Sontag's view that criticism on a work of art should focus on its 'sensuous immediacy' and 'show *how it is what it is*' rather than '*what it means*' (1966, 9, 14). Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, in distinguishing between the practices of surface reading and symptomatic reading, define a surface as 'what insists on being looked *at* rather than what we must train ourselves to see *through*' (2009, 9). Symptomatic readings, which usually adhere to psychoanalytical and Marxist interpretations (after Althusser and Balibar 1970; Jameson 1981), concern the gaps in a text and go beyond or outside it in search of meaning. The gothic aesthetic is a visual language, so 'what lies in plain sight' is not only 'worthy of attention' (Best and Marcus 2009, 18), but should be placed at the centre of scholarly criticism.

Granted, conceptualising and defining the Gothic through an investigation of its aesthetic qualities rather than its 'alleged cultural purpose' (Aldana Reyes 2020, 6) is an unfashionable critical approach, but this should not deter film and gothic scholars from engaging at length with the 'erotics' of the surface (Sontag 1966, 14). As Spooner notes, justifying 'Gothic through its utility has resulted in a narrow understanding of its possibilities' (2017, 17), a perspective which Aldana Reyes shares (2020, 17). With them, importantly, I emphasise the same major caveat—that these two approaches are by no means mutually exclusive. After all, the 'aesthetic dimension of a film […] never exists floating free of historical

and cultural particularity', Richard Dyer reminds us (1998, 9). 'Equally', he continues, 'the cultural study of film must always understand that it is studying film, which has its own specificity' (9). In other words, my contention is that the focus on the artistic does not preclude or diminish the importance of social, historical, cultural, or political interpretations. Quite the opposite—they complement each other. My study of the Gothic as 'a cultural and aesthetic mode' (Jones 2021, 6) aims to demonstrate this by offering a contextual reading of the aesthetic's visual language as ingrained, from its inception, in movements of migration. With Kathleen Newman, I understand changes in film style to be not merely 'a response to national conditions and pressures, but also to have [...] multiple, international determinants' (2010, 4) that should be considered.

Aesthetics, in this book, do not constitute a secondary concern to the engagement with the socio-political reality, but are rather the very manifestation of it. Instead of applying to the cinematic Gothic the dominant hermeneutics and conducting the traditional excavations for supra-textual meaning, present in the 'invisible', '*inner darkness*' of the text (Althusser and Balibar 1970, 27), I suggest that socio-political sensibilities originally gave rise to the aesthetic and exist therein, in the *visible* interstices of the cinematographic image. My method responds to Sontag's call for a criticism that 'dissolves considerations of content into those of form' (1966, 12), affording primary attention to the 'directness' of surfaces (11). Crucially, Gerd Gemünden and Anton Kaes advance that, in Hollywood, especially following the establishment of the Production Code Administration, filmmakers found a way to incorporate and translate 'political, ideological and institutional constraints' into a film's formal elements (2003, 6). The films of the travelling directors, I argue, contain a specific, if multiform, stylistic 'accent', in the sense that Hamid Naficy (2001) uses the term, which embeds political meaning in the formal elements of the films. Read in this way, meaning—social, political, and artistic—does not lie underneath the surface but is inscribed into it: *the surface is political.*

In an unexpectedly cinematic definition of the Gothic, French sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) writes that 'the Gothic is not the Gothic because of the period in which it was developed, but because of the manner of seeing of the period' (1918, 119). The Gothic is about point of view; it does not carry a unified meaning across texts. Drawing on Rodin, the Gothic is therefore not about reflecting contemporary national socio-political terrors per se, but about perspective and sensory perception: it is

about *how* we see. Aesthetic representations are inextricably embedded in the times that birth them, but they also travel, change, acquire 'accents', and linger beyond given psychological interpretations and socio-political contexts. What endures through these journeys, allowing us to fathom the Gothic's formidable resilience, is the surface and its inscription of a particular 'manner of seeing'. It is this affective and accented 'manner of seeing'—one which is transnational, transhistorical, conspicuously haptic, and excessively mnemonic—that I am calling the cinematic gothic aesthetic.

To investigate the different accents, sensibilities, and malleability of the aesthetic, I combine analytical strategies stemming from gothic studies, film studies, literary criticism, memory studies, disability studies, exile studies, phenomenology, and neuroscience. This permits a reappraisal of the cinematic Gothic that hinges on a more fluid model than genre or any one discipline or methodology would allow. The impulse behind this seemingly eclectic theoretical strategy is the desire to emphasise the non-essentialism of the Gothic and its influence on the development of modern cinematic discourse. In this sense, bringing different critical vantage points into conversation illuminates the extent to which the Gothic's multifarious legacies underlie discursive and representational practices that have shaped certain forms of cinema from the turn of the century to the digital age. Despite this variety of methodological approaches, my analysis throughout is underpinned by a sustained engagement with the films and the question of how the gothic aesthetic is forged in various stylistic, generic, and transnational contexts. The primacy of close analysis does not disavow the significance of the narrative, but troubles the notion that aesthetics exists only in the service of the plot or of symptomatic readings.

The Chapters

Together, the chapters advance a reading of the cinematic Gothic as a product of displacement that brings forth innovative aesthetics and a powerful set of cultural and political concerns. Rather than rooting themselves in places, which traditionally have been the clear supports of human identity, the characters attempt to anchor their lives in memories, namely through the touching and gathering of objects. Memory, however, soon becomes diseased and 'infernal', to go back to Adorno's qualifier, and the process of re-collection is revealed as ultimately futile. Amid these tensions, there emerges an image of gothic protagonists as incomplete beings,

haunted by an ever-returning yet ever-inaccessible past, compelled to define their identity by their otherness or in relation to some marker of difference—poignant figures of loss, angst, and dystopia that stand as projections and harbingers of a failing society, cluttered by the past and unable to move forward.

The case studies in this book are intended to do more than present and explore an array of illustrative examples. I aim instead to chart specific memoryscapes and routes of re-membering that reconsider canonical and neglected films and filmmakers, making efforts to analyse distinctive aspects of the gothic aesthetic as a discourse on memory and exile. In this way, the close readings build a context for understanding how the Gothic is embedded in the histories and cultures of contemporary societies.

My inquiry begins by placing a much-commented feature of the Gothic (its influence by travel narratives and its spatial emphases) in a new light. Chapter 2 starts off with an investigation of the specific types of mobility that characterise the agents of the filmic Gothic, in their majority European émigrés, exiles, and 'professional travellers' (Bergfelder 1996, 22) who created a distinct way of visually rewriting and externalising experiences of displacement and alienation on the screen. The gothic aesthetic is the product of their travels and cultural exchanges, and so this chapter offers a contextual analysis to acknowledge the role and contributions of these 'travelling directors' to the uniqueness of the Gothic in film. While avoiding biographical interpretations, I point to both the positive aspects and the painful disruptions brought about by voluntary and forced dislocations and analyse how exilic personal memory is recorded in a film's visuals. In this respect, I attend to the development of specific techniques and approaches to the cinema, as an art and ideological vehicle, in different national contexts. The films of the travelling directors, I will demonstrate, focus on othered, exilic characters and construct memory-images in relation to the pivotal role of objects, hapticity, and décor. Alongside such names as Alfred Hitchcock, my investigation discusses the role of hitherto elided but significant figures, such as German professional traveller, and later exile, Robert Wiene and Swedish émigré Victor Sjöström. The relevance of the travelling directors is further explored via their impact on the works of Hathaway, Cocteau, and Carné, among others. This chapter looks not just to the countries of production but considers the nationalities and cross-border travels of the filmmakers as well. In doing so, it creates a framework for a combined aesthetic and socio-political approach to the films; one which does not excavate beneath the surface for meaning

nor allegorises moments in the narratives as either symbolic of universal human anxieties or strictly national, time-bound preoccupations. Rather, in refusing to separate between style and substance, it proposes a close engagement with the surface as the aspect in which a collaborative authorial signature articulates the private experiences of displacement.

Moving from these private experiences and the mapping of diverse international exchanges and influences to a discussion of the narratives, Chaps. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 are structured around overlapping types of diegetic travelling—spatial, temporal, and psychological—and consider a restricted number of films to reveal how theoretical and aesthetic concerns emerge from the individual texts. Overall informed by phenomenology, which understands memory as always mediated by sensory perception, these chapters echo each other in their treatment of haptic imagery, touch, travelling, and mnemonic landscapes as integral to the films. At the narrative level, the Gothic is a world of travellers, of characters exiled from home and family, love and normality, from their own bodies and minds, from life and even death. The profusion of sombre imagery of separation and displacement shows how central the private and socio-political anxieties of uprootedness are to the Gothic. In addition, the films put forward a politics of touch that defines the aesthetic to this day and, as will be shown, frames acts of re-membering as inevitably failed endeavours.

Departing from a close analysis of *Portrait of Jennie*, and with reference to *Laura* (Preminger, 1944), *Corridor of Mirrors* (1948), and *Vertigo* (Hitchcock, 1958), among other films, Chap. 3 lays out my understanding of the term 'memory'. Expanding on its intricacies, it characterises gothic protagonists as re-collectors whose movements of search drive the films and posits that the gothic aesthetic exists in places and under certain forms that critics do not usually explore. Such is the case with objects: in the course of the films, particular objects stand out from the mise-en-scène and acquire specific properties that shape the onscreen journeys of the characters and our viewing experience. The Gothic, I suggest, builds on the hoarding and retrieval of memories through what I call 'memory-objects': objects that stand for or have become memory, including photographs and wax figures. In this sense, my readings construct re-membering as a spatial act and memory as placeable and tangible. In its tangibility, memory might become transmissible, running the risk of being co-opted by others. This strengthens the overarching argument that the aesthetic foregrounds an exilic discourse wherein the self becomes divorced or estranged from its identity as it attempts to retrieve the past.

In the highly multisensory process of re-collecting memories, the Gothic insistently privileges touch as a motif of both separation and intimacy. Whereas most scholars elect a study of the gaze, founded on ocularcentrism, as their preferred framework for studying character relations as well as our own positioning as viewers, I turn to the hand as a key vehicle of re-collection and a primary site of affect and affection. Looking at hand amputation as portrayed in *Orlacs Hände* (Wiene, 1924) and *The Unknown* (Browning, 1927), Chap. 4 draws on disability studies to interrogate the complication of identity in relation to a body that has become othered and exilic through injury. Based on the work of, among others, Karen Barad, Monika Pietrzak-Franger, and Thomas Fahy, I analyse the wounded body as a discursive site that is fundamentally political. The sorrows and existential dilemmas of the differently abled protagonists find visual reference in wounded war bodies, used and then disposed of by the state.

Dismemberment is further explored in Chap. 5, which builds on Georges Braque's notion of 'manual space' (Danchev 2005, 88) and Katherine Rowe's 'unexpected clutch' and 'mortmain control' (1999) to examine the idea of independent agency and shifting discourses of power in the Gothic. This crystallises in an exploration of the image of the disembodied hand in *La Belle et la Bête* (Cocteau, 1946) and *Wuthering Heights* (Wyler, 1939), which present memory as disruptive and a threat to the sanity of the characters. Central here is an understanding of the hand as a locus of sublime terror, exile, and uncanny absence that challenges the integrity of the gothic subject by blatantly and violently emphasising its constructed nature and, consequently, its easy disassembly and destruction.

Chapter 6 follows on from this idea of re-collection as a dangerous process and conceptualises the perils of preying on an other's memory through the general postulates of Luc Ciompi's (1982) affective-cognitive metatheory which, in the context of pathological conditions, examines how rational thought and logic depend on affects. A close reading of visual and manual hapticity in *Rebecca* (Hitchcock, 1940) and *Peter Ibbetson* (Hathaway, 1935) will illustrate these concerns. Mnemonic spaces, accessed through transgressive *curiositas* in *Rebecca* and shared telepathic dreams in *Peter Ibbetson,* devolve into imprisoning structures that feed the subject's obsession with re-membering. Shifting from an 'everyday logic' to a 'psychotic logic', depicted in very different ways in both films, the characters attempt to achieve control over the foreign or otherwise hostile environment. Exclusion from a particular environment or, conversely, the construction of a sense of belonging are both signalled by the intervention

of intensely manual memory-objects, such as gloves and rings. In both films, the need to touch, possess, and transgress spatial, temporal, and psychological boundaries is directly linked to the nexus between home and exile, one which is haunted by an acute preoccupation with memory. Ultimately, the cinematic Gothic draws forth a failed relationship with re-collection, which allows for a questioning of the overall desirability of memory.

Expanding the focus from obsessive re-membering to the inability to re-collect, Chap. 7 takes as its main topic wilful and involuntary forgetting. The tension between the two emphasises the threshold existence of the protagonists and suggests death as the only way to cope with the challenges and pains of memory in a gothic context. In the light of neurologist Oliver Sacks's research on amnesia and music, and psychologist and cognitive neuroscientist Endel Tulving's work on human memory, I analyse *Juliette, or Key of Dreams* (Carné, 1951), which depicts a strange realm—the Land of Oblivion—whose inhabitants have all lost their memory. The close connection between music, memory, and nation which emerges here in the figure of an amnesic accordionist, begins my investigation into musical instruments as memory-objects, which continues in the next chapter. The accordion, which the hand's touch brings to life, appears in this film as the only medium of remembering and thus of counteracting an otherwise thoroughly exilic existence. *Juliette* deploys a gothic aesthetic to portray a self-reflexive, somewhat satirical, and utterly despondent outlook on disenchanted and disenfranchised life in contemporary societies, a point which I develop further in Chap. 8.

Chapter 8 focuses on the piano—a tactile space par excellence—and argues that the connections between memory, touch, and estrangement in the Gothic are made evident through pianism. The awakening and retrieval of memories that piano music facilitates triggers spatial and psychological processes of audiovisual re-collection that decisively contribute to the breakdown of relationships. Pianos or harpsichords appear as central to the plots of *Orlacs Hände*, *Undercurrent* (Minnelli, 1946), *Dragonwyck* (Mankiewicz, 1946), *While I Live* (Harlow, 1947), and *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (Ophuls, 1948), which anchor my investigation into the Gothic's aural geographies. Through Marcel Proust's and Reverend H.R. Haweis's writings, and guided by Ivan Raykoff's (2013) research on 'sound-bodies', '*un*sound bodies', and 'untuned women', I analyse the effects of pianism's dark aural aesthetics on the memory of the viewers-listeners and the tortured virtuosos. I advance the concept of 'haptic

listening' to analyse the characters' intense experience of piano music in exilic spaces of musical interaction and offer a cinematic, literary, and pseudo-medical contextualisation of the piano's evil effects.

This book offers the first sustained scholarly engagement with the gothic aesthetic in the cinema via the symbiotic relationship between memory, travelling, and touch. Building on the momentum created by the burgeoning of popular and scholarly interest in gothic texts, it reconsiders the workings of this multifaceted aesthetic and its influential legacy, looking to enrich our understanding of the challenging potentialities of this 'trans-medial, genre-defying, migratory and polluting phenomenon' (Myrone 2013, 78). Conrich suggests that '[a]ttempts to present a sufficiently expansive consideration of the Gothic film have been obstructed by its omniformity, with writers consequently preferring to examine specific divisions', such as the Universal monster movie cycle, 1940s persecuted-women films, and Hammer horror (1998, 76). In defining the cinematic Gothic as an aesthetic centrally concerned with memory and exile, this book embraces the Gothic's intrinsic 'omniformity' as productive and paramount to its inquiry.

This volume proceeds from three interconnected premises. I depart from the idea that the filmic Gothic is an aesthetic and, as such, it is cross-generic and establishes transnational and transhistorical continuities among a wide variety of texts. Secondly, I suggest that the cross-border movements of the travelling directors had a crucial impact on the emergence, development, and dissemination of the Gothic. This approach expands the canon to filmmakers and national traditions that have not received much attention in the context of the Gothic and supports an examination of the aesthetic as exilic at its core. Finally, I consider memory and processes of remembering via the body, specifically via manual re-collection, to be structural to the cinematic Gothic, whose fractured characters embody the tensions between experience and the complex, unstable, and often unreliable workings of memory. Moreover, by focusing on *in extremis* situations, such as amputation and amnesia, and turning to the hand as a key site and vehicle of re-collection and contagion, I suggest that we can generate a layered and complex account of memory, identity, agency, affect, and their breakdown in moments of psychological and socio-political unrest. In urging the reader to think about the Gothic in these terms, and through a range of disciplines, this book extends previous scholarship and breaks new ground for investigating not only areas that have eluded critical study, such as the role of hands in film, but also issues

prioritised in current academic discourse on memory, migration, and the senses. Overall, this book aims to demonstrate how the Gothic is embedded in the social, political, and cultural histories of global societies and how gothic films inform societal understandings of human agency, identity formation, social unbelonging, and political and medical erasure.

Frankl perceptively observes that 'however many attempts have been made to describe Gothic, they are all merely steps. Anyone who undertakes a new one must realize that his attempt will also be merely *one* step […] for no generation has ever suspected what was yet to be thought and discovered about Gothic' (1960, 837). This book represents one more step in an ever-expanding and relentlessly fascinating journey through the dark and cobwebbed annals of gothic fiction. In keeping with the archival drive of much contemporary scholarship, insofar as it seeks to recover a range of significant but largely understudied films, directors, and national contexts, *Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film* signals a timely intervention that aims to encourage future reinterpretations of the aesthetic by troubling the canon and offering the reader a new interdisciplinary methodological framework for a critical reappraisal of the cinematic Gothic, its history, cultural currency, and global influence.

Note

1. For a detailed discussion of the diverse usages of the term 'Gothic', see Chris Baldick, ed. 1992. *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales*, xi–xvi. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

References

Adorno, Theodor. [1951] 2005. *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*. Trans. E.F.N. Jephcott. London: Verso.

Aldana Reyes, Xavier. 2014. *Body Gothic: Corporeal Transgression in Contemporary Literature and Horror Film*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

———. 2016. *Horror Film and Affect: Towards a Corporeal Model of Viewership*. London: Routledge.

———. 2019. Gothic and Cinema: The Development of an Aesthetic Filmic Mode. In *The Edinburgh Companion to Gothic and the Arts*, ed. David Punter, 395–405. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

———. 2020. *Gothic Cinema*. London: Routledge.

Althusser, Louis, and Etienne Balibar. 1970. *Reading Capital*. Trans. Ben Brewster. London: NLB.

'An English Unit Making Film in Paris for Rank.' 1947. *To-day's Cinema* 68 (5446, 14 January): 3, 9.

Assman, Jan. 1995. Collective Memory and CulturaI ldentity. *New German Critique* 65 (Spring-Summer): 125–133.

Bacon, Simon, and Katarzyna Bronk, eds. 2014. *Undead Memory: Vampires and Human Memory in Popular Culture*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Bal, Mieke. 2002. *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Barefoot, Guy. 2001. *Gaslight Melodrama: From Victorian London to 1940s Hollywood*. London: Continuum.

Battaglia, Francesca. 2019. Music and Neo-Victorian Gothic Tropes: The Glass Armonica in *A Slight Trick of the Mind* by Mitch Cullin. *Gothic Studies* 21 (2): 129–144.

Bayer-Berenbaum, Linda. 1982. *The Gothic Imagination: Expansion in Gothic Literature and Art*. London: Associated University Press.

Bell, James, ed. 2013. *Gothic: The Dark Heart of Film*. London: BFI.

Bergfelder, Tim. 1996. The Production Designer and the *Gesamtkunstwerk*: German Film Technicians in the British Film Industry of the 1930s. In *Dissolving Views: Key Writings on British Cinema*, ed. Andrew Higson, 20–37. London: Cassell.

Berliner, David. 2005. The Abuses of Memory: Reflections on the Memory Boom in Anthropology. *Anthropological Quarterly* 78 (1, Winter): 197–211.

Best, Stephen, and Sharon Marcus. 2009. Surface Reading: An Introduction. *Representations* 108 (1): 1–21.

Berthin, Christine. 2010. *Gothic Hauntings: Melancholy Crypts and Textual Ghosts*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Bevan, Alex. 2023. *Gothic Literary Travel and Tourism*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

Beville, Maria. 2014. Gothic Memory and the Contested Past: Framing Terror. The Gothic and the Everyday Living Gothic, Lorna Piatti-Farnell M Beville, 52–68. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Blazan, Sladja. 2021. *Haunted Nature: Entanglements of the Human and the Nonhuman*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bloom, Clive. 1998. Introduction: Death's Own Backyard; The Nature of Modern Gothic and Horror Fiction. In *Gothic Horror: A Reader's Guide from Poe to King and Beyond*, ed. Clive Bloom, 1–22. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Botting, Fred. [1996] 2005. *Gothic*. London: Routledge.

Bowser, Eileen. 1990. *The Transformation of Cinema: 1907–1915*, Vol. 2. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Brogan, Kathleen. 1998. *Cultural Haunting: Ghosts and Ethnicity in Recent American Literature*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.

Brown, Simon. 2012. Censorship Under Siege: The BBFC in the Silent Era. In *Behind the Scenes at the BBFC: Film Classification from the Silver Screen to the Digital Age*, ed. Edward Lamberti, 3–14. London: BFI/Palgrave Macmillan.

Bruhm, Steven. 2002. The Contemporary Gothic: Why We Need It. In *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle, 259–276. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Burke, Edmund. 1757. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. London: R. and J. Dodsley.

Cameron, Ed. 2010. *The Psychopathology of the Gothic Romance: Perversion, Neuroses and Psychosis in Early Works of the Genre*. Jefferson: McFarland.

Carroll, Noël. 1987. The Nature of Horror. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 46 (1, Autumn): 51–59.

———. 1990. *The Philosophy of Horror: Or, Paradoxes of the Heart*. London: Routledge.

Carruthers, Mary. [1990] 2008. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Caruth, Cathy, ed. 1995. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

———. 1996. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Ciompi, Luc. 1982. The Concept of Affect-Logic. http://www.ciompi.com/en/affect-logic.html. Accessed June 2023.

Clery, E.J. 1995. *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction 1762–1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Conrich, Ian. 1998. Gothic Film. In *The Handbook of Gothic Literature*, ed. Marie Mulvey-Roberts, 76–81. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Conrich, Ian, and Laura Sedgwick. 2017. *Gothic Dissections in Film and Literature: The Body in Parts*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Curti, Roberto. 2015. *Italian Gothic Horror Films, 1957-1969*. Jefferson: McFarland.

———. 2017. *Italian Gothic Horror Films, 1970-1979*. Jefferson: McFarland.

———. 2019. *Italian Gothic Horror Films, 1980-1989*. Jefferson: McFarland.

Danchev, Alex. 2005. *Georges Braque: A Life*. London: Hamish Hamilton.

DeLamotte, Eugenia C. 1990. *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dixon, Wheeler Winston. 2010. *A History of Horror*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Doane, Mary Ann. 1987. *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Dyer, Richard. 1998. Introduction to Film Studies. In *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*, ed. John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson, 3–10. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Edkins, Jenny. 2003. *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Edney, Sue, ed. 2020. *EcoGothic Gardens in the Long Nineteenth Century: Phantoms, Fantasy and Uncanny Flowers*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Edwards, Justin D., and Johan Höglund, eds. 2018. *B-Movie Gothic: International Perspectives*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Eljaiek-Rodríguez, Gabriel. 2017. *Selva de Fantasmas: El Gótico En La Literatura y El Cine Latinoamericanos*. Bogota: Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

———. 2018. *The Migration and Politics of Monsters in Latin American Cinema*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Elliott, Kamilla. 2007. Gothic-Film-Parody. In *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, ed. Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy, 223–232. London: Routledge.

Farber, Stephen. 1966. New American Gothic. *Film Quarterly* 20 (Autumn): 22–27.

Felman, Shoshana, and Dori Laub. 1992. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. London: Routledge.

Felleman, Susan. 2006. *Art in the Cinematic Imagination*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Fincher, Max. 2007. *Queering Gothic in the Romantic Age: The Penetrating Eye*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Forshaw, Barry. 2013. *British Gothic Cinema*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Frank, Frederick S. 2005. *Guide to the Gothic III: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism, 1994–2003*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press.

Frankl, Paul. 1960. *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations Through Eight Centuries*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gamer, Michael. 2004. *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gasperini, Anna. 2019. *Nineteenth Century Popular Fiction, Medicine and Anatomy: The Victorian Penny Blood and the 1832 Anatomy Act*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gemünden, Gerd, and Anton Kaes. 2003. Introduction. *New German Critique* 89 (Spring–Summer): 3–8.

Goddu, Teresa A. 2007. American Gothic. In *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, ed. Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy, 63–72. London: Routledge.

Grieveson, Lee. 2004a. Woof, Warp, History. *Cinema Journal* 44 (1, Autumn): 119–126.

———. 2004b. *Policing Cinema: Movies and Censorship in Early-Twentieth-Century America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gunning, Tom. 1990. Weaving a Narrative: Style and Economic Background in Griffith's Biograph Films. In *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser and Adam Barker, 336–347. London: BFI.

———. 1991. *D. W. Griffith and the Origins of American Narrative Film: The Early Years at Biograph*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

———. 2004. "Now You See It, Now You Don't": The Temporality of the Cinema of Attractions. In *The Silent Cinema Reader*, ed. Lee Grieveson and Peter Krämer, 41–50. London: Routledge.

Haefele-Thomas, Ardel. 2012. *Queer Others in Victorian Gothic: Transgressing Monstrosity*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

Halberstam, Jack. 1995. *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Hand, Richard J., and Jay McRoy, eds. 2020. *Gothic Film: An Edinburgh Companion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Hansen, Miriam. 1990. Early Cinema: Whose Public Sphere? In *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser and Adam Barker, 228–246. London: BFI.

Hanson, Helen. 2007. *Hollywood Heroines: Women in Film Noir and the Female Gothic Film*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Hassall, Linda. 2021. *Theatres of Dust: Climate Gothic Analysis in Contemporary Australian Drama and Performance Landscapes*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Heiland, Donna. 2004. *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hoeckner, Berthold. 2019. *Film, Music, Memory*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Hoeveler, Diane Long. 1998. *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Hogle, Jerrold E. 2019. Abjection as Gothic and the Gothic as Abjection. In *The Gothic and Theory: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle and Robert Miles, 108–125. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Hopkins, Lisa. 2005. *Screening the Gothic*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Horner, Avril, and Sue Zlosnik, eds. 2016. *Women and the Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Hubner, Laura. 2018. *Fairytale and Gothic Horror*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Huyssen, Andreas. 1995. *Twilight Memories Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Jameson, Fredric. 1981. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Jancovich, Mark. 2009. "Thrills and Chills": Horror, the Woman's Film and the Origins of Film Noir. *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 7 (2): 157–171.

Jones, Darryl. 2021. *Horror: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kavka, Misha. 2002. The Gothic on Screen. In *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerry E. Hogle, 209–228. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kaye, Heidi. 2012. Gothic Film. In *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter, 239–251. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
Keetley, Dawn, and Matthew Wynn Sivils, eds. 2018. *Ecogothic in Nineteenth-Century American Literature*. London: Routledge.
Keil, Charlie. 2001. *Early American Cinema in Transition: Story, Style, and Filmmaking, 1907–1913*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
Khair, Tabish. 2009. *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness: Ghosts from Elsewhere*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Kobrynskyy, Oleksandr, and Gerd Bayer, eds. 2015. *Holocaust Cinema in the Twenty-First Century: Images, Memory, and the Ethics of Representation*. London: Wallflower Press.
Kord, T.S. 2016. *Little Horrors: How Cinema's Evil Children Play on Our Guilt*. Jefferson: McFarland.
Kovacs, Lee. 1999. *The Haunted Screen: Ghosts in Literature and Film*. Jefferson: McFarland.
Kremmel, Laura R. 2022. *Romantic Medicine and the Gothic Imagination: Morbid Anatomies*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
Kristeva, Julia. [1980] 1982. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. L. S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press.
Leeder, Murray, ed. 2015. *Cinematic Ghosts: Haunting and Spectrality from Silent Cinema to the Digital Era*. London: Bloomsbury.
Lenhardt, Corinna. 2020. *Savage Horrors: The Intrinsic Raciality of the American Gothic*. Bielefeld: Transcript.
Lichtner, Giacomo. 2008. *Film and the Shoah in France and Italy*. London: Vallentine Mitchell.
Luckhurst, Mary. 2017. Punchdrunk, the Immersive, and Gothic Tourism. *About Performance* 14–15: 7–18.
Luckhurst, Roger. 2018. Corridor Gothic. *Gothic Studies* 20 (1–2, November): 295–310.
Lupton, Catherine. 2004. The Exile of Remembering: Movement and Memory in Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil*. In *Cultures of Exile: Images of Displacement*, ed. Wendy Everett and Peter Wagstaff, 33–48. New York: Berghahn Books.
Lurie, Alison. [1981] 2000. *The Language of Clothes*. New York: Henry Holt.
Malchow, Howard L. 1996. *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-century Britain*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
McDonald, Keith, and Wayne Johnson. 2021. *Contemporary Gothic and Horror Film: Transnational Perspectives*. London: Anthem Press.
McGrath, Patrick. 1997. Transgression and Decay. In *Gothic: Transmutations of Horror in Late Twentieth Century Art*, ed. Christoph Grunenberg, 158–153. Cambridge: MIT Press.
Meehan, Paul. 2011. *Horror Noir: Where Cinema's Dark Sisters Meet*. Jefferson: McFarland.

Miles, Robert. 1993. *Gothic Writing, 1750–1820: A Genealogy*. London: Routledge.
Morgan, Jack. 2002. *The Biology of Horror: Gothic Literature and Film*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
Mulvey-Roberts, Marie. 2016. *Dangerous Bodies: Historicising the Gothic Corporeal*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Musser, Charles. 1994. *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907*. Vol. 1. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Myrone, Martin. 2013. Gothic Art's Cinematic Legacies. In *Gothic: The Dark Heart of Film*, ed. James Bell, 78–81. London: BFI.
Naficy, Hamid. 2001. *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Nelson, Victoria. 2013. *Gothicka: Vampire Heroes, Human Gods, and the New Supernatural*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Newman, Kathleen. 2010. Notes on Transnational Film Theory: Decentered Subjectivity, Decentered Capitalism. In *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*, ed. Nataša Ďurovičová and Kathleen Newman, 3–11. New York: Routledge.
Nora, Pierre. 1989. Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire. Trans. Marc Roudebush. *Representations* 26 (Spring): 7–24.
Nora, Pierre and Lawrence D. Kritzman, eds. 1996–98. *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, vols. 1–3. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. New York: Columbia University Press.
O'Neil, Miles. 2021. Conjuring Sonic Demons in Contemporary Australian Gothic Theatre. *Performance Research* 26 (1–2): 125–132.
Pakier, Malgorzata. 2013. *The Construction of European Holocaust Memory: German and Polish Cinema after 1989*. Oxford: Peter Lang.
Palacios, Valérie. 2009. *Le Cinéma gothique: un genre mutant*. Rosières en Haye: Camion noir.
Palmer, Paulina. 1999. *Lesbian Gothic: Transgressive Fictions*. London: Cassell.
———. 2012. *The Queer Uncanny: New Perspectives on the Gothic*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
———. 2016. *Queering Contemporary Gothic Narrative, 1970–2012*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Parker, Elizabeth. 2020. *The Forest and the EcoGothic: The Deep Dark Woods in the Popular Imagination*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Passey, Joan. 2020. Dark Tourism. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Gothic*, ed. Clive Bloom, 49–62. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Peirse, Alison. 2013. *After Dracula: The 1930s Horror Film*. London: Bloomsbury.
Pérez Edelman, Diana. 2021. *Embryology and the Rise of the Gothic Novel*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Piatti-Farnell, Lorna, Maria Beville. 2014. Introduction: Living Gothic. In The Gothic and the Everyday Living Gothic, Lorna Piatti-Farnell M Beville, 1–12. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pirie, David. 2008. *A New Heritage of Horror: The English Gothic Cinema*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Punter, David. 2013. The Original Gothics. In *Gothic: The Dark Heart of Film*, ed. James Bell, 103. London: BFI.

———. [1996] 2013a. *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions 1765 to the Present Day, Vol. 1: The Gothic Tradition*. London: Routledge.

———. [1996] 2013b. *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions 1765 to the Present Day, Vol. 2: The Modern Gothic*. London: Routledge.

Radcliffe, Ann. 1826. On the Supernatural in Poetry. *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* 16 (1): 145–152.

———. [1794] 1836. *The Mysteries of Udolpho: A Romance*. London: J. Limbird.

Rein, Katharina. 2021. *Gothic Cinema: Eine Einführung*. Wiesbaden: Springer.

Rigby, Jonathan. 2000. *English Gothic: A Century of Horror Cinema*. Richmond: Reynolds & Hearn.

———. 2007. *American Gothic: Sixty Years of Horror Cinema*. Richmond: Reynolds & Hearn.

———. 2016. *Euro Gothic: Classics of Continental Horror Cinema*. Cambridge: Signum Books.

Rodaway, Paul. 1994. *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place*. London: Routledge.

Rodin, Auguste. 1918. The Gothic in France. *The North American Review* 207 (746, January): 111–121.

Rowe, Katherine. 1999. *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Ruskin, John. [1851–1853] 1904. *The Library Edition of the Works of John Ruskin, Vol. X: The Stones of Venice, Vol. II: The Sea-Stories*, ed. E.T Cook and A. Wedderburn. London: George Allen.

Sage, Victor. 1988. *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition*. London: Macmillan.

Schneider, Steven Jay, ed. 2004. *Horror Film and Psychoanalysis: Freud's Worst Nightmare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. 1986. *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*. New York: Methuen.

Skal, David J. 2004. *Hollywood Gothic: The Tangled Web of Dracula from Novel to Stage to Screen*. New York: Faber and Faber.

Smith, Andrew, and William Hughes, eds. 2003. *Empire and the Gothic: The Politics of the Genre*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sontag, Susan. 1966. Against Interpretation [1964]. In *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, 3–14. New York: Noonday Press.

Spinetti, Federico. 2021. Punk Rock on the Gothic Line: Resounding the World War II Antifascist Resistenza in Contemporary Italy. *Popular Music and Society* 44 (2): 212–232.

Spooner, Catherine. 2010. Preface. In *Twenty-First-Century Gothic*, ed. Brigid Cherry, Peter Howell, and Caroline Ruddell, ix–xii. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.

———. 2017. *Post-Millennial Gothic: Comedy, Romance and the Rise of 'Happy Gothic'*. London: Bloomsbury.

Stamp, Shelley. [1999] 2000. Moral Coercion, or The National Board of Censorship Ponders the Vice Films. In *Controlling Hollywood: Censorship and Regulation in the Studio Era*, ed. Matthew Bernstein, 41–59. London: The Athlone Press.

Subotsky, Fiona. 2020. *Dracula for Doctors: Medical Facts and Gothic Fantasies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thompson, Kristin. [1985] 2005. From primitive to classical. In *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960*, ed. David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, 246–64. London: Routledge.

Tidwell, Christy, and Carter Soles, eds. 2021. *Fear and Nature: Ecohorror Studies in the Anthropocene*. Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press.

Toulet, Emmanuelle. 1986. Le Cinéma à l'exposition universelle de 1900. *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 33 (April–June): 179–209.

Troy, Maria Holmgren, et al. 2020. *Nordic Gothic*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

van Elferen, Isabella. 2018. Dark Timbre: The Aesthetics of Tone Colour in Goth Music. *Popular Music* 37 (1): 22–39.

Walker, Janet. 2005. *Trauma Cinema: Documenting Incest and the Holocaust*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Walpole, Horace. [1764] 1766. *The Castle of Otranto*: *A Gothic Story*. London: William Bathoe.

Warner, Marina. 2006. *Phantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media into the Twenty-first Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wasson, Sara. 2020. *Transplantation Gothic: Tissue Transfer in Literature, Film, and Medicine*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

White, Dennis L. 1971. Poetics of Horror: More than Meets the Eye. *Cinema Journal* 10 (2, Spring): 1–18.

Williams, Gilda. 2007. Introduction: How Deep Is Your goth? Gothic Art in the Contemporary. In *The Gothic*, ed. Gilda Williams, 12–19. London: Whitechapel Gallery/MIT Press.

Wittern-Keller, Laura. 2008. *Freedom of the Screen: Legal Challenges to State Film Censorship, 1915–1981*. Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky.

Wood, Robin, and Richard Lippe, eds. 1979. *American Nightmare: Essays on the Horror Film*. Toronto: Festival of Festivals.

Yang, Sharon Rose, and Kathleen Healey. 2016. Introduction: Haunted Landscapes and Fearful: Spaces – Expanding Views on the Geography of the Gothic. In *Gothic Landscapes: Changing Eras, Changing Cultures, Changing Anxieties*, ed. Sharon Rose Yang and Kathleen Healey, 1–18. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Zigarovich, Jolene. 2018. *TransGothic in Literature and Culture*. London: Routledge.

CHAPTER 2

Memory as Personal History: Émigrés, Exiles, and Professional Travellers

One of the ways the cinematic Gothic travelled was through the movements of its promoters: the filmmakers, producers, cinematographers, composers, art directors, actors, and screenwriters who left their home countries to work in a different cultural environment, temporarily or permanently, willingly or unwillingly. The list of such film artists and technicians whose sensibilities and stylistic signatures created the cinematic Gothic is long, and the aesthetic reflects the achievements of their close collaboration. While the filmmakers had a particular vision for the film's narrative, thematic, and stylistic elements, this vision would not have been concretised without the likes of Austro-Hungarian cinematographer Franz Planer (*The Face Behind the Mask*, 1941; *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, 1948), German composer Franz Waxman (*Bride of Frankenstein*, 1935; *Rebecca*, 1940; *Sunset Boulevard*, 1950), or German art director Hans Dreier (*Peter Ibbetson*, 1935; *The Uninvited*, 1944; *The Strange Love of Martha Ivers*, 1946; *Night Has a Thousand Eyes,* 1948; *Sunset Boulevard*), among many others, whose stories are too often left untold.

With this caveat, my discussion in this chapter centres on a representative group of filmmakers who contributed to the creation, development, and dissemination of the gothic aesthetic. My decision to concentrate on the filmmakers rather than the cinematographers or art directors, for instance, may appear strange, given my focus on aesthetics. On this, my reasoning follows that of French émigré director Maurice Tourneur who,

J. Jacob Ramalho, *Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film*,
Palgrave Gothic, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-73628-5_2

in a letter to *Variety* in 1923 contesting the power held by film producers, reminds the editors and the readers of the importance of the role of the director, which 'includes a say in the selection and adaptation of the story, the selection of the cast and the building of the sets'; the director, he argues, is the one who ultimately carries 'the full responsibility of the direction of a picture' (20). The notion of 'responsibility' is key, for it escapes the auteurist pitfalls of positing the director as a film's primary creator while also pointing to the fact that directors were afforded a degree of control over their pictures. If not 'unmolested' by industry moguls, to quote Tourneur (20), the directors I discuss here, and their cross-border contributions to the Gothic, were especially notable and impactful. I call these professionals 'travelling directors', a moniker which encompasses three distinct categories: those expatriate filmmakers who left their home countries for economic, social, or professional reasons and thus travelled across national borders as émigrés; the exiles, who were forced out of their homeland due to persecution and war; and the 'professional travellers', to use Tim Bergfelder's expression (1996, 22), who went abroad for a limited period of time in search of new techniques and knowledge with which to inform their professional practice.

My research in this chapter is particularly indebted to, and expands, the studies of Thomas Elsaesser and Ginette Vincendeau, beginning with *Les Cinéastes allemands en France: Les Années Trente* (1983). In subsequent publications, Elsaesser further explores the work of German émigrés in 1930s Paris, who produced 'a cinema of mise en scène and space', 'of abstraction and artifice' (1984, 283), which contrasted with the realist, 'actors' cinema' that prevailed in France (283). Vincendeau (1992, 1988) focuses more closely on the complex exchanges between the German émigrés and the French film industry and analyses the significance of the émigrés to the emergence and development of film noir, a style with which the Gothic often overlaps. The contribution of foreign directors to Hollywood cinema in the first half of the twentieth century (cf. Gemünden 2014; Portuges 2012; Smedley 2011; Cerisuelo 2006; Koepnick 2002; Phillips 1998; Taylor 1983) and to noir productions (cf. Esquenazi 2012; Brook 2009) has been widely studied in English and French-language criticism. In-depth studies that connect the Gothic to the practice of émigrés, exiles, and professional travellers, however, are still outstanding. My considerations here add to these works by probing a range of stylistic qualities, narrative techniques, and technological innovations in cross-border exchanges between the US and different European film industries.

Jean-Loup Bourget contentiously claims that the Germanic contribution to Hollywood filmmaking has been grossly and globally overestimated (2005, 213–43). Regarding the Gothic, I likewise suggest that, although the direct impact of German-speaking directors outweighs that of other filmmakers due to their sheer number, such influence is not necessarily or even mainly 'Germanic', and certainly not Germanic alone. There is a longer and far richer line of influences to be traced, consistent with the Gothic's constitutive hybridity. The impact of French Impressionism or Soviet montage cinema on German filmmakers, for instance, has not been discussed in the context of gothic aesthetics. French Impressionism, in turn, was also marked by foreign sensibilities, one of its most prominent figureheads being Brazilian director Alberto Cavalcanti. It is important to understand the fundamentally diverse ancestry of the cinematic Gothic to avoid the shortcomings of a critique of influence that works only in one direction and focuses on a restricted group of filmmakers or film cycles which are all deemed to convey a uniform experience, attached to a specifically Germanic cultural milieu.

Indeed, the scholarly focus on émigrés and exiles from German-speaking countries to the US has overshadowed the legacy of other figures and artistic phenomena to the evolution of gothic films and has also overlooked or downplayed three important aspects. First, that there were significant migration fluxes prior to 1933, when an ideological criterion (the opposition to Nazism) did not factor in and the 'international language' of silent cinema facilitated the transcultural travelling of film workers, many of whom received invitations from Hollywood due to their notoriety (Bourget 2005, 215), including German directors F.W. Murnau and Paul Leni, Swedish director Victor Sjöström, and Danish director Benjamin Christensen; second, that non-German-language travelling directors contributed substantially to the creation of the Gothic's visual grammar; and third, that many of these journeys were not unidirectional: a high number of travelling directors, such as German exile Max Ophuls, British professional traveller Thorold Dickinson, and British émigré Alfred Hitchcock, worked across more than two national borders. Austro-Hungarian Michael Curtiz is another case in point. After directing a few features in Budapest, he went to Copenhagen for six months to learn about new film techniques at Nordisk Film, a leading European filmmaking company at the time. Once back in Budapest, Curtiz fought in the First World War and later worked in Vienna, Paris, and Berlin, leaving for the United States in 1926 (Robertson 1994, 6–8). From professional traveller to émigré, Curtiz's

career is richly intercultural, and its assumed 'Germanic' edge would perhaps be better characterised as 'European'.

Furthermore, there were also journeys of return. Certain émigrés, including William Dieterle, and exiles, namely Fritz Lang and Jean Renoir, eventually returned home after the war, whereas Ophuls, for instance, left Hollywood to return to a career in France. Finally, there is also the case of foreign directors who virtually began their film careers in the US, as Bourget reminds us (2005, 214), meaning that their outputs and the extent to which their expertise was influenced by European conventions or knowhow differs from others who already had an acclaimed oeuvre behind them. *Wuthering Heights* director, William Wyler, for instance, left native Alsace (then part of the German empire) in 1920, beginning his film career working for Carl Laemmle (his mother's cousin) at the Universal studios in New York (Miller 2013, 27). *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1931) director, Rouben Mamoulian, an Armenian born in today's Georgia (then part of the Russian Empire), escaped the turmoil in the wake of the Russian Revolution by moving to Paris in 1920 and relocating shortly afterwards to London. He then emigrated to the US in 1923, where he embarked on an academic career, produced a series of operas and Broadway plays, and directed his first feature film in 1929 (Luhrssen 2013, 15–16, 23–25). He therefore learned the craft while already away from his homeland.

This chapter contextualises the distinct reactions of specific European film industries, mainly Britain, France, Germany, and Soviet Russia, to the undisputed supremacy of Hollywood in the first two decades of the twentieth century, locating the emergence of the gothic aesthetic in the individual and joint efforts towards innovation on both sides of the Atlantic. The sections that follow sketch the 'complex' and 'multiform' migratory routes of key travelling directors (Bourget 2005, 214), hoping to demonstrate how the filmic Gothic appeared *in dialogue*, that is, as a process of reciprocal knowledge exchange grounded in difference that cannot be claimed by any one national tradition in isolation. I start by conceptualising the Gothic as a product of migration which I examine as exilic on different levels. I hope that, in reframing the aesthetic's early cinematic influences, my work can contribute new insights into the genesis of the cinematic Gothic and its subsequent development. The impact of the travelling directors can be further ascertained comparatively, through an analysis of contemporaneous works by directors who did not cross borders, but whose oeuvre clearly denotes the legacy of those who did. To that effect, at the end of this chapter, I briefly consider Henry Hathaway, Vincente Minnelli, John Harlow,

and Jean Cocteau, whose films showcase direct foreign influences which are then reworked, giving renewed currency to the Gothic and ensuring the aesthetic is ever-evolving and ever-innovative.

The Exilic Aesthetics of the Gothic

'The past life of émigrés is, as we know, annulled', Theodor Adorno tells us in *Minima Moralia*; 'even the past is no longer safe from the present, whose remembrance of it consigns it a second time to oblivion' ([1951] 2005, 46–47). In asking how movements of border crossing and forced migration influenced the gothic works of expatriate filmmakers and other travelling directors, this chapter suggests that the directors' past is not 'annulled' but transposed to the screen through specific film techniques and a diegetic emphasis on re-membering, touch, and journeying. A transnational thinking, that is, the awareness of these movements of travelling and influence across national borders, allows, on the one hand, for a deeper questioning of the role different nations have played through Continental avant-garde movements, art phenomena, inter-European apprenticeships, and the personal experience of cultural exchange in the creation, reinvention, and continued appeal of the gothic aesthetic. On the other hand, it facilitates a complex and nuanced reconsideration of the bonds that develop between memory, mise-en-scène, and certain spatial and temporal environments in the films. It does so by framing the narratives as stories of movements: movements of search, of constant and at times overwhelming journeying through places, times, people, words, music, emotions, and objects; movements that sometimes collide, sometimes go in opposite directions. Teleological movements towards home, love or companionship, stability, status, fame, and fortune, but also movements that become stuck and circular. These movements are never without obstacles, some of which cannot be surmounted—in a way mirroring the hardships of émigré and exile life.

Historically, aesthetically, and narratively, the cinematic Gothic is exilic at its core: it is borne out of transnational dislocations and, through the creation of singular atmospheres reliant on technical and technological innovation, its narratives tell stories of uprootedness, instability, and marginalisation. Exile, in this sense, can be applied to the narratives and their characters, thus exceeding the actual dislocation of individuals who had to abandon their place of origin, like the antifascist refugee filmmakers forced to flee during and in the period leading up to the Second World War.

Exile, then, may be thought of in terms of those (real people and fictional characters) who have experienced spatial and temporal estrangement and exchanged the security of the known place, the home, for an unpredictable future. Wendy Everett and Peter Wagstaff define the trope of exile taking into consideration these different modes of displacement, arguing that it can be understood as a

> metaphor for a range of phenomena concerned with the distinctive, the disjunctive and the alienated. Just as the exiled individual may be robbed of birthright and cultural inheritance, so too she or he may be robbed of selfhood, of the holistic conjunction of mind, spirit and body, through violation or exploitation. The same sense of exile, or alienation, may result for the individual who is marginalised, cast adrift, by the inability or unwillingness to conform to the tyranny of majority opinion. In this light, exile becomes an essentially somatic experience, in which the subject's own body, or image, is appropriated by an external agency. Just as forced migration—mass or otherwise—threatens the autonomy of individuals by defining them in terms of economic value, so the commodification and expropriation of an individual's physical reality deprives her or him of the ability to live on her or his own terms. (2004, x)

The protagonists of the films I examine in this book embody this multifaceted interpretation of exile. Informed by the actual travels of the filmmakers and other film practitioners, the characters appear excluded in some way, adrift, deprived of certain abilities, financial means, rights, or knowledge to be able to live on their 'own terms', often unwilling or unable to conform to an unhomely milieu that does not seem to accommodate them. This leads to their bodies becoming 'sites of travel' (xvii). Stylistically and thematically, the films I discuss all tell stories of alienation, travel, failure, and the need for refuge. They address these concerns explicitly in their visuals, through the framing of lonely, wandering characters excluded from society or otherwise disconnected from it, and through motifs and techniques (from low-key and contrast lighting to the impressionist, and later expressionist, 'unfastened' or 'unchained' camera) that at each moment inscribe into the films intense experiences of mobility, displacement, and otherness.

In this context, key aspects of Hamid Naficy's work on exilic, migratory, and diasporic cinema prove relevant to an analysis of the films of the travelling directors. The framework of an 'accented cinema' proposes a reading of a film's author, narrative, subject matter, and style in terms of deterritorialisation, rupture, and trauma. Naficy describes the accented

cinema in opposition to hegemonic filmmaking practices that dominate mainstream production, where films remain 'without accent' (2001, 4). The classical Hollywood cinema is exemplary in this regard, so it is not surprising that Naficy centres his study on independent and art cinema. He nonetheless asserts that American cinema was, from its inception, 'immigrant, transnational, and American all at the same time' and that, between the two world wars, the émigrés and exiles working in the US 'were not given to a totalizing image of assimilation, and they engaged in various performative strategies of camouflage in their films and self-fashioning in their lives' (7). Building on this idea, I suggest that some of the output of these filmmakers represents more than a 'predecessor' of accented cinema (8) and is instead a first—and highly complex—iteration of it. While accented alternative or independent films constitute a separate category requiring its own investigative approach, I argue that an accented style also emerged in 'the interstices' of dominant production systems, to use Naficy's terminology (4). This is overtly noticeable in the works of exile directors such as Ophuls, who, in their refusal to assimilate to a generic, uniform visual style, eventually left Hollywood. Yet, the core traits of this cinema, as identified by Naficy, feature just as prominently in the productions of the professional travellers and émigrés, which likewise depict the experience of uprootedness through the textured surfaces and plotlines of films that focus on the successive, lonely journeys of their protagonists.

The travelling directors developed a cinema of the in-between, a multivocal cinema of 'conflicted or performed identities' where 'the certainty and wholeness of the body (and the mind) are often put into doubt' (Naficy 2001, 32, 28). Through a systematic emphasis on isolation, entrapment, imprisonment, travelling, and the sensory, namely the need to touch, the films foreground a clear authorial voice and mirror their director's experience of displacement. In effect, the tropes that Naficy identifies in exilic and diasporic filmmaking recur in the works of the travelling directors. Besides the 'inscription of the biographical […] and cinematic (dis)location of the filmmakers', all the productions I discuss in the present book feature 'amphibolic, doubled, crossed, and lost characters; subject matter and themes that involve journeying, […] identity, and displacement; [and] dysphoric, euphoric, […] synaesthetic, liminal, and politicized structures of feeling' (4). Hochscherf, who draws on Naficy too, suggests that the general arguments of his theory apply to genre films (in other words, to conventional or commercial film forms), and that, although themes of loneliness, dislocation, and foreignness have been

represented on the screen outside of émigré or exilic productions, the constancy of such themes in their films 'can hardly be interpreted as coincidental' (2011, 12, 96).

Gábor Gergely (2012) extends Naficy's theory to the pre-1950s Hollywood cinema by exploring the exilic bodies of displaced actors, focusing on three key gothic figures: Conrad Veidt, Peter Lorre, and Béla Lugosi. Exploring a film's cast through the angle of immigration and exile offers significant insights into the stories and histories of these productions. The role of exilic actors was vital to construct the accented qualities of the films, and the nationalities and individual accents of the actors (and the characters they played) appear as especially meaningful to the constitution of the gothic aesthetic itself as 'accented'. Accented cinema, then, does not imply solely thematic preoccupations and coincidences; it is inscribed in the films' style and the actors' bodies.

The authorial presence of exilic filmmaking manifests also in the self-reflective engagement with socio-political critique, namely through the depiction of social exclusion and the instability of personal identity, which allows for a singular approach to reality—one based on the careful use of and consistent adherence to the gothic aesthetic (an aesthetic of the margins and the marginal). Elsaesser's concept of 'double occupancy' helps to elucidate another way of accenting the films. The identities of both the directors and the characters appear as always 'hyphenated or doubly occupied', always 'diasporic in relation to some marker of difference' (2005, 108). Class (Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, 1939, or Lisa in *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, 1948), physical disability (Quasimodo in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 1939, or Jarrod in *House of Wax*, 1953), mental disorder (Paul in *Corridor of Mirrors* or Orlac in *Orlacs Hände*), and otherworldliness (Dracula in Browning's film, Peter and Mary in *Peter Ibbetson*, 1935, or Jennie in *Portrait of Jennie*, 1948) are some of these markers of difference that articulate the fundamentally 'discontinuous state of being' of exilic subjects (Said 2001, 177). Elsaesser draws on the work of émigrés Jacques Derrida and Ludwig Wittgenstein to specify the state of double occupancy, explaining the usefulness of Derrida's concept of 'writing "under erasure", indicating […] the capacity of textual space to let us see both itself and something else', and of Wittgenstein's 'duck-rabbit picture, sign of the co-extensiveness of two perceptions in a single representational space' (2005, 110). The latter, as an uncanny visual depiction of 'co-extensiveness', is an especially powerful representation of the tensions of identity, whereby one is always already other(ed), one identity forever on the verge of overtaking and potentially erasing the other,

but where the two are intrinsic to the whole. These tensions, as harnessed on celluloid, are represented through various kinds of alterity predicated on different forms and flows of movement, which include conflicted acts and types of remembering: a remembering within and outside the self, performed with others, through others, or in spite of others.

My arguing that the émigrés and exiles that concern me here displace or project personal memory onto the bodies and environments of the characters by favouring certain aesthetic devices, themes, and narrative strategies, cohesive in their multifarious manifestations, does not mean to suggest that the films should be interpreted as allegories of émigré or exilic experiences, as that would be reductive and, in certain cases, merely speculative. I therefore do not analyse the films, to borrow from Bourget, 'in naively biographical and nostalgic terms' (1973, 195). 'Nostalgia', in fact, is one of Naficy's components of the accented style (2001, 290), but one which I claim is absent from the gothic aesthetic—at least in the popular understanding of the term, defined in journalist Herb Caen's column as 'memory with the pain removed' (qtd. in Davis 1979, 37) or, as Fred Davis describes it, a 'positively toned' feeling that evokes a lived, lost past 'almost never infused with those sentiments we commonly think of as negative—for example, unhappiness, frustration, despair, hate, shame, abuse' (14, 18). Where nostalgia may be tinged with sadness or melancholia, Davis continues, that 'serves only to heighten the quality of recaptured joy or contentment' (14). In this traditional sense of the term, nostalgia, I argue, is something the gothic films of the travelling directors consciously seem to avoid, a point to which I will return further along.[1]

Biography, in turn, despite its validity and interest as a critical framework, tends to result in somewhat uniform and extrapolatory readings of exile via trauma. Voluntary uprootedness, temporary or long-term, and coerced displacement are not, however, a uniform phenomenon or condition that produces homogenous effects. Writing about the diversity of exilic experience in America, Jean-Michel Palmier notes that exile cannot be described 'in a single image. It horrified or disconcerted [the exiles]. They cursed it or decided to remain. They carried on criticizing its values or adopted them' (2006, 455). Along the same lines, I do not wish to confine diasporic, and especially exilic, filmmaking to a discursive exercise on trauma. Rather, I propose an investigation of the gothic works of refugee directors through an alternative, yet complementary, perspective that reconsiders the experience of migration 'as a creative impetus' (Hochscherf 2011, 12). In this sense, I suggest that the productions of the travelling directors perform a re-envisioning of a communal form of memory on the

screen—one in which the gothic aesthetic and its universal themes and tropes point to what we might describe as 'the affective complexity of subjective and inter-subjective remembering' (Albano 2016, xiv), that is, affective processes of remembering that are intersubjective, reliant upon shared spaces, shared objects, and shared temporalities. In short, memory in these films is not bound by individual trajectories, nostalgic sentiment, biographical accounts, or national borders.

Importantly, my suggestion that the concept of an 'accented cinema' in relation to the Gothic applies to the three categories of travelling directors acknowledges the core differences between these groups and does not wish to suppress the specifically traumatic experience of German-speaking refugees fleeing from fascism. My aim is to contribute to the numerous studies that investigate the specificities of the Germanophone exile cinema by bringing to light co-related experiences of dislocations—other accents, if you will. Likewise, migratory flows and the experiences of immigrant filmmakers cannot be confused with the professional circumstances that led to the temporary transnational trips of many filmmakers. For the purposes of my research, centred as it is on the gothic aesthetic, and thus on finding the commonalities amid the differences, the intersections between the three groups, namely where the characteristics of accented cinema emerge, are emphasised and studied. The travelling directors, as I hope to demonstrate, formed an aesthetically, chronologically, and geographically close-knit network through direct encounters and exchanges. Their interactions marked a turning point in the history of the cinema.

One might ask how much of a change is perceptible from the films shot in one's home country to those directed in another, and if host countries, principally the US and Britain, were more influenced by the foreign directors than the reverse. While these are interesting, much-debated questions in newspapers and film magazines since the late 1910s, in my view, taking a purely comparative approach to this issue risks devolving into a hierarchical comparison between different cinematic traditions and film industries, ignoring that this is, at the core, a question of mutual influence and cultural transmission. In line with Bourget, Marc Cerisuelo, and Elsaesser, I too believe that the works of the travelling directors should be understood as a result of 'hybridisation' (Bourget 2005, 218–219) and are therefore best analysed in the context of processes of 'cultural transfer' (Cerisuelo 2006, 15–16) and 'transatlantic transmission' (Elsaesser 2005, 312). To be sure, the transnational collaboration between cinema professionals worked both ways: its impact was due to the hand of American filmmakers who had worked in Europe or with European directors and to

European directors who had travelled to the United States or elsewhere. The time span between the early 1920s and 1933 in particular should be regarded as a period of 'pan-European interference, transnational cross-fertilisation, and as a time when it is in general difficult to distinguish what is indiginous [*sic*] from what is exotic', Hochscherf explains (2011, 8). In this sense, it is more productive to ask how exactly—and to what extent—the geographical movements of migration weighed in on the formal and technical characteristics deployed in the work of expatriate filmmakers; or, to phrase it differently, how the processes of international travel and the resulting hybridisation with both local and global talent aligned to generate a nuanced yet highly cohesive form of cinematic storytelling.

Early Transnational Exchanges

Before the First World War, David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson remind us, 'the cinema was largely an international affair. Technical and artistic discoveries made in one country were quickly seen and assimilated elsewhere' (2019, 46). The migratory trajectories that took shape all over Europe at the time, and which were made possible by a liberal capitalist world system where people and goods could more freely and easily cross cultural and political borders, intensified during the mid to late 1920s. The early travelling directors were often professional travellers, some of whom would eventually settle in a foreign country, acquiring the status of émigrés. The heightened visuality of the gothic aesthetic owes much to the travels that occurred during these decades, which exhibited a special keenness for subject matter that markedly showcased cinema's origins in fairground attractions and magic shows, as well as its proclivity, from the very beginning, to engage with images of hauntings, death, spiritualism, and necromancy. These films suffused quotidian life with funereal iconography and privileged fantastic, subversive images—images that did not fit the mould—where the incorporeal, the supernatural, and human flaws were highlighted. *Le Manoir du diable*, shot by Georges Méliès in 1896, starts off in the eponymous manor, where a large bat transforms into Mephistopheles. The film features several other motifs that would later become staples of onscreen Gothic, such as ghosts, witches, an imp, and a skeleton. Méliès's trick photography and the fantastical possibilities it generated paved the way for the narrative integration of supernatural attractions. Coincidentally released on the same day as the first gothic novel, *Le Manoir* can be considered the first gothic film, but the aesthetic is still in embryonic form. Importantly, Méliès's ground-breaking experimentations can be traced to London, where he

travelled in 1884 with the purpose of learning English and expanding the family's shoe business. This one-year stay changed the course of his life, for it was in London that Méliès came into contact with pantomime, conjuring, and magic acts. He became a regular presence at the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly and befriended famous British illusionists whose work would guide his cinematic career (Ezra 2000, 7–8). The first gothic film, then, denotes a key British influence.

Actor-turned-director Rupert Julian worked in his home country of New Zealand and in Australia before settling in the United States in 1911. In 1925, he filmed *The Phantom of the Opera* for Universal. Even though they did not get along (and were on non-speaking terms for most of the shooting), Julian had Universal hire leading actor Lon Chaney to star in the film, which proved to be decisive for the film's enduring success. The production was beset with problems and another director was eventually brought in to film a new ending (Havis 2008, 7). Still, Julian is responsible for recognising Chaney's unique talent, and the film's sumptuous sets remain breathtaking. Innovative as well was the use of two-colour Technicolor for specific scenes, including the 'Bal Masqué'. The appearance of colour in an otherwise black-and-white film recalls the later films *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Albert Lewin, 1945) and *Portrait of Jennie*.

Another professional traveller, and shortly thereafter émigré, whose contribution to the Gothic has remained critically overlooked, is Parisian filmmaker Maurice Tourneur, who moved to New York in 1914, at the time of the internationalisation of French film companies and their expansion into the US market. He rapidly became a top director and decided to remain. One of the reasons for his success was the extraordinary pictorial qualities of his films, deriving, in part, from a skilful use of space and architecture. The haunting visual sensibilities his films display 'evoke mood and atmosphere', 'the exotic and the fantastic' (Jacobs 1939, 207). Lewis Jacobs affirms that '[m]uch of the atmosphere, design, and pictorial beauty of pictures today are due indirectly to Tourneur's influence' (209). While this may seem somewhat exaggerated, a closer examination of Tourneur's esteemed reputation in Hollywood and the impact of his films, with their impressionist edge, indeed allow for an enthusiastic reading of their effects. Tourneur's work went on to influence the macabre and esoteric style of, among others, Irish émigré Rex Ingram. The characteristics which had cemented Tourneur's reputation would nonetheless be the ones to end his American career in 1928, when the visual aspects more often than not tended to overwhelm the narrative. In the gothic horror film *La main du diable* (*The Devil's Hand*, 1943), shot in France, Tourneur

merges his imaginative mood compositions with a thoroughly gothic plot involving a cursed, disembodied hand.

Another early French émigré, Robert Florey, served as an assistant on several films in France and the US, to where he moved in 1921. He directed his first film in 1927 and Universal's 'highly distinguished' yet 'generally neglected' *Murders on the Rue Morgue* in 1932. In collaboration with émigré cinematographer Karl Freund, the film's images 'suggest Surrealism as much as Expressionism' (Wood 2004, 120). Florey would later direct *The Face Behind the Mask* (1941), a gothic noir starring exile Peter Lorre, and the gothic horror film *The Beast with Five Fingers* (1946), also with Lorre in the lead role, which consolidated the nefarious connotations of disembodied manual appendages in the popular imagination.

Influential professional traveller Joseph L. Mankiewicz, the American-born son of German-Jewish immigrants, worked as an intertitle translator in Berlin in the 1920s, returning afterwards to the US (Stone 2008, 169), where he would produce Lang's first American picture *Fury* (1936). Mankiewicz worked as a screenwriter and a producer. His directorial career evidences his exposure to expressionist and impressionist films, which he combines with a literate approach to filmmaking and a penchant for the epistolary. In 1946 and 1947, respectively, he filmed the Romantic gothic melodramas *Dragonwyck*, which I explore in Chap. 8, and *The Ghost and Mrs Muir*. The latter's oneiric, melancholy Romanticism displays a clear impressionist influence, namely in the use of superimpositions to capture the ghost of Captain Gregg. Vincent Amiel describes the story in exilic terms, as taking place not just by the sea but at the edge of the world, with Lucy Muir caught between the opposing tides of 'desire and eternity, youth and death' in a film that 'exudes unparalleled poetry' (117). Amiel notices a curious detail in Mankiewicz's direction: that only in the first third of the film, when Lucy meets the captain, are there subjective point-of-view shots. For the remainder of the film, the camera remains detached, observant, recording the mundane unfolding of events in a way that is surprisingly unmelodramatic or sentimental; especially telling in this regard is the final section, in which the camera depicts Lucy's aging from afar, her presence hardly more than a phantom-like silhouette underlying the mercilessness of time's passing and anticipating the much-awaited return of the ghost (120–124).

The instability of the Danish film industry led Carl Theodor Dreyer to leave his native Denmark and, between 1920 and 1926, he directed seven films in five countries (Bordwell 1981, 9–17). He shot *Vampyr* in France in 1930 (released in 1932) after visiting England in 1929 to study sound

technology. Following in Griffith's footsteps, Dreyer was one of the first filmmakers to fully exploit the power of the close-up, whose haptic, 'lyrical', and 'affective' qualities (Balázs 1952, 56; Deleuze [1986] 2005, 109–111) are recurringly mobilised for dramatic effect in the gothic aesthetic.

American director, actor, and screenwriter Tod Browning exemplifies a distinct type of travelling director; one who did not travel across national borders, but across state lines: at the end of the nineteenth century, he ran away from home to join a circus, with which he toured extensively (Herzogenrath 2008, 8). His many gothic horror milestones are poignantly exilic to the core, often viscerally so, representing marginal, misguided, tortured characters who upset the orderly course of normative society. Gergely considers *Dracula* (1931), for instance, 'one of the most important explorations of exile in Hollywood cinema' (2012, 10). Browning wrote most of his scripts, imbuing them with a bitter irony that comes across cinematically, through the pace of the films, the use of low-key and contrast lighting, the acting, and the movement packed in each scene, which makes the camera seem more mobile than it often is. His 'propensity for dealing with the world of people warped in mind and body' (Jacobs 1939, 382) led to Browning himself acquiring a peripheral, exilic status in the US and abroad, especially following the release of his most controversial film, *Freaks* (1932). Anticipating the latter's realist aesthetics, circus setting (a microcosm for the real world), and the theme of tormented love, loss, and murderous revenge is Browning's *The Unknown* (1927), which I analyse in Chap. 4. It features a criminal who performs as 'Alonzo the armless' in a circus to hide from the police: an exilic, anti-heroic figure that typifies Browning's protagonists as tragic loners bent on their own undoing.

This brief overview of early travels provides a starting point for a discussion of the gothic aesthetic as thoroughly multi-accented. In what follows, I explore in more depth the workings of different industries and the intricacies of specific avant-gardes during the first decades of the twentieth century to better understand how the aesthetic developed across many national borders.

British Émigrés and the British Film Industry

The possibilities of technical and artistic experimentation, still dormant in the 'impoverished and low-profile' British film industry during the first two decades of the twentieth century (Higson 1999, 275), enjoyed a steady development from the mid-1920s. At the time, Hollywood

dominated the international film market unchallenged, with American films accounting for approximately 95 per cent of the British market share (Guback 1969, 8). This led to a protectionist quota legislation, implemented by the Cinematograph Films Act of 1927, aimed at increasing the production and exhibition of domestic films. More funding for national productions prompted the internationalisation of British cinema and made England significantly more attractive for foreign workers, who were looking to perfect their craft. These included Dreyer, as mentioned, and Soviet theorist and filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein. The studios were rapidly reorganised as vertically integrated companies and started to invest in European co-productions and co-funding partnerships. As Andrew Higson explains, during the mid to late 1920s, different European nation-states joined efforts to create a transnational film infrastructure based on mutual cooperation, and during this period, 'key creative personnel […] frequently moved across national borders, and between companies in different countries' (2010, 71). One of Britain's most important partners was Germany's UFA (Universum Film-Aktien Gesellschaft), which ensured an extensive collaboration and traffic of film personnel, technical expertise, and artistic talent between England and Weimar Germany. Alfred Hitchcock, who got his start in film working in Germany in 1924, was one of many to benefit from such collaborations. In 1939, he would move to American soil to begin production on *Rebecca* (Schroeder 2012, 33).

In the 1930s and 1940s, British film sought to distinguish itself from the 'escapist' American cinema by privileging documentary filmmaking (Higson 1986, 74). Alongside this tradition, however, a penchant for the fantastic made its way into the productions of several British directors, namely Powell and Pressburger and Thorold Dickinson, whom Philip Horne and Peter Swaab describe as being 'among the most seriously international of filmmakers' (2008, 4). Deeply influenced by European, non-British films, Dickinson opted for a career in film following a screening of Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (1924), which had a profound impact on him (37, 40). As Dickinson points out, at the time, '[i]t was cheaper to make occasional films abroad. Hitchcock was working in Berlin and George [Pearson] chose Paris' ([1969] 2008, 40). Dickinson followed the latter's footsteps and left native England to work in Paris in the 1920s, where he witnessed French Impressionist filmmaker and critic Abel Gance shooting *Napoléon* (1927) (Horne and Swaab 2008, 4). Pearson, a friend and mentor of Dickinson's, later told him that 'the easiest way to get a job in England is to come back from America' (qtd. in Sainsbury 1940, 67). Dickinson took those words to heart and, from September to November

1929, stayed in New York to visit the studios and learn about the latest developments in film techniques, specifically sound technologies (Horne and Swaab 2008, 8, 44). The 1930s are punctuated by transcultural encounters: in 1930, Dickinson met Sergei Eisenstein at the Film Society of London; in 1936, he travelled to West Africa to do location shooting for his directorial debut, *The High Command* (1937) and, upon his return in 1937, integrated a delegation of his trade union, the Association of Cine-Technicians (A.C.T.), to the Soviet Union. Over the course of four weeks, he visited Mosfilm, learned about the primacy of the cinema to Soviet culture, and reencountered a profoundly changed Eisenstein (8–10). Dickinson would later be responsible for two key British gothic films: *Gaslight* (1940) which, alongside Hitchcock's *Rebecca*, initiated the cycle of female gothic melodramas, and *The Queen of Spades* (1949), which composes a fiercely moving tale of love, death, and greed. Both films star German émigré Anton Walbrook. Martin Scorsese discovers in Dickinson's 'emotional detail[s]' a touch of Marcel Carné and Jean Renoir, stressing also the 'nervous energy' that runs through his pictures yet never devolves into a 'superficial frightfest' (Horne 2008, 23–26). Lauding *The Queen of Spades* as a masterpiece, Scorsese highlights Georges Auric's score and Dickinson's 'sense of sound', as well as his 'creative use of clutter' in the film (26–27), stressing the significance of objects and mise-en-scène to the picture's gothic effects.

From the mid-1930s, the British film industry was thoroughly international, with the host nation's culture interacting, and often blending, with the national cultures of foreign directors. Writing in 1937, H. Chevalier comments on the many artists and technicians who came to work in Britain at the time, explaining that the sudden development of the industry led studios to draw 'on outside sources, chiefly Hollywood, although the internal national troubles in Germany made available other highly-qualified technicians' (50). The A.C.T. vehemently tried to counteract the employment of increasing numbers of foreign workers and looked for embargos on non-British professionals, 'urging war against the retention of foreigners' (50). The A.C.T.'s adopted policy and pressure on the Ministry of Labour demonstrates that the fall of the Weimar Republic in 1933, which would see the English capital becoming 'one of the refugee centres of the Nazi-enforced diaspora' (Hochscherf 2011, 2), did not mark the beginning of the migratory routes of the expatriate film artists to the UK, as often stated, but rather intensified processes of exchange already in place. Germanophone personnel's impact on the British film industry can be seen in structural changes to the filmmaking process, most notably in the

cooperation within production crews and the idea of 'film as a truly collaborative medium' (Hochscherf 2011, 77). In addition, they promoted training schemes, effectively importing the apprenticeship system prevalent in German and Austrian studios, thereby changing the working methods and the environment in British studios (78).

British filmmakers, in turn, influenced American cinema. The 'assiduous cherry-picking by Hollywood of many European talents' (Forshaw 2013, 22) led to the emigration of British professionals. In addition to Hitchcock, a pivotal example is James Whale. Held captive by the Germans in a war camp during the First World War, he became involved in staging plays for his fellow prisoners (Watson 2009, 5). Following the end of the conflict, he pursued acting and set designing and found success as a theatre director, which earned him the attention of Hollywood producers. He started at Universal Pictures in 1930 and completed *Frankenstein* the following year, reportedly citing *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* as a major source of inspiration for the film (Spadoni 2007, 159). *Frankenstein*, Barry Forshaw explains, 'shaped Gothic cinema for years to come. Whale [...] made use of a weighty cadre of British acting talent, which unmistakably informs the character of his work' (2013, 22). In its 'macabre wit', *Frankenstein* discloses 'a distinctly British black humour', while a British literary sensibility suffuses its sequel, *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), right from the prologue depicting the famous 1816 holiday in Lake Geneva (22–23). Whale specialised in gothic horror productions, which also include *The Old Dark House* (1932), whose travelling misfits display comic and queer overtones, and *The Invisible Man* (1933), which denounces the English class system (23).

Whale's countryman, émigré Lewis Allen, further strengthened the presence of English Gothic in Hollywood. He left England to direct Broadway plays and, in 1941, was invited to work at Paramount, subject to a six-month apprenticeship. His first American film, the lyrical ghost story *The Uninvited* (1944), which was followed by the gothic noir *The Unseen* (1945), tells the story of two siblings from London who settle in a haunted house on the Cornish coast, and was ground-breaking for its suggestive atmosphere and understated, serious tone.

French Impressionism and *Photogénie*

Film production in Europe grew rapidly in the first decade of the twentieth century, when domestic markets were more relevant and profitable than the transatlantic trade in films (Guback 1969, 8). Hollywood was at

the forefront of narrative cinema, developing such techniques as continuity editing and effectively inventing conventional filmic storytelling as we know it today. From the 1910s, the revolution of film techniques and modes of storytelling in the US was widely imported and appropriated by international directors. Some, immersed as they were in European thought currents and the narrative avant-garde, made their connection to such intellectual and aesthetic developments clear in their productions, in turn differentiating them from mainstream American productions. These movements towards the creation of distinctive national cinemas were fast-tracked when the war interrupted the global circulation and consumption of films.

Following the onset of the Great War, a new generation of French film critics and directors sought to study the cinema and explore alternative filmmaking practices, giving rise to a phenomenon that came to be known as 'Impressionism'. Its importance to the development of the Gothic as it emerges in the films of the travelling directors cannot be overestimated. The technical innovation of the camerawork, inclusive of optical tricks in the Meliesian tradition, and a freely roaming camera that conveys a character's viewpoint, thoughts, memories, fantasies, or dreams would directly influence German expressionist filmmakers, who popularised the latter creative technique in the 1920s and, as Thompson remarks, are usually credited with its invention, even today (2005, 119).

'The film camera went to America from Europe'; 'film art nevertheless c[a]me from America to Europe', Béla Balázs writes (1952, 48). Balázs attributes the pioneering role of Hollywood over Paris to the capitalist ideology that thrived in a 'traditionless' America, where the 'cultural vacuum of Hollywood' could breed a brand-new bourgeois art form that erased the classical principle of European aesthetics—the fundamental distance between spectator and artwork (48–51). French cinemas were invaded by American films from late 1915 to early 1916, reigniting the interest and investment in writing on the cinema which, despite remaining prolific, had somewhat slowed down after the beginning of the war, when the French film industry came to a halt (Abel 1988, 95). The French intellectual elite and the general public consumed and admired American productions which, by 1917, took up over 50 per cent of the exhibition market (Bordwell and Thompson 2019, 52). In the meantime, the young French directors felt that national productions lagged severely behind the engaging films arriving from Hollywood and set out to define film as an art form, advocating for the exploration of medium-specific artistic

potentialities. The reliance on theatre techniques, for example, was hailed as detrimental to the delineation of the cinema's uniqueness, especially where camera placement and acting were concerned (Abel 1988, 102–103).

In 1910s and 1920s France, the sustained critical engagement of the intellectual elite (inclusive of scholars, writers, artists, and philosophers) with the cinema produced a plethora of relevant theories on the emergent art form. French writing on the cinema concentrated on aesthetic discussions around its status as art and its entertainment value, rather than on the role of the medium as a new technology or scientific instrument (Abel 1988, 97), as Soviet filmmakers would later do. Instead of abandoning topics and emotional expression dear to French sensibilities to dynamise the industry and appeal to Anglo-Saxon audiences, as Charles Pathé suggested (104), critics multiplied their efforts in dissecting the practice—the art—of narrative filmmaking, expounding on its specificities and primary distinctive qualities. To some, including Pathé, Henri Diamant-Berger, and Emile Vuillermoz, the *auteur* was the screenwriter; to others, such as Louis Delluc, it was the filmmaker (103). There seemed to be a consensus around 'a generally held classical French attitude of moderation and balance' that stood opposed 'to a perceived sense of American exuberance and disorder' (104). Richard Abel surveys the technical aspects of American films that most piqued the interest of French critics: Diamant-Berger criticised 'the overuse of close-ups', Colette the overreliance on the shot/reverse shot, and Armand Bour the pace of parallel editing (104). The feverish production of critical thought on the cinema in film magazines, newspapers, books, and *ciné-clubs* during the teens and twenties, along with the production of French films by critics-turned-directors, meant that their conceptualisation of the cinema as an art form, and the need to support a French cinema that was not a mere copy of its American counterpart, influenced not just a generation of French filmmakers, but also those who came to France to apprentice and the cinephiles abroad who consumed the films.

'The twenties was a time of aesthetic experimentation for European cinema', Maureen Turim asserts ([1989] 2014, 61), and the widespread passion for the cinema 'encouraged an emerging [and transnational] intellectual cinephilia' (Higson 2010, 70). The influence of Impressionism, philosophical currents, and film theories were manifest in new approaches to film practice. Such preoccupations with memory, I argue, are inscribed in the films' aesthetics, notably via flashbacks and the camera's rapport with objects.

On this, Vuillermoz's thinking is especially significant for the emphasis it places on uncovering 'the spirit of things' (Abel 1988, 108). It is through the camera's exploration of things, and its aestheticisation of the prosaic, that the subjective and the mnemonic are revealed (Aitken 2001, 82). Like a poet, the filmmaker 'transforms, recreates, and transfigures nature, according to his emotional state […] [and] concentrates all the force of feeling or thought onto an inanimate object', Vuillermoz argues (Abel 1988, 108). The fierceness of nature frames the romantic aestheticisation of misery in Jean Renoir's short film, *La Petite Marchande d'allumettes* (The Little Match Girl, 1928), based on Hans Christian Andersen's 1845 fairy tale. The son of Impressionist painter Auguste Renoir, and later émigré in the US, Renoir gave the film a realist, dramatic tone that clashes with the fleeting moments of fantasy that occur when the young woman collapses in the snow. A striking commentary on poverty and indifference, the film offers a hallucinatory, toyland dream of love, loss, and death, which takes over the heroine as the blistering cold and the falling snow envelop her dying body, fusing sur/realist oneirism in a way that has rarely transpired in other national traditions. The depiction of a character's delusional reveries in such a way that reality, memory, imagination, and the sublime force of nature mix and meld became key to the aesthetic, as apparent in *Wuthering Heights* and *Portrait of Jennie*.

Aligned with the Romantic and Gothic tradition of investing nature with meaning, Delluc, in turn, 'celebrate[d] the revelatory description of natural landscapes […] for having a significance of their own as well as providing the generative matrix out of which an original story could evolve' (Abel 1988, 109). Delluc was drawn to the simpler narrative lines and tonal nuances of Scandinavian productions, namely those of Swedish actor-director Victor Sjöström, who combined shooting on location and in sets. Jim Tully states that Sjöström's style was much praised by émigrés Maurice Tourneur, Chaplin, and Ernst Lubitsch (qtd. in Petrie 2002, 134). It was an expressive, naturalistic, and markedly grim style that presented fatalistic narratives in which the landscapes or interior sets often mirrored the inner turmoil and desperate actions of the characters. Delluc praises the 'truthfulness' of Sjöström's cinematography, its 'austere ugliness and […] acute lyricism' ([1919] 1988b, 188). Sjöström played a key role in the development of the gothic aesthetic, not only through his impact on French impressionist filmmakers, but on European and American directors more broadly. His innovative use of the flashback, a recurring technique in gothic melodramas, 'became highly influential in

European cinema of the 1920s' (Bordwell and Thompson 2019, 56), as did his elaborate in-camera special effects, which include the ghostly superimpositions in *The Phantom Carriage* (1921). American writer-turned-producer/director Albert Lewin, who decided to enter films after seeing *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (Felleman 1995, 387), worked with Sjöström, whose influential 'austere ugliness' can be perceived in Lewin's gothic films, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945) and *The Private Affairs of Bel Ami* (1947), marked by the exotic, the odd, artful décor, and *fin-de-siècle* moral decadence. Sjöström's success was such that he emigrated to the US in 1923 to work for Samuel Goldwyn (Florin 2013, 27). The first film he completed after his arrival, under the name Victor Seastrom, was the highly profitable and critically successful *He Who Gets Slapped* (1924), a gothic revenge drama set in a circus that displays the same identifying traits of his earlier films, namely the expressive realism, restrained performances, and fatal misfortune of the title character.

Sjöström's films demonstrated that realism and stylisation could productively co-exist, a point Balázs echoes: 'For the truth […] resident in nature can be reproduced not merely by a servile imitation of nature but even more faithfully by a stylization which exaggerates and stresses certain points. The natural presentation may perhaps reproduce reality, but the stylized image expresses the truth' (1952, 270). Delluc's thinking on the cinema's portentous capabilities likewise brings together French Impressionist painting and French Realist fiction, upholding that while the real (the natural) grounds cinematographic representation, the camera and the mise-en-scène can stylise it, highlighting the poetry of a pregnant atmosphere where '"silent things" in isolation bec[o]me radiantly alive' (Abel 1988, 109). Cinematic art, he postulates, should become 'the fairy-land [*la féerie*] of the imagination' (1920, 100).

The work of Brazilian-born émigré Alberto Cavalcanti, 'arguably the greatest expatriate influence on [British] national cinema', is singularly complex in this regard (James 2010). Invited by Marcel L'Herbier to work as a production designer, Cavalcanti became a prominent figure with the Impressionists. He directed his first film, an experimental documentary, in 1926, moving to England in 1933, where he was responsible for two segments ('Christmas Party' and 'The Ventriloquist's Dummy') of Ealing's gothic horror portmanteau film *Dead of Night* (1945). The film showcases Cavalcanti's impressionist and realist roots, namely in the uncanny way he makes 'silent things', including a dummy, come alive. Rather than 'radiantly', though, he exposes the haunting qualities of the

object, offering a disturbing and mordant commentary on the breakdown of sanity, hinting at the emotional explosions of Expressionism.

Delluc uses the term '*photogénie*' to describe the impressionist quality the cinema bestows upon reality, mythologising the ordinary with 'impressions of evanescent eternal beauty' and, in so doing, making the spectator see the world anew ([1917] 1988a, 137). This idea is central to the development of the gothic aesthetic, which suffuses the surfaces of the real with a sublime feel that defamiliarises habitual perceptions. Filmmaker Germaine Dulac further clarifies this relationship between reality, aesthetics, and cinematic technique by connecting it with affect. She claims that '[t]he Seventh Art does not stop at the stylization of an impression as sculpture and painting do. It augments a fact by grafting a feeling onto it by means of a technique that is proper to it' ([1924] 1988 306). *Photogénie*, in this sense, concerns productions where the objective world 'is subsumed in a subjective response to it' (Turim [1989] 2014, 67). A truly 'cinegraphic language', Vuillermoz summarises, emerges out of a skilful, artistic editing, which constitutes 'the moment of inspiration, of personal interpretation, of life "perceived through a temperament". This is the moment of "style"', the moment when the artist manipulates the rhythm of the images and thereby shapes affect: the artist 'ration[s] out the visual impressions and psychological emotions, creating a powerful dramatic "progression", a decrescendo, a surge, a diversion' ([1920] 1988, 225–226). The idea of a visual rhythm that elicits emotions through montage is exceedingly visible in the films of Hitchcock, for example. Such poetic and affective visual rhythms can also be achieved beyond montage, through the dexterity of camera movement within a single take, as in the films of exile Max Ophuls.

On a par with rhythm, the Impressionists conveyed emotion and subjectivity through the inclusion of mental images in the diegesis, such as the match girl's dying dream in Renoir's film. These are noticeable as well in the 1928 Edgar Allan Poe adaptation *La Chute de la maison Usher*, directed by émigré filmmaker and theorist Jean Epstein. Born in Warsaw (then part of the Russian Empire), Epstein did translation and editing for Auguste Lumière and was influenced by the Chaplin comedies he watched in London in 1915 before they premiered in France (Wall-Romana 2013, 5). *La Chute* uses cinematic techniques that draw on Impressionism, specifically slow motion, subjective point-of-view shots, and superimposition. To articulate the psychological traits of the characters and convey an atmosphere of uncertainty and terror, Epstein's narrative is acutely sensorial

(with hypersensitive characters and others with dulled senses) and introduces explicit, visual references to other Poe stories: 'Ligeia' (1838), 'The Pit and the Pendulum' (1842), and 'The Oval Portrait' (1842), heightening the significance of objects, namely portraits, through intertextuality and intermediality. Epstein's camera intervenes in the real and 'supplement[s] ordinary human perception' by 'present[ing] a world transformed rather than familiar' (Gunning 2012, 18–19). The scene of Madeline's resurrection is especially striking: emerging from the past in a full shot, shrouded in smoke and white tulle tousled by violent wind gusts, she embodies a prototypical memory-image, intensely ghostly and haptic, the camera lingering on her flowy veil, which fills the screen in a disturbing dance of textures. The camera accesses the temporality and inner movements contained in the objects it films and thereby accesses memory (Lundemo 2012, 212–213). The active presence of memory in that enclosed space is so overpowering that the whole edifice eventually collapses under its weight.

La Chute translates the preoccupation with memory and different types of recall that pervaded French *cafés* and *ciné-clubs*. Bergson's *Matter and Memory* (1896) and Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913–1927) dominated intellectual debates on the topic. As Turim notes, the 'rendering of memory processes can be understood in the context of French inquiry into *l'esprit*—the intellectual and emotional functioning of the mind'—in vogue at the time ([1989] 2014, 64). These discourses on memory coalesced with Impressionism, Surrealism, Symbolism, Freudian psychoanalysis, and Modernism, and developed in the context of a general counter-reaction to commercial, mainly Hollywood, filmmaking paradigms (67; Abel 1988, xvii).

Memory-images, inclusive of dreams and flashbacks, are hallmarks of the Gothic. In her comprehensive study of the flashback, Turim states that '[t]heories of subjectivity and memory and the quest for a cinematic equivalent to the surging of memory images […] color the form of flashbacks in [European] avant-garde movements', suggesting that the presence of émigré directors in Hollywood, especially from the end of the silent period, played a key role in the deployment of this device to explore character psychology while serving as a conscious, unitary retelling of the past ([1989] 2014, 54). Naficy coincidentally lists retrospectiveness and flashbacks as constitutive components of the accented style (2001, 291). The impressionist flashback operates through a poetic ambiguity and ironic displacement that distances these productions from American

sentimental symbolism, epitomised in D.W. Griffith's films (76). Delluc and Epstein use the flashback as a philosophical and psychological focalisation device to compose Bergsonian and Proustian memory-images that render the complexities of human consciousness visible through montage, framing, and tone (79). It is no wonder, then, that Impressionism privileges a sombre mood of *ennui* and melancholy alongside a sense of anguish that stems from the grip of the past on the present—a familiar melodramatic and gothic trope.

Epstein expanded the concept of the photogenic to encompass the quasi-mystical, revelatory, and haptic properties of the cinematic image. Based on a distrust of human vision and on a wish to circumvent ocular-centric approaches to film, the cinema's mission, Epstein advocates, is to lay bare that which normally remains invisible to the unaided eye. Slow motion, close-ups, and other techniques foreground the cinema's 'revelationist' capacity (its uncovering of the real), for they do not reproduce human sight (Turvey 2008, 3–4). The poetic, revelatory quality of impressionist films (sometimes to the detriment of narrative sophistication, as with Maurice Tourneur) is one of the most lasting contributions of this avant-garde phenomenon to the Gothic, and is visible in such films as *Peter Ibbetson*, *La Belle et la Bête*, and *The Ghost and Mrs Muir*.

In the hands of a skilled poet-filmmaker, the object in close-up has 'a temperament, habits, memories, a will, a soul'; it becomes a character (Epstein [1924] 2012, 296). The lighting of objects, for instance, was carefully considered 'to enhance their photogénie as much as possible' (Bordwell and Thompson 2019, 82). Elsewhere, I have analysed how portraits and dolls (Ramalho 2017, 2020) come alive and are re-signified by the camera. In Chaps. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, I explore instead how photographs, gloves, rings, and pianos, become sites of memory and mystery through a tactile aesthetic which, in the tradition of Vuillermoz and the *photogénie* of Delluc, Dulac, and Epstein, mythologises the real without erasing its realness. The camera both reproduces and manipulates the profilmic, realising at once the legacies of realist Lumière and illusionist Méliès. This core attribute was maintained as the gothic aesthetic travelled, and we can find it in the persistent combination of the fantastic and the realist in the films of the travelling directors. The blurring of reality and confabulation (or psychosis) adds a layer of uncanniness to the stories, as illustrated by Cavalcanti's animation of the inanimate in 'The Ventriloquist's Dummy', in which Hugo, the dummy, has apparently

become endowed with an existence of his own, driving a talented ventriloquist to attempted murder.

Jacques Tourneur's American films are exemplary in their attention to the *photogénie* of objects. In 1914, he travelled to the US with his father, Maurice Tourneur, and worked as a script clerk in several of his films, including one shot in Tahiti. Between 1930 and 1934, upon returning to France, he worked as an assistant director and/or editor in all his father's films, during which time he also directed his first four features (Fujiwara 1998, 22). In 1934, he landed a contract at MGM, switching to RKO in 1942. Martin Scorsese describes Tourneur as 'an artist of atmospheres', claiming that

> each of his films boasts a distinct atmosphere, with a profound sensitivity to light and shadow, and a very unusual relationship between characters and environment—the way people move through space in Tourneur movies, the way they simply handle objects, is always special, different from other films. (1998, xi)

Tourneur's apprenticeship with his father in France taught him about managing light and thus controlling darkness. The mastery of shadows Tourneur's films display brings French Impressionism to bear on American noir. The attention to mood composition in *Cat People* (1942), for instance, is accomplished via the use of light sources, such as streetlamps, which, combined with the subtleness of the acting, convey Tourneur's characteristic atmospheric style. The concealment of horror by engulfing key moments in shadows, shielding them from the audience's vision, recalls Dreyer's *Vampyr* and Browning's *Dracula*, but the ingenious, continuous dance Tourneur enacts with the darkness heightens the suspense in a stylised way that the more realist gothic horror of Dreyer and Browning did not.

In 1918, Louis Aragon adds to the theorisation of *photogénie* with a discussion of *décor* as the locus of modern beauty, 'endow[ing] with a poetic value that which does not yet possess it' and 'willfully restrict[ing] the field of vision so as to intensify expression' (2000, 52). To him, filmmakers are *metteurs en scène* who should be poets, philosophers, and attentive spectators, too (52). Focusing on the figuration and perception of objects in film, he advances that 'screen objects that were a few moments ago sticks of furniture or books of cloakroom tickets are transformed to the point where they take on menacing and enigmatic meanings' (52).

Rather than a mimetic representation of life, he suggests an 'audacious aesthetic' for the cinema that eschews the limitations of theatre and photography (53). Tellingly, Aragon turns to the Gothic to support his point about the evocative power of décor and objects, advocating that, before watching certain films, one should read Poe's 'The Philosophy of Furniture' (1840), a somewhat satirical critique of American interior decoration, and *The Adventures of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838), a creative and vividly grim collage and appropriation of nautical tales (52). Building on gothic literature's attention to the décor as crucial to the creation of an atmosphere of sublimity, the films use the camera to generate affective environments that anchor the narratives. This is clear in Cocteau's living castle in *La Belle et la Bête* or the object-laden abodes in *The Cat and the Canary* (Leni, 1927), *Rebecca*, *Corridor of Mirrors*, and *The Queen of Spades*. The gothic mise-en-scène, as Barry Curtis asserts, is often disconcerting, complex, 'often irrational, obscured and densely decorated with texts, statuary and images' (2008, 86), which attests to the intrusive presence of the profilmic space, turning the décor from the merely decorative to a constitutive element of the film's storytelling.

Expressionism and the German-Speaking Émigrés

The cinematic tradition that most contributed to elevating the importance of the décor to filmic storytelling was German Expressionism. In fact, while innovative camerawork constituted the core formal trait of French Impressionism, German Expressionism stands out primarily for its sophisticated use of the mise-en-scène (Bordwell and Thompson 2019, 90). Various devices stress the mise-en-scène's overt plasticity: elongated shadows produced through chiaroscuro; stylised, canted angles; distorted, non-realistic sets; and recurring close-ups, often of objects and body parts. These confer a distinct and readily identifiable feel to the images, effectively generating a new take on film language. An expressionist mise-en-scène promotes a particular spatial use of the human body, often privileging a geometric framing that places characters against unusually shaped objects, door frames, and windows. The mobile human figure sometimes merges with the sets and is literally and figuratively overshadowed by the décor. According to Italian film theoretician and émigré Ricciotto Canudo, 'painters and *écranistes* have collaborated to attain the living atmosphere of dream', so that '"exceptional" characters sometimes appear glued to the décor' ([1923] 1988, 294). It results that the graphic composition of

individual shots is, in itself, expressive—even in the absence of a human element. The narrative and the rebellious visuality of the shots are thus not secondary to an actor's performance. *Caligari*'s leading actor, German exile Conrad Veidt, who starred in other gothic films, including *Orlacs Hände*, Austrian émigré Henrik Galeen's *The Student of Prague* (1926), and Leni's *The Man Who Laughs* (1928), once wrote 'no role is a good role which gives the actor *too much* prominence' (Cole 1940, 11). Expressionist productions establish an organic link between body, décor, framing, lighting, and plot, as when, in *Caligari*, Veidt 'glides on tiptoe along a wall, his extended hand skimming its surface' (Bordwell and Thompson 2019, 92). A certain overacting or theatricality of carefully made-up faces and costumed bodies reflects as well the interest in the language of gesture and facial expression apparent in Weimar film theory, which results in the privileging of non-intrusive editing techniques (Aitken 2001, 16–17). The plot, then, unfolds at a slower pace than the French impressionist productions, with their continued experimentation with optical effects and montage.

Curtis attributes the visual 'distinctiveness' of German films to 'an attempt at product differentiation', that is, to an effort 'to better compete with the well-established French and American cinemas' (2008, 157). Indeed, cinematic Expressionism developed during and immediately after the Great War due to the isolation of the German market from the rest of the world. For the first two years of the war, Germany continued to import films, namely from Denmark, but in 1916, the government banned foreign productions from theatres, which increased the demand for more domestic films and thereby stimulated the development of the national market (Bordwell and Thompson 2019, 47). The ban was not lifted until 31 December 1920 (86). Expressionism brought together 'high art' and popular entertainment, which appealed to a mainstream audience and made the style especially prone to migration from the Old Continent to the New World. From 1918 to the fall of the Weimar Republic in 1933, German cinema was surpassed only by Hollywood in 'technical sophistication and world influence' (86). While the French film industry was depleted, with government support having been redirected to the war effort, the German cinema prospered, and practitioners were quick to adopt the techniques of American films, such as continuity editing, and promptly adapted to the latest technological advancements coming in from Hollywood during the 1920s, namely by building larger, state-of-the-art studios and utilising artificial lighting equipment. In addition to

the American influence, Freund, E.A. Dupont, Murnau, Lang, and other German-speaking travelling directors followed in the footsteps of Epstein and other impressionist filmmakers and experimented with, developed, and internationalised what became known as the '*entfesselte Kamera*', the 'unfastened camera', liberated from the tripod, and popularised in later decades by Ophuls and Hitchcock.

The exponents of German Expressionism in film, from Wiene's *Caligari* to Paul Wegener and Galeen's *The Golem: How He Came into the World* (1920), Murnau's *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Terror* (1922), Lang's *Dr Mabuse: The Gambler* (1922), and Leni's *Waxworks* (1924), all denote a gothic aesthetic that transpires not just in the mise-en-scène and acting, but in the themes and technical devices deployed to 'mak[e] the invisible visible' and 'manifest[…] the world inside in the world outside' (Nelson 2001, 203). The drive to represent the world subjectively (that is, as one experiences it through a combination of intellectual faculties, memory, imagination, and sensory perception, rather than how it is apprehended by one's senses) adds a rather more frightening and disturbing layer to the theories and films of the French Impressionists, revealing new conceptual and aesthetic possibilities for the portrayal of the characters and their anguished struggles against themselves and their circumstances. The expressionist movement's matrix is therefore characterised by exaggeration and the grotesque. The visual distortions mirror the blurring or collapse of the boundaries between subject and object, and between the internal (subjective) world and the external (objective) natural or human-made environment, leading to a sinister way of apprehending and representing inner and outer reality.

Compared to other European avant-garde phenomena, German Expressionism travelled faster, more intensely, and more widely. As Victoria Nelson explains, '[f]or decades after the 1920s, ripples from the Expressionist pond continued to spread throughout Europe and across the Atlantic' (2001, 213). Despite the widespread anti-German sentiment in the aftermath of the First World War, expressionist films had an immediate impact abroad, including in France, where following a massively successful screening of *Caligari* arranged by Delluc in 1921, the film opened in Paris in April 1922. Writing at the time, Lionel Landry states that 'enthusiasm [for *Caligari*] is intense' ([1922] 1988, 268), and the film was much discussed in the press: praised by Vuillermoz and Canudo, it was vilified by Cendrars for its gimmicky pictorial distortions, sentimentalism, and for being uncinematic, '[h]ybrid, hysterical, pernicious' ([1922] 1988, 271).

The German studios suffered successive setbacks from the mid-1920s, owing to a series of grandiose productions with lavish sets, such as Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), which depleted UFA's finances. The expensive process of adapting the studios to sound and UFA's 'gross financial mismanagement', in their desire to match and surpass Hollywood productions, led to further problems (Hochscherf 2011, 26). In the late 1920s, as UFA plunged into crisis, some of the movement's figureheads emigrated to the US. Murnau and Leni both accepted invitations from the major studios. Murnau travelled to New York in 1926 and, the same year, Leni went to work for an early German-Jewish émigré, Carl Laemmle, founder of Universal Pictures studios (Schneider 1990, 59). Both had their first American films released in 1927: *Sunrise* and *The Cat and the Canary*. Murnau's film about temptation and a proto-femme fatale foreshadows the noir films of the 1940s, whereas Leni's departed from previous expressionist productions by introducing parodic elements into the plot which, emphasised through the mise-en-scène, offered a different gothic mood to American audiences—one that follows in the footsteps of Jane Austen's half-homage, half-satirical take on the Gothic in *Northanger Abbey* (1817). This bold approach indicates how easy it is for terror and horror to tip over to comedy, at once revealing the humorous as intrinsic to the Gothic and anticipating the gothic cinema's 'comic turn' in the 1980s and 1990s (Horner and Zlosnik 2012, 323), epitomised in Sonnenfeld's *The Addams Family* and the work of Tim Burton.

German Bohemian Karl Freund, who collaborated closely with Murnau, Dupont, and Lang whilst employed at UFA, photographed *The Golem*, *Varieté* (1925), and other expressionist productions. Moving to the United States in 1929, he worked as cinematographer and uncredited director on *Dracula* (1931) and later directed *The Mummy* (1932) and *Mad Love* (1935), a remake of Wiene's *Orlacs Hände* (1924). Freund continued to work primarily as a cinematographer in Hollywood films, including *Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1932) and *Undercurrent* (1946). His mobile, investigative camera denotes an unmatched technical ingenuity, instrumental to the industry, which included using tilts, pans, pulleys, cranes, trolleys, and strapping a camera to his chest. With Freund, the film camera became an organic narrative device.

One of the last to emigrate to the US before the rise of Nazism was William Dieterle, who arrived in 1930. He remained faithful to the bittersweet realist, yet poetic, style he had displayed in his German films, such as *Ludwig* (1930). In Hollywood, he directed a handful of gothic films for major studios, most importantly RKO's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*

(1939) and the Selznick production, *Portrait of Jennie* (1948). Guided by furtive encounters with people and objects, the latter exposes an artist's obsessive pursuit of a ghostly figure, which I will examine in Chap. 3.

The American film industry was established by the steady influx of immigrants arriving in the US and the studios quickly realised the significance of foreign talent (and international markets) for the US to acquire, and then maintain, a hegemonic position in the global market. In Hollywood, the pioneers of German cinema combined daring visuals with a kind of naturalistic expressionism in a complex negotiation of studio control, the host nation's filmmaking practices, and transnational heritage. Particularly notable were the meticulously designed sets and the recurring and prominent use of specific iconography, specifically mirrors, doors, and staircases. Significantly, the importation of such motifs from Europe to Hollywood draws attention to the axial role played not only by the directors, but by the set designers and cinematographers who sought employment and, later on, exile in the US. Film critic and German émigré Lotte Eisner, in her seminal study of German Cinema, *The Haunted Screen* (1952), writes about the obsession of German-language filmmakers for winding staircases, noting that this was perhaps so because of the way they structure space while conveying a feeling of mental instability (1969, 119–27). The influence of this expressionist motif is evidenced in a plethora of later gothic films, namely exile Robert Siodmak's *The Spiral Staircase* (1946) and *Portrait of Jennie*. The latter's shots inside a lighthouse towards the end of the film in turn influenced Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), where the use of a staircase plays with the acrophobia and vertigo of the protagonist with the double purpose of adding suspense by disorienting the main character while also symbolising the illusion of love and the ephemerality of life. Staircases figure widely in Hitchcock's oeuvre, including in *Rebecca* and *Shadow of a Doubt*.

Before cinema's inception, Germany already had a long, well-established tradition of literary terror, which once drove Poe to clarify that 'terror is not of Germany, but of the soul' (1840, 6). This comment, written as a response to plagiarism accusations, is relevant to a consideration of the filmic Gothic, in that it demonstrates the global impact of German terror tales and how a certain feeling of atmospheric uncanniness came to be associated with a specific nation and culture. The gothic aesthetic of the early to mid-twentieth century, in its diasporic diversity, cross-border influences, and transnational co-productions, seems to prove Poe right. Germanophone travelling directors (and other film personnel) did bring

forward a unique type of sinister gothicism, generated through a creative combination of intermedial (film, theatre, literature, painting, music) practices that engaged the medium's specificity and became highly influential. Nevertheless, different facets and gradations of cinematographic terror can be traced to various countries around the world during the same time span.

Impressionism, Expressionism, and Poetic Realism

From the second half of the 1920s, the importance of the prominent German and French avant-gardes started to wane. The former, in the first instance, due to most of its main directors, cinematographers, set designers, and actors working abroad and, from the early 1930s, due to the rise of fascism in Weimar Germany. The latter as a consequence of financing difficulties and the stylistic diffusion of the Impressionist phenomenon after 1929, with the experimental films unable to conquer foreign markets. The chiaroscuro distortions, paranoid aesthetics, and performative exaggeration of Expressionism, along with the subjective, revelationist, and phenomenological impulse that guides impressionist filmmaking in its search to augment and thus enhance human perception, nevertheless continued to influence film theory and practice across borders, and their altered, stylised view of reality continued to be widely emulated.

As Impressionism dwindled, a small group of filmmakers in France reworked impressionist and expressionist settings and characters into a new, short-lived movement known as 'poetic realism'. Expressionist elements emerge in the haunted characters living on the margins of society, the slow-paced shots, and the sombre, studio-bound décors which metonymically represent inner turmoil. Like German Expressionism, poetic realism showcases a political edge that deals with the consequences of war, social malaise, economic precarity, and the imbalance between the classes. The 'poetic', impressionist element intrudes upon the hardships of the everyday and concerns both style and narrative.

French filmmaker Marcel Carné, an exponent of poetic realism in the 1930s, was an avid filmgoer and admirer of Chaplin, Lang, and Murnau, acknowledging that his '"plastic language"' derived from the Expressionists (Turk 1989, 15, 41). While stationed in the Rhineland for eighteen months during the Great War, Carné recalls how he used to leave the barracks to watch films (41). Yet, as much as he learned from and was inspired by the works of émigré and exile directors, and despite working regularly

with Jewish producers who later sought exile, he was 'plagued' by 'travel anxieties'; '[t]horoughly monolingual', 'fiercely Gallocentric', and with no acquaintances abroad to facilitate a diasporic existence, he repeatedly decided against leaving France as a professional traveller, abandoning a number of opportunities to visit Los Angeles or work with Alexander Korda in London (129, 350–351). After France's capitulation in 1940, some of the most distinct members of the French film community left the country, including Renoir and Ophuls. Carné's decision to remain made him 'a convenient target of scapegoatism', as Edward Baron Turk notes, even though he was never a collaborationist or a fascist (186). Labelled a 'Jewish sympathizer, sexual outlaw, […] and collaborationist pawn *manqué*' (187), Carné was shunned by many of his contemporaries. His disenchanted protagonists remained, throughout his career, examples of exilic characters 'whose social outsiderdom correlates especially closely with his own' (277). Carné returned to the poetic-realist mode of storytelling in 1951 with *Juliette, or Key of Dreams* (Juliette ou la clef des songes). Situated between the German Caligarists and the Italian Neorealists (110), this work is reminiscent of Orson Welles's gothic-infused *Citizen Kane* (1941) and *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942). In fact, Welles acknowledged his affinities with Carné, stating that the French director 'is not a realist'; rather, he 'transfigures reality through his style' (qtd. in Turk 1989, 110). The efforts to adapt Georges Neveux's play, *Juliette ou la clé des songes* (1930) to the screen began in 1942; Cocteau and Jacques Viot drafted the screenplay, which would later be extensively revised and virtually rewritten by Neveux and Viot, with Cocteau's blessing. *Juliette*, which grounds my analysis of amnesia in Chap. 7, poignantly depicts the way oneirism and the dystopian day-to-day clash—the former eventually overtaking the latter.

One of the most prominent artists to emulate and continue the Impressionist tradition, via German Expressionism, was English filmmaker Alfred Hitchcock. Charles Barr identifies America, Germany, Britain, and Russia as the four main currents in Hitchcock's oeuvre, relegating France to the role of a 'smaller tributar[y]' (2011, 50). The conception of an exploratory camera that lays bare a character's subjectivity, and the experiments with contrast lighting and gesture, which were quickly absorbed and became paramount to the German cinema of the 1920s, were first explored, as we have seen, by the French Impressionists. In this sense, the impact of Impressionism on Hitchcock's work may be greater than previously acknowledged. It is also likely that he would have watched French

avant-garde productions at the Film Society of London, founded in 1925, where Thorold Dickinson worked and which Hitchcock often frequented (Sterritt 2011, 311).

Hitchcock wrote about his admiration for Griffith and American cinema (Barr 2011, 54), and American directors continued to shape his career during his job working with Hollywood professionals at Islington's Famous Players-Lasky studio in 1921–1922 (50). As Hitchcock himself admitted, though, his major source of inspiration was 'The Germans. The Germans' (McGilligan 2003, 64). 'My models', Hitchcock told Donald Spoto, 'were forever after the German filmmakers of 1924 and 1925. They were trying very hard to express ideas in purely visual terms' ([1983] 1987, 75). A partnership between the British Gainsborough Pictures and Weimar Germany's UFA to collaborate on multilingual co-productions using continental filmmaking practices took Hitchcock to Berlin in 1924, where he worked as an assistant director and watched the shooting of Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (1924) (75; Barr 2011, 56–57). Hitchcock's apprenticeship in Berlin and his direction of two films in Munich in 1925 proved essential to his career, namely in the preference for 'heavily shadowed photography' (Higham 1962–63, 6); the use of subjective camerawork, noticeable in *Vertigo*; and the freely moving, 'unchained camera', as in *Under Capricorn* (1949) (Barr 2011, 57). Fresh from his sojourn in Berlin, expressionist traits are most evident in the Gainsborough production *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog* (1927), from the use of lighting, odd angles, stylised acting, and the *Nosferatu*-like framing of characters in doorways, 'to the *Caligari*-ish electric sign' (Prasch 2019, 234), but crop up later in many of Hitchcock's Hollywood films. Accenting the films were not just the visuals and the plots but Hitchcock's casting of German actors. Bernhard Goetzke, who had starred in Lang's *Destiny* (1921), appears in *The Lodger*, and Austro-Hungarian exile, Peter Lorre, a familiar face from Lang's *M* (1931), stars in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934) and *Secret Agent* (1936). In addition to his enthusiasm for European avant-gardes and American cinema, Hitchcock also embraced the new language of Soviet montage cinema, developed, among others, by Lev Kuleshov and Sergei Eisenstein.

The Soviet Montage Cinema

At the end of the 1920s, the new centre of European film criticism shifted from France and Germany to Moscow, where Soviet cinema emerged out of the ashes of the pre-revolutionary Russian film industry. Before the

Bolsheviks seized power, American, French, and German films dominated the market and were the most popular with Russian audiences (Joyce [1996] 2007, 367). The virtuoso acting style in Italian, German, and Danish films heavily influenced Russian filmmaking at the time, too (Bordwell and Thompson 2019, 49). After the October Revolution of 1917 and during the civil war that ensued, many Russian directors sought refuge in Paris, in turn influencing French filmmaking. Lenin acknowledged the profoundly influential role of cinema and nationalised the film industry in 1919, providing state funding for the creation of film schools and workshops (Fabe 2014, 21).

After an unsuccessful attempt to ban all American and European films (deemed to adhere to a set of capitalist values) at a time when there was no native Soviet film industry, the newly constituted government decided to continue the policy of importing films. In the 1920s, almost two-thirds of the films screened were foreign (Youngblood 1992, 51), with American productions accounting for 57 per cent of the market in 1924 (Ball 2003, 90). Foreign films, Mark Joyce argues, could therefore be seen as effectively 'subsidising the dramatic experimentation with film form undertaken by the Soviet filmmakers' ([1996] 2007, 368). The popularity of American films, with their 'maximum movement and […] primitive heroism', led director Lev Kuleshov to warn readers of the radical film journal *Cinema-photo* of a widespread 'Americanitis' ([1922] 1974, 127–128).

The Soviet approach to film severed ties with the Russian cinema of the Tsarist regime, whose body of mostly melodramatic films, made between 1907 and 1917, dealt primarily with the upper classes and their relations with the working masses. The early Soviet critics and directors set out to change the popular cinema of action and sentiment 'to an agent of social, political, and cultural enlightenment' (Youngblood 1992, 37–38). Many, as Denise J. Youngblood explains, 'learned the craft from reediting foreign films' (51), as well as through a careful comparative study of American films and 'unsuccessful attempts […] shot by Russian directors' (Kuleshov [1922] 1974, 129). By the end of 1927, ideological, but especially economic and nationalistic imperatives, marked an abrupt shift regarding the cinema's entertainment value, resulting in '[p]urges of film libraries and dramatic curtailment of imports' in the 1930s, with foreign, especially American, films being discarded and removed from circulation (Youngblood 1992, 66; Ball 2003, 90). Like the French impulse to construct film as a 'high' art form against the 'low' entertainment value of

mainstream American films, Soviet directors too looked to differentiate their outputs by focusing on film as art—and as ideological weapon.

The most influential export of Soviet cinema concerns the innovative use of editing. Kuleshov experimented with montage techniques based on the hypothesis that one shot needs to be understood in relation to other shots, and that the audience extracts meaning from their combination: meaning is generated through editing. This theory ultimately contained a twofold realisation: that film spectators are active participants that aid in the production of meaning and that editing, and consequently the cinema, could manipulate both affect and intellect. Unlike classical Hollywood's continuity editing, designed to be invisible, Soviet montage is obtrusive, it draws attention to itself.

An illustrious student of Kuleshov's was travelling director Sergei Eisenstein, who ventured into the Gothic with his two-part epic *Ivan, the Terrible* (1945, 1958). Like Pudovkin and other Soviet pioneers, Eisenstein admired the technical expertise of D.W. Griffith, who he confirmed had played 'a massive role in the development of montage in the Soviet film', calling him 'a revelation' (1977, 201), and stating that 'all that is best in the Soviet cinema has its origins in *Intolerance*' (Barna 1973, 74). German expressionist films, frequently screened in Moscow, might be inferred to have influenced Eisenstein's exploration of the visual potentialities of the cinema, despite his argument to the contrary (75). A prolific theorist, Eisenstein conceived of montage as more than the use of individual shots as the ordered building blocks of a scene (Pudovkin's linkage editing). His montage technique is, instead, dialectical, in that it aims at creating meaning (and conveying political implications) from the collision or juxtaposition of opposite elements. In this respect, it is reminiscent of the cinematic language already suggested by the impressionist avant-garde. In his exhortation of the qualities of a true film artist, Vuillermoz argues that, through montage, the film artist 'will make eloquent contrasts emerge, develop the inverse of a vision, […] he will cut a scene at the exact moment when its trajectory ought to prolong itself […], inspire it with a new élan' ([1920] 1988, 226–227). Eisenstein takes this conception of montage to the extreme. To him, the real is interesting only in so far as the subject attributes meaning to it through interpretation, and the cinema is a medium, an instrument, through which to conduct such an interpretive endeavour; its value lies not in reproducing but intervening upon the real by giving it an ideological edge (Aumont et al. 2008, 56). In his extensive critical writings on the cinema, Eisenstein discusses his revolutionary 'montage of

attractions', based on the organisation of fragments in such a way as to create 'chains of associations' in the mind of the viewers, shocking them into political awareness ([1924] 2010a, 41): the cinema, he writes, is '*a tractor ploughing over the audience's psyche in a particular class context*' ([1925] 2010b, 62); Soviet cinema needs action, not contemplation—it needs a 'Cine-Fist', Eisenstein concludes (64). This drove him to criticise the French Impressionists for their 'political naïveté' (Wall-Romana 2013, 35).

Always eager to improve his skills, Eisenstein left the Soviet Union in 1928 for a long tour of Europe, lecturing in Paris and London in 1929–30 (Taylor and Christie 2005, 447), sharing his political approach to film art, while learning about sound motion pictures. His trajectory, then, was somewhat similar to Thorold Dickinson's, who, as noted, also travelled to Paris (in 1927) and then to New York (in 1929) to study the use of sound technology. In 1930, the two met at the Film Society in London, when Eisenstein presented *October* (1927), and 'left a great impression' on Dickinson (Becker 2008, 125). Dickinson, who had a background as a film editor, paid careful attention to editing throughout his career. The strong, obtrusive montage in *The Arsenal Stadium Mystery* (1939) and *Gaslight* (1940), for instance, could be seen to demonstrate the influence of Eisenstein's writings and practice on the British director.

The impact of Eisenstein's films was particularly strong in Germany and the US. Kristin Thompson examines the success of Eisenstein's films in these two markets, concluding that 'even though the films were banned in many countries, they managed to reach a surprisingly large and heterogeneous audience, ranging from Berlin's intellectual elite to farmers in the USA' (1993, 62). The conception of the film shot as a sort of circus attraction that should grab the audience's attention and condition their response resonates with the work of Tod Browning who, like Eisenstein, employed violent imagery to assault and engage the viewers politically, shaping their reactions by including moralising prologues (in *Freaks*) and utilising increasingly rapid cutting in climactic moments. Browning's onscreen politics are obviously substantially different to Eisenstein's, dealing primarily with class, gender, and ableism in American society and offering a satirical commentary on gullibility (*Dracula*), hypocrisy (*Freaks*), and greed (*The Unknown*). Aesthetically, Browning's realism is sometimes filtered through the fantastic, as in *Dracula*, or quite literally carnivalised, as in *Freaks* and *The Unknown*. Alec Charles suggests that certain continuity errors and 'flaws' in Browning's films 'add a jarring quality to the

montage', invoking 'internal contradictions and even paradoxes which might bear comparison with those dialectical contrasts which characterise radical cinema', namely that of Murnau and Eisenstein (2006, 84). Charles goes as far as to argue that Browning's creative use of imagistic symbolism might allow for a reading of his 'discontinuities' as purposeful—'as anticipating Eisenstein rather than Ed Wood' (85). While this may seem like a gross extrapolation, as Charles concedes, given the fundamental differences between the two filmmakers and Eisenstein's more pronounced complexity and sophistication, this aesthetic connection, if anecdotal, remains nevertheless compelling in the light of Eisenstein's familiarity with American cinema.

Hitchcock, in turn, learned editing techniques from the Soviet cinema, but 'perverted' montage's association with propaganda and revolution, employing and modifying the techniques of the Soviet filmmakers 'in the creation of popular bourgeois entertainment' (Wood 2002, 208). Hitchcock's mastery of rapid cutting is arguably best captured in the infamous shower murder scene from *Psycho* (1960) but features throughout his oeuvre.

By the early 1930s, 'montage' was such a popular term in Hollywood, that it urged Karl Freund to write, in an article for *American Cinematographer*: '"Montage" is nothing new; neither is it a Russian invention' (1934, 204). He traces the usage of the term to prewar France's world-leading cinematic artistry and technique, reminding readers that the word, which literally means 'assembling', was widely adopted in continental Europe and beyond. The 'virile', 'bewildering', and '[d]azzling' technique, as reimagined by Soviet filmmakers, reuses the basic principles of early American editing technique, 'adapted to suit the peculiar needs of the Russian Directors, Cinematographers and Producers' (204). Eisenstein, as noted earlier, did not shy away from exulting the influence of American silent cinema, especially Griffith's films, on the craftsmanship that would characterise his own practice. Freund recalls meeting both Eisenstein and Pudovkin in Germany, where the Soviet directors travelled to learn about the cinema and acquire film stock at lower prices. '[T]hey regarded the German studios as both their base of supplies and their teacher', Freund explains (204). If the Soviet pioneers did not invent the technique, Freund continues, they refined it 'to a point where it became a close approximate of the ultimate of pure cinematographic expression', one that is essentially visual, independent from intertitles, capable of surmounting language barriers, and in which every frame is 'vitally expressive' (210).

The German-Speaking Exiles

From the mid-1910s until 1933, the critical successes of Impressionism and Expressionism, along with the reputation of the German film industry, were reflected in the co-productions with British studios and the many invitations from top Hollywood producers to successful European filmmakers, which led to the internationalisation of both the European avant-garde movements and the practitioners engaged with them. These early transnational collaborations, as we have seen, had economic and/or educational and artistic purposes, not political turmoil, as their main motor: there was 'a two-way traffic across the Atlantic' (Gemünden 2014, 5). After Hitler's ascent to power, following his appointment as Chancellor in January 1933, Hollywood became the final destination for most German-speaking film personnel, with approximately 800 film practitioners seeking exile in the US.

The end of the Weimar Republic in 1933 brought with it a wave of exiles, particularly German-Jewish living in Germany and nearby countries, who emigrated *en masse* to escape the Nazi regime. Hans Kafka, writing in 1944, remarks that '[c]ompared with what was to come later, the first immigration wave from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary to Hollywood looks like a mere trickle. […] The second wave was a flood' (2003, 185–6). As Hochscherf states, right after Goebbels' address to film officials on 28 March 1933, UFA executives 'concurred with the ending of all contracts with Jewish employees as soon as possible' (2011, 58). With the rapid rise of fascism, film artists and technicians working in Germany and, especially after the *Anschluss*, in Austria as well, became exiles. During this time, some émigrés became exiles too, as they suddenly found themselves unable to return to their home countries. These film professionals sought refuge in other European countries, especially France and Britain, and across the Atlantic in the United States. Writing about the situation in Britain, Hochscherf argues that 'the most successful exiles were the professional travellers who participated in co-productions and who were consequently used to working in an international team (70). Among the most famous German-language exiles, we find the likes of Robert Wiene, Fritz Lang, Billy Wilder, Max Ophuls, Robert Siodmak, and Otto Preminger.

Wiene worked as a scriptwriter and director in the German and Austrian film industry for about twenty years. In Germany, he directed the expressionist classic *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1920) and, between 1924 and

1926, he completed five films in Vienna for the Austrian film company Pan Film (Jung and Schatzberg 1999, 113). One of these productions was the Austrian expressionist film *Orlacs Hände* (1924), which I explore in Chaps. 4 and 8. The political engagement of Wiene's films, in their self-reflexive and incisive critique of delusional autocrats, striking a cautionary tone about the power amassed by those who manipulate minds and images (*Caligari*), and their cruel portrayal of gratuitous violence and the complex traumas of war veterans (*Orlacs Hände*), made him persona non grata in Germany. After his latest film was banned, Wiene left for Budapest in 1933, travelling to London the following year and to Paris in 1936, where he worked until his death (Jung and Schatzberg 1993, 25–35; Schneider 1990, 54).

Lang, who was born in Austria and had already travelled extensively around the world before the outbreak of World War I, fled to Paris in 1934, as did Austro-Hungarian Billy Wilder (born in today's Poland). Wilder stayed briefly in Paris, just long enough to shoot his first feature, and left for Hollywood that same year. Lang found a home in Hollywood in 1936, when he accepted an invitation from David O. Selznick to work for MGM. Forced into exile in 1933, Siodmak and Ophuls also escaped first to France. Siodmak stayed until 1939. During his Hollywood career, he specialised in noir and melodrama, sometimes overlapping both formulas. In *The Spiral Staircase* (1946), noteworthy for its mise-en-scène, Siodmak 'does not give us any relief from the claustrophobic enclosure of [the] house', overemphasising its cluttered interiors where objects appear 'like clumsy obstacles' by 'framing routine shots at low angles' and 'in chiaroscuro lighting' (Greco 1999, 76). The clutter and tensions in the mise-en-scène are central to Ophuls, too. For eight years, he worked in France, the Netherlands, and Italy, moving to the US in 1941, where Siodmak helped him find work. His *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, a Romantic-Gothic story about the fatal excesses and flaws of memory, is one of my case studies in Chap. 8.

In 1935, Austro-Hungarian Otto Preminger (born in today's Ukraine) accepted an invitation from Joseph Schenck (a Russian émigré) and Darryl F. Zanuck, the co-founders of Twentieth Century Pictures, to work for Fox. In 1938, Dieterle, together with his wife, Charlotte, Paul Kohner, Liesl Frank, and others, created the European Film Fund: an institution dedicated to assisting the ever-growing number of refugees. Among those, was Austro-Hungarian Andre de Toth. An avid professional traveller since the 1930s he was, in his own words, 'a restless, curious globetrotter' (Slide

1996, 31–32) who, throughout his life, worked in numerous countries, including the UK, Austria, Spain, Libya, and Yugoslavia (viii-ix). He longed to work in Hollywood, where he had collaborated with screenwriters on a couple of visits in the 1930s. When he was told by a fellow director that, were he Jewish, he would not be working, he up and left Hungary (33). He arrived in the US in 1940 and directed the American Gothic noir *Dark Waters* in 1944.

For these directors, the choice to leave their home country after 1933 was geo-political: these were movements away from fascism that came about as a consequence of political turmoil. They shared similar trajectories of social and artistic oppression and hope for an artistic rebirth in a foreign industry. Arthur Koestler writes that 'what a refugee craves most is relief from his permanent feeling of uprootedness' and an escape from their 'ghetto existence' (1954, 247). For the exiles discussed in this book, the cinema and the gothic aesthetic proved a cathartic outlet.

Expressionist aesthetics, Nelson indicates, 'were to resurface along with their émigré directors in the strange American low-art mating of German Expressionism with the hard-boiled detective mode of pulp fiction that became the great *film noir* movement of the 1940s' (2001, 213–214). Noir's formal aspects, however, echo not only Expressionism, but also poetic realism to comment on contemporaneous postwar social issues by exposing the underbelly of American city life through a singular representation of urban spatiality and 'mental disintegration' (Kracauer 1946, 134). The influence of Expressionism on film noir notwithstanding, it is important to clarify that backlighting and the use of selective lighting were common in Hollywood productions well before they were introduced in Germany (Thompson 2005, 123), as mere flashbacks, a common device in film noir. Furthermore, the generalised assumption that 'Germanic' means 'expressionist' must be revised, as prior to their exile in Hollywood, Wilder and Siodmak, for example, both responsible for key noir films, had 'showed no expressionist predilections whatsoever' (Koepnick 2003, 85). The confusion arguably arose following the publication of *The Haunted Screen*, which resulted in a long-lasting misunderstanding that all Weimar films are 'expressionist', despite Eisner's efforts to clarify the use of the term (Sudendorf 1993, 91).

As becomes apparent from my discussion of the international influences that shaped Expressionism and poetic realism, the line connecting noir to Expressionism is not as straight as some critics have previously asserted. Preminger's *Laura*, Lang's *The Woman in the Window*, Renoir's *The*

Woman on the Beach (1947), or *The Spiral Staircase*, for instance, possess specific traits that have made them noticeably hard to categorise neatly, critics often using hyphenated terms to denote their generic crossovers and stylistic hybridity. The first three meld reality and dream in a conspicuous way that is absent from classic noirs, such as *Double Indemnity* (Wilder, 1944) or *The Killers* (Siodmak, 1946), and yet is thoroughly gothic in its creation of an atmospheric mise-en-scène and the figuration of objects as catalysts for memory. The exaggerated focus on the senses and sense impairment allows for a further connection: the protagonist of Siodmak's film is mute; the painter in *The Woman on the Beach* is blind; and *Laura*'s detective's transgressive voyeurism amounts to a form of necrophilia.

The 'Carte-de-Visite' Effect

The reception of émigrés and exiles, and their films, was often beset with problems. A period of generalised patriotism and hostility towards immigrants persisted after the US entry into the First World War, leading to the first Red Scare (1919–20) and culminating in the Immigration Act of 1924. With the film industries of Britain, France, and Italy still recovering from years of armed conflict, American producers turned to Germany, which never ceased production and maintained high productivity levels throughout the war, in the hope of finding an outlet for their films abroad. The domestic market was, however, very strong, so much so that American producers worried about the reception of their films. If exporting their product proved more difficult than expected, the import of German films went in the opposite direction. The resounding success of Lubitsch's *Madame DuBarry* (1919), the first German film to be released in the US following the war, in December 1920, marked the beginning of what some critics described as an 'invasion', with 'floods', 'deluges', and 'tidal waves' of German imports being 'dumped' on American territory (Petrie 2002, 3–5). The fears about the impact this might have on the American economy led to 'Equity, First National, Famous Players, and the American Legion [to call] for a ban on *all* foreign films' (5). Eager to dynamise US film production with motion pictures that would appeal to overseas audiences, Hollywood producers invested in the employment of foreign talent, mostly professionals based in Germany, which some in Teutonic lands viewed with mistrust as a 'talent drain', an 'act of sabotage', and 'a crippling blow to German production' (Saunders 1994, 198–99). The situation escalated in such a way that, in 1925, Germany imposed barriers to

the circulation of American films. After the sound revolution, production standards fluctuated and, between 1929 and 1932, the German film industry steadily replaced American imports by creating kitsch films for the endogenous market that were nonetheless as 'vacuous as any attributed to Hollywood' (239–40). Once again, we can see a two-way influence at work, in this case with the German industry registering a shift away from purely artistic merit towards the much-demonised entertainment value that anchored the American production system.

By this time, the American filmmaking business and the studio system had become firmly established. Film critic H. Chevalier presents a picture-perfect view of global collaboration in Hollywood, claiming that 'the American, British, German, Chinese, French, Indian or Swiss all work together amicably, and whatever ability they show they are allowed to use' (1937, 51). We know that this is not exactly an accurate depiction of what truly happened, on a day-to-day basis, under the aegis of the Hollywood studio system. Nonetheless, despite the interference of the studios on the work of *all* their employees (not just foreign personnel) and not to downplay the impact of studio pressures on foreign directors specifically, the fact is that many of them did manage to navigate or even overcome such constraints and use their expertise, their talent, and, in some cases, their cultural heritage creatively. Contrasting the émigrés' and exiles' 'high culture, good reputation and artistic sensibility' with the vile Hollywood studio heads, who supported a cinema that had 'pitilessly devoured most other forms of cultural expression' paints too dire and simplistic a picture (Palmier 2006, 548). Similarly, it is a misconception that 'American producers knew little or nothing of German films from the 1920s' (549): they were often well familiar not only with the films of individual directors, but with specific techniques being developed abroad. The professional travellers, sometimes working as part of international co-productions, as was the case with Hitchcock, were frequently the ones responsible for passing this knowledge along.

There were multiple complexities involved in the process of adapting one's work to a different cinematic industry where different rules applied, particularly one with such a demarcated structure and entrenched hierarchy as the Hollywood studio companies. The fact that the studios were fundamentally profit-oriented and required that directors bend to the rules of the system resulted in 'decidedly mixed experiences' (Petrie 2002, x), leading directors such as Ophuls to return to Europe, but it also spurred creativity in some cases. Many, in fact, became established,

successful Hollywood directors and chose not to return home. As Jean-Pierre Esquenazi remarks, some films were closer to author works than studio products, in the sense that they came from non-conformist individuals who used the system but were not completely beholden to it (2012, 341–342). Some had successful careers abroad and did not completely assimilate into the dominant modes of style and narrative. In line with Esquenazi, I agree that a more nuanced approach is needed to avoid the pitfalls of oversimplistic analyses of filmmaking practices from the perspective of the stereotypical brilliant artist who struggles against the ignorant studio producer. Edward Said encounters in the condition of exile, alongside a feeling of 'terminal loss', 'a potent, even enriching, motif of modern culture' (2001, 172). Similarly, Czech surrealist filmmaker and artist Jan Švankmajer explains the positive outcomes that may arise from facing barriers to artistic freedom and experimentation:

> so much for the idea that totalitarian systems and censorship act as a brake on original creativity. In a sense they act in exactly the opposite way. To overcome difficulties and to get around prohibitions whips up defiance and subversion, which is inherent in all creativity worth that name; it achieves fine nuances. (2014, xix)

Siodmak, for example, retained a level of artistic control by insisting on editing his films. Wilder adjusted to the system too, and broadly adhered to generic conventions, often engaging with them self-consciously and subverting expectations. Wilder's unique approach to genre is at its most blatantly mordant in the gothic noir drama *Sunset Boulevard* (1950). The film is furthermore singularly exilic on the level of production and plot: directed by an exiled filmmaker and starring an Austrian émigré, Erich von Stroheim (Hans Dreier served as art director) with an accented speech, it depicts an ostracised, aging actress who lives in self-imposed isolation, inhabiting a made-up present, grossly detached from reality. The film does not shy away from its contentious subject matter and acts as a powerful metafiction that provides a scathing, satirical commentary on the Hollywood film industry.

The oft-neglected fact that Hollywood filmmaking was highly influential in shaping early German cinema through collaborations and the importation of technology and techniques has led to misguided generalisations, namely that American cinema 'was the radical negation of everything that had made the grandeur of German cinema', so much so that

Lang and others 'had to modify their aesthetic' (Palmier 2006, 455). In comparison to the freedom of the German art scene, the American studio system did impose a multiplicity of creative and budgeting restraints to the filmmakers, yet this did not equal 'radical negation'. As for 'modifying their aesthetic', the change was not, in the case of the directors that concern us here, as drastic as Palmier's words might have us believe. The stylistic turn, in some cases, happened still in Germany, as Expressionism drew to a close and the more realist approach of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) took over. As with most transmedial avant-garde movements, the daring aesthetic edge was bound to become interweaved with more conventional storytelling; Kristin Thompson aptly terms these 'commercial avant-garde movements' (1996, 281). Moreover, by the mid-1920s, the cinema of Weimar Germany was struggling, with UFA desperately trying to find a compromise between artistic purity and international box-office appeal to save the studio from financial collapse. This was also a time when the Nordic cinema, with pioneers of the fantastic film and on-location shooting, was likewise not producing as many avant-garde films as before. Sjöström, for example, eventually left Hollywood after a successful career due to the industry's movement towards the introduction of sound technology in all motion pictures. He went on to direct one film in Britain before moving back to Sweden to work as an actor. There are therefore multiple individual, economic, and political reasons for the disappearance of intensely avant-gardist films in the 1930s and the subsequent fragmentation of the European film industry that go well beyond the tight reins many directors were given while working within the Hollywood studio system.

Palmier's otherwise insightful analysis of Weimar émigrés and exiles in literature, the arts, and academia falls manifestly short where it pertains to the cinema. The overly dismissive attitude towards the Hollywood productions of early émigrés and antifascist refugees which, to the exception of Murnau's *Sunrise* (1927), Palmier deems 'have scant interest' include *Secret Beyond the Door* (2006, 517). Lang's 1947 film is a postmodern, self-reflective exploration of gothic intertexts and psychoanalysis with the satirical edge and sardonic humour that characterise the productions of the travelling directors. The misguided expedition of the heroine, Celia, down a darkened corridor and towards the forbidden titular door in an effort to unravel her husband's secret is thoroughly expressionistic, from the high angle at the top of the spiral staircase to the deep-shadowed cinematography that transforms her into a black silhouette, disturbed only by the sharp bright circle of her flashlight.

Where gothic cinema is concerned, it is most certainly not the case that these directors 'made no films of value' during their Hollywood years (Palmier 2006, 548). In his in-depth study of Sjöström, Bo Florin argues that, during his American career, he 'was able to develop his auteur qualities in a unique way', retaining 'elements of the particular "Sjöström style" from the Swedish years' (2013, 63), and in effect 'modifying and varying the Hollywood system' (15), namely through the introduction of reflective, philosophical intertitles (49–62). That the travelling directors modified the Hollywood aesthetic—and were not simply forced to modify *their* aesthetic, as Palmier claims—is not a minor detail. Florin quotes the director's 'unwritten memoirs', published in a Swedish newspaper in 1933, after his departure from the States, and in which he describes his experience working on the gothic revenge melodrama *He Who Gets Slapped* as 'if I had made a film during the good old times. Like at home in Sweden […]. I was allowed to make my script without interference, and the shooting was made quickly and without a hitch' (2013, 45). Graham Petrie notes that Sjöström 'made few concessions to popular taste' in this film and it was nonetheless hailed by critics and audiences, which goes against the common narrative that his American films were 'unmitigated disasters' (2002, 136). Some filmmakers, then, 'brilliantly defended their artistic integrity in America', writer Sven Stolpe states (qtd. in Florin 2013, 29), and even 'contaminated the whole of Hollywood' with a productive, European way of working, matinée idol Conrad Nagel observes (37). While the use of the verb 'to contaminate' is objectionable in the context of discourses on migration, it does draw attention to those two-way influences, again pointing to the complexities of émigré and exilic work.

This discussion feeds into the larger contemporary debates over national versus international cinema, Europe versus Hollywood, films as capitalist commodities versus cultural products. Many film historians have engaged in such intellectually stimulating and significant investigations (cf. Saunders 1994; Thompson 1996; Higson and Maltby 1999; Higson 2010; Florin 2013), and these are mostly beyond the remit of the present work. Some points remain nonetheless relevant to a more comprehensive understanding of the gothic aesthetic. Accounts from primary and secondary sources vary greatly in their assessment of the degree of freedom or independence the directors were allowed within the American production system. I have mentioned two critics, Chevalier and Palmier, whose views stand at opposite ends of the spectrum. Between them, there are rich and contradictory opinions, even within the same countries and referring to the same directors. The conquering of foreign markets is looked at with enthusiasm,

suspicion, or else from the angle of the proud, lonely artist fighting the good fight against the evil, uncultivated Hollywood capitalists, usually unsuccessfully. On the one hand, there is apotheotic applause at the preservation of national identity, as in the telegram an audience in Stockholm sent to Sjöström in 1924 on the premiere of his first American film, lauding him for staying faithful to his style and traditions 'that bring fame to Sweden over there' (Florin 2013, 36). On the other, there are accusations of artistic compromise resulting in mediocrity or lesser-quality films, as with French scholar Philippe Roger, who describes Ophuls's American years as a 'parenthesis' in his career (1989, 123).

Granted, while Palmier's generalising statements and monolithic perspective about the situation of the émigrés and exiles in Hollywood lack sufficient nuance,[2] there is an undeniable paradox in the way some travelling directors were treated on American soil. 'Those specifically invited to work in Hollywood', Petrie explains, 'are brought over because their films are considered to be *different* from the standard Hollywood fare' and yet, 'often after an initially enthusiastic response, their works begin to be condemned for being *too* artistic, *too* different, *too* individual, *too* disconcerting' and 'not *entertaining* enough' (2002, xi). The ambiguity in the reception of certain films and the fact that some directors 'were unable or unwilling to adapt' (xiv) should not, however, lead to a scholarly obliteration of their successes. Discussing Hollywood's search for innovation, or differentiation, Bordwell highlights four main categories: temporary disruptions of narrative unity; the assimilation of experimental techniques from European avant-garde movements; non-conformist film forms that subvert or else challenge the classical cinema; and the presence of an authorial voice through what he calls the 'bounds of difference' ([1985] 2005, 72–87). Bordwell's conclusion—that, in classical Hollywood 'there are no subversive films, only subversive moments' (84)—meaning that there are limits to how much films are allowed to differ, connects with the ambivalent response to the operations of many travelling directors, from Sjöström to Browning and Lang, whose ideas, to go back to Petrie's phrasing, were often judged '*too* different'.

Noël Herpe identifies a certain 'overexpressionism' in the American productions of foreign directors, what he calls a 'carte-de-visite' (postcard) effect, meaning that the filmmakers supposedly emphasise their trademarks, namely the reliance on artifice and gloominess, much more than they did in their home countries (2008, 127). These trademarks, he adds, became a means of asserting a European identity, often through caricature. As part of the 'internationalism' debates and the 'Film Europe'

project, which entailed the construction of 'a transnational [European] cinema of collaboration and allegiance' (Higson 2010, 70), some filmmakers, technicians, and critics 'felt that films with strong traits of their country of origin would [...] have the greatest international appeal', whereas others favoured films in which the subject matter avoided a 'strong identification with a single country', as Thompson explains (1996, 288–89). She further notes that, 'with an elaborate montage sequence or two tossed in and a fair amount of subjectivity and lots of camera movement' Hollywood could easily copy the European style, their films often becoming more European than European productions (295). A film's 'distinctive *foreignness*' (Hayward 2000, 187), then, is not exclusive to the productions of the travelling directors, but was often purposely emulated in Hollywood as a desirable feature. Foreignness was commodified.

While I agree that a rich, cross-generic, interart, and transnational heritage is foregrounded in the works of émigré and exile directors, I contrariwise do not find it is generally expressed over-emphatically. There is an impressive consistency between the pre-American and the Hollywood films of Ophuls, for example, in terms of content as well as style, particularly in the fluidity of camera movements, the use of lighting and long takes, and the mythologisation of places, individuals, and their struggles. Leni and Dieterle, in turn, with their expressionist and Romantic films respectively, also remained stylistically and thematically faithful to their early German works while working abroad. Exaggeration was very much embedded in German Expressionism, with its 'emphasis on total artificiality' (Sudendorf 1993, 93); it would be difficult to imagine how its features could have been overly foregrounded in films shot in a host country. In sum, the work these directors produced in their respective countries (the subjects they filmed, the camera techniques they employed, and their authorial signature) comes through in their productions away from home. Only it comes paired, I argue, with a greater sense of melancholia and ironic self-awareness. In other words, I believe that the fluxes of emigration and exile created a particular kind of mourning for and re-invention of the distant homeland.

Between Chevalier's naïf, rosy-coloured depiction of blissful international cooperation and Palmier's bleak criticism of the directors' situation and work in Hollywood, there was an opportunity for professional and artistic growth, from which the gothic aesthetic benefited immensely. On the screen, these filmmakers created a specifically cinematic Gothic with works that, through a revolutionary use of techniques unique to the medium, expose the modern condition of alienation, emphasising feelings of self-doubt and uneasiness, a sense of aimlessness in a new city, the pain of being

away from the security of home and loved ones, the hopelessness of abandonment and displacement, the difficulty in severing ties and letting go, and the unimaginable horrors of gratuitous violence. Take the long shots that frame *Portrait of Jennie*'s wandering painter, Eben, walking through Central Park at dusk while his thoughts, verbalised in voice-off, express his constant insecurity towards his work or the candid close-ups of young Lisa, passionately listening to her neighbour's hypnotic piano playing which, night after night, leads her down an obsessive spiral as she pursues the mystifying virtuoso in *Letter from an Unknown Woman*. Consider still the life-changing injury sustained by the eponymous protagonist of *Orlacs Hände*, which resulted in the amputation of his hands and served as the motto for a visual likening of Orlac to a veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. As the trauma makes him unstable and susceptible to manipulation, the film combines close-ups, intertitles, and expressionist performance to dramatise Orlac's descent into insanity. Through transnational exchanges, individual journeys, and shared trajectories, the travelling directors respected their cultural heritage and artistic traditions and brought to the host country various forms of representing the exilic body and mind.

The Impact of the Travelling Directors

Displacement—forced or willed—features in the productions of the travelling directors. I mentioned also the atypical cases of Browning (a different type of travelling director) and Carné (who deliberately did not travel) as marginal(ised) filmmakers, both of whom created films that are profoundly exilic and offered novel approaches to the aesthetic. To assess the substantive impact of the travelling directors on the development of the cinematic Gothic, it is furthermore helpful to consider the role of filmmakers who fall outside the category of 'travelling directors' as I have defined it, and who were not professionally marginalised, but who contributed, in different ways, to the continuous reinvention of the onscreen Gothic. The aesthetic indeed owes much to the intervention of those who admired and directly learned from the émigrés, exiles, and professional travellers, including the previously mentioned Albert Lewin. Here, I will consider four filmmakers: American-born Henry Hathaway and Vincente Minnelli, Englishman John Harlow, and Frenchman Jean Cocteau. The inclusion of examples from their films in this book is twofold. It heightens the importance of foreign influences to the development of a singular way of storytelling according to which the camera closely registers the interplay between the characters' wandering, sensory bodies and the mise-en-scène, especially objects, as vital

to engendering the suspense that permeates the action. Additionally, it shows how my methodology and findings may be applied more widely to other generic or modal formations, national contexts, and contemporary narratives. In the case of these filmmakers, the influences were direct, which makes them especially relevant to a consideration of how the Gothic evolved and travelled between genres, styles, and countries.

Hathaway worked as an assistant director to Austrian émigré Josef von Sternberg in the 1920s (Pomainville 2016, 26). Sternberg's films, while not gothic, influenced the aesthetic with their emphasis on visual poetry, marginal characters, and masterful contrast lighting. This can be seen in Hathaway's 1935 adaptation of George du Maurier's novel, *Peter Ibbetson* (1891), a poetic fantasy about the boundless power of love, memory, and dreams, whose tragic heroes and emotional intensity, conveyed through expressionist chiaroscuro, recall Sternbergian visuals. Furthermore, the film, which I analyse in Chap. 6, seems thoroughly foreign and anachronistic, more in tune with 1920s European avant-gardes than with anything being produced in Hollywood at the time. Mixing the mental images that populate impressionist pictures with the clash between reality and escapist reverie that anchors poetic realism to frame a surrealist narrative remains unparalleled. Tellingly, surrealist stalwart André Breton called it a 'prodigious film, the triumph of surrealist thought' (1987, 128), and it featured prominently in his Paris exhibition 'Le Surréalisme en 1947'. Lubitsch, Hathaway recounts, likewise 'raved' about the 'marvelous picture' (2001, 125).

The modernist movement in art, to which he was exposed while in Chicago, marked the career of Vincente Minnelli, who toured endlessly with his vaudevillian family all through his childhood. His exposure to the works of Henri Matisse, Max Ernst, and Salvador Dalí was instrumental, as were the experimental films of émigré Luis Buñuel and Jean Cocteau. He relocated to New York in 1930, where he became an avid reader of Guy de Maupassant and the Brontë sisters (Naremore 1993, 10–14). Although best known for his musicals, Minnelli directed almost as many melodramas; both genres are marked by intense displacement and the clash of different classes, dream-worlds, and worldviews, oftentimes reminiscent of poetic realism. The musical melodrama *Brigadoon* (1954) bears the imprint of Carné's *Juliette* in the mesmerising disenchantment of a village lost in space and time where idyllic utopia quickly turns nightmarish. In addition, both films present the disappearance of the self as the answer to happiness. In *Brigadoon*, as in the female gothic *Undercurrent* (1946), photographed by Freund, Minnelli expresses 'his flair for surreal

and impressionist imagery' (de la Roche 1959, 4). His elegant, mobile camera and the investment in stylistic unity above all else distinctly recall impressionist and expressionist films. *Madame Bovary*'s (1949) Romantic aesthetic likewise veers towards the Gothic, with Emma Bovary's obsessive fantasies of grandeur and status quo, the melancholy yet, at times, quasi-satirical third-person narration, and the camera's minute attention to the décor and objects that increasingly suffocate her life.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Harlow worked in several productions for British International Pictures (BIP), part of the efforts to internationalise British cinema. Harlow was assistant director to E.A. Dupont in multiple-language productions, including *Cape Forlorn* (1930), and to German émigré Arthur Robison in *The Informer* (1929), photographed by German émigrés Werner Brandes and Theodor Sparkuhl. Both films build a claustrophobic, suspenseful mood through expressionist aesthetics that anticipate 1940s noir. Harlow later directed the gothic mysteries *Candles at Nine* (1944) and *Spellbound* (1941). His *While I Live* (1947), which I will explore in Chap. 8, recalls the Dupont dramas of the late 1920s in its slow pace and understated, sombre eeriness.

Cocteau was part of the cosmopolitan avant-garde (of European, Jewish, and Yiddish roots) that had found a home in 1910s Paris. He befriended Proust, worked with impressionist L'Herbier, and admired Chaplin and Eisenstein (Cocteau 1957, 141, 117–118), and his 'cinema of the senses' was likewise influenced by Méliès (Williams 2008, 41, 44). Myriad foreign personalities shaped his art: writing on *La Belle et la Bête* (1946), which I shall examine in Chap. 5, Cocteau draws on Goethe to describe the way 'truth and reality contradict each other' and on Vermeer to describe the work of costume designer Christian Bérard (1972, 7–8). There is also a link to Expressionism when, in 1934, following discussions in Paris with Robert Wiene, Cocteau agreed to the German director's request to play the role of Cesare in a sound remake of *Caligari*, which was ultimately shelved (Jung and Schatzberg 1999, 72).

Rather than being derivative, the films of these directors opened new doors that allowed the Gothic to develop and maintain its relevance and innovation across national and generic borders. The transnational talent flows from the 1910s to the 1950s created the cinematic Gothic as an intrusive aesthetic that was rapidly absorbed by film practitioners worldwide. European avant-gardist cinema, including French Impressionism and poetic realism, German Expressionism, and Soviet montage were all heavily influenced by Hollywood's invention of modern cinematic storytelling techniques, inclusive of continuity editing, the close-up, and

lighting. In turn, Hollywood's aesthetics were radically altered in their vibrant interaction with European films and travelling film personnel. Compositionally, the roving camera that brings characters and places together, the subjective perspective that reframes a scene, the mastery over the editing process that calls upon the viewer's active participation in meaning-making, the pivotal significance of particular objects to the construction and retrieval of memories—all these features exploit a stylistic sensibility that is wholly distinctive and thoroughly transnational. In the films of the travelling directors and those they directly inspired, this stylistic sensibility becomes thematically gothic as well, in their predilection for exilic characters who inhabit exilic spaces.

In this chapter, I have highlighted how the new ways of storytelling being developed in Hollywood in the 1910s became an inspiration to filmmakers around the world. Importantly, as we have seen, this influence is not exclusive to Hollywood, nor is Hollywood synonymous with 'American'. Over five decades, the travelling directors brought their experiences of knowledge exchange and displacement to the screen and co-created a genuinely global gothic aesthetic. Arising from fairground attractions and Méliès's trick films, the cinematic Gothic develops a fascination with nature and objects and turns artistic through the oneiric, exploratory cameras of the French Impressionists; it grows menacing in the chiaroscuro delusions of German and Austrian Expressionism; feeds off the spoils of the war in the working-class dystopias of French poetic realism; gains a terrifying cadence with Soviet montage; and becomes overtly disenchanted and cynical in the decadent criminal endeavours of American noir. Its overly dramatic mannerisms, thematic and aesthetic contrasts, and untamed explosions of feeling often give way to understatement, the literary use of voice-over narration, and a hint of ironic detachment, which betrays a typically British sensibility.

In 1920s Europe, two opposite movements contributed to the development of the gothic aesthetic. On the one hand, the concerted initiatives to promote a cross-border European film trade and the aspirations to create a European exhibition circuit guaranteed a faster circulation of films and personnel; on the other, various national governments adopted quotas and other protective legislation designed to stimulate internal production and regain a more substantial market share for European films, meaning that national industries strove to become more sophisticated and innovative to compete better with foreign, mainly American, productions. Britain relied on foreign talent, mostly from German-speaking countries; France developed a theoretically grounded approach to film as art;

Germany and Austria were granted access to a global market to export their highly sophisticated, intermedial films after the lifting of the ban imposed during World War I; Soviet Russia drew on American editing techniques and developed them, rethinking the cinema as a powerful ideological medium.

National cinemas were dialectical and heterogenous sites of international collaboration and imitation, which 'disputes the ideology of a national cinema that claims to be pure' and 'exemplifies the complex nature of cross-national appropriation and creativity' (Gemünden and Kaes 2003, 8). Indeed, the career paths of the professional travellers, the émigrés, and the exiles attest to 'a lively to-and-fro rather than one-way movements' (Hochscherf 2011, 64). Saunders's concluding argument about the relationship between Berlin and Hollywood during the Weimar years extends, I suggest, to the connections between the different industries mentioned in this chapter: 'Exchange was so voluminous and adoption or assimilation by one cinema of another's methods and techniques so routine that the web of influence and counterinfluence cannot be fully disentangled' (1994, 249). This chapter has posited the gothic aesthetic as inherently exilic, transnational, and multi-accented, a product of multiple, multiform exchanges and patterns of cross-fertilisation of techniques and technology which, in their constitutive diversity, coincide on specific formal-aesthetic, narrative, and thematic elements. The cinematic Gothic, we can conclude, does not possess a single origin: it emerged in the interstices of innovative techniques and technologies and the criss-crossing paths of film personnel.

The travelling directors accented their films in myriad ways: through the casting of foreign actors and technicians, the importation of national styles and techniques via sponsored apprenticeships and co-productions, the privileging of objects as vehicles for memory, and the insistence upon themes of failure, dislocation, loss, and disillusionment. The films' accented style therefore responds to the socio-cultural condition of displacement, inscribing into the mise-en-scène, atmosphere, and plotlines experiences of mobility, trespassing, claustrophobia, unbelonging, and motifs of itinerancy. Wherever they travelled, wherever they worked, these directors combined national and foreign styles that explore the memoryscapes of a world in which intimate spaces of absence and obsession, fear and devotion, love and mourning become haptic and embodied in dystopian characters as they are refracted through the melancholy of willed displacement and the challenges of forced uprootedness. The condition of exile (geographic, physical, and psychological) generates complex spaces of flows.

These flows—these travels—underlie both the lives of the practitioners and their films. In this chapter, I have contextualised the former; the remaining chapters will elucidate the latter.

Notes

1. Nostalgia in exilic or diasporic filmmaking is nonetheless present in specific genres, such as musical and romantic comedies (Hochscherf 2011, 98, 207).
2. As Petrie notes, some film historians' negative observations may be due to certain films not being widely available and, where they were, the prints were often not in top condition (2002, xii–xiii). In the 1985 edition, Petrie specifically lists *He Who Gets Slapped* as being mostly inaccessible at the time of writing, highlighting Maurice Tourneur and Browning as two directors whose work should be reassessed, considering the rediscovery of some of their silent films (3). Palmier's book dates from 1987, meaning these accessibility constraints would have applied to his research.

References

Abel, Richard. 1988. *French Film Theory and Criticism: 1907–1939*. Vol. 1. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Adorno, Theodor. [1951] 2005. *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*. Trans. E.F.N. Jephcott. London: Verso.

Aitken, Ian. 2001. *European Film Theory and Criticism: A Critical Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Albano, Caterina. 2016. *Memory, Forgetting and the Moving Image*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Amiel, Vincent. 2010. *Joseph L. Mankiewicz et son double*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Aragon, Louis. 2000. On Décor [1918]. In *The Shadow and Its Shadow: Surrealist Writings on the Cinema*, Ed. and Trans. Paul Hammond, 50–54. San Francisco: City Lights Books.

Aumont, Jacques, et al. 2008. *Esthétique du film*. Paris: Armand Collin.

Balázs, Béla. 1952. *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art*. Trans. Edith Bone. London: Dennis Dobson.

Ball, Alan M. 2003. *Imagining America: Influence and Images in Twentieth-Century Russia*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Barna, Yon. 1973. *Eisenstein*. Trans. Lise Hunter, ed. Oliver Stallybrass. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Barr, Charles. 2011. Hitchcock and Early Filmmakers. In *Companion to Alfred Hitchcock*, ed. Thomas Leitch and Leland Poague, 48–66. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.

Becker, Lutz. 2008. My Teacher Thorold Dickinson. In *Thorold Dickinson: A World of Film*, ed. Philip Horne and Peter Swaab, 122–128. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Bergfelder, Tim. 1996. The Production Designer and the Gesamtkunstwerk: German Film Technicians in the British Film Industry of the 1930s. In *Dissolving Views: Key Writings on British Cinema*, ed. Andrew Higson, 20–37. London: Cassell.

Bordwell, David. 1981. *The Films of Carl Theodor Dreyer*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. [1985] 2005. The Bounds of Difference. In *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960*, ed. David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, 73–87. London: Routledge.

Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. 2019. *Film History: An Introduction*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Bourget, Jean-Loup. 1973. Social Implications in the Hollywood Genres. *Journal of Modern Literature* 3 (2, April): 191–200.

———. 2005. *Hollywood: La norme et la marge*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Breton, André. [1937] 1987. *Mad Love*. Trans. Mary Ann Caws. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Brook, Vincent. 2009. *Driven to Darkness: Jewish É migré Directors and the Rise of Film Noir*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Canudo, Ricciotto. 1988. Reflections on the Seventh Art [1923]. In *French Film Theory and Criticism: 1907–1939,* Vol. 1. Trans. Claudia Gorbman, ed. Richard Abel, 291–303. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Cendrars, Blaise. On The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari [1922]. In *French Film Theory and Criticism: 1907–1939,* Vol. 1. Trans. Stuart Liebman, ed. Richard Abel, 271. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Cerisuelo, Marc. 2006. La présence germanique à Hollywood: un transfert culturel essential. In *Vienne et Berlin à Hollywood: nouvelles approches*, ed. Marc Cerisuelo, 11–27. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Charles, Alec. 2006. Double Identity: Presence and Absence in the Films of Tod Browning. In *The Films of Tod Browning*, ed. Bernd Herzogenrath, 79–93. London: Black Dog Publishing.

Chevalier, H. 1937. 'What's Wrong? An Involuntary Symposium.' With contributions from George Elvin et al. *The Cine-Technician* 3 (10, June-July): 50–51.

Cocteau, Jean. 1957. *Opium: The Diary of a Cure*. London: Peter Owen.

———. 1972. *Beauty and the Beast: Diary of a Film*. Trans. Ronald Duncan. New York: Dover.

Cole, Hubert. 1940. Conrad Veidt Replies. *Picturegoer* 9 (469, 18 May): 11.

Curtis, Barry. 2008. *Dark Places: The Haunted House in Film*. London: Reaktion.

Davis, Fred. 1979. *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia*. New York: Free Press.

de la Roche, Catherine. 1959. *Vincente Minnelli*. Wellington: The New Zealand Film Institute/Film Culture/de la Roche.

Deleuze, Gilles. [1986] 2005. *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. London: Continuum.

Delluc, Louis. 1920. *Photogénie*. Paris: Maurice de Brunoff.

———. 1988a. Beauty in the Cinema [1917]. In *French Film Theory and Criticism: 1907–1939*, ed. Richard Abel, vol. 1, 137–139. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

———. 1988b. Cinema: The Outlaw and His Wife [1919]. In *French Film Theory and Criticism: 1907–1939*, ed. Richard Abel, vol. 1, 188–189. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Dickinson, Thorold. 2008. Working with Pearson [1969]. In *Thorold Dickinson: A World of Film*, ed. Philip Horne and Peter Swaab, 40–43. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Dulac, Germaine. 1988. The Expressive Techniques of the Cinema [1924]. In *French Film Theory and Criticism: 1907–1939*, Vol. 1. Trans. Stuart Liebman, ed. Richard Abel, 305–314. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Eisenstein, Sergei. 1977. *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace.

———. 2010a. The Montage of Film Attractions [1924]. In *Sergei Eisenstein: Selected Works, Writings 1922–34*, ed. Richard Taylor, 39–58. London: I.B. Tauris.

———. 2010b. The Problem of the Materialist Approach to Form [1925]. In *Sergei Eisenstein: Selected Works, Writings 1922–34*, ed. Richard Taylor, 59–64. London: I.B. Tauris.

Eisner, Lotte H. 1969. *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt*. Trans. Roger Greaves. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Elsaesser, Thomas. 1984. The German Émigrés in Paris During the 1930s: Pathos and Leave-Taking. *Sight and Sound* 53 (4, Autumn): 278–283.

———. 2005. *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Elsaesser, Thomas, and Ginette Vincendeau. 1983. *Les Cinéastes allemands en France. Les Années trente*. Paris: Goethe Institute.

Epstein, Jean. 2012. On Certain Characteristics of Photogénie [1924]. In *Jean Epstein: Critical Essays and New Translations*. Trans. Tom Milne, ed. Sarah Keller and Jason N. Paul, 292–296. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Esquenazi, Jean-Pierre. 2012. *Le Film noir: Histoire et significations d'un genre populaire subversif*. Paris: CNRS Éditions.

Everett, Wendy, and Peter Wagstaff. 2004. Introduction. In *Cultures of Exile: Images of Displacement*, ed. Wendy Everett and Peter Wagstaff, ix–xix. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Ezra, Elizabeth. 2000. *Georges Méliès: The Birth of the Auteur*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Fabe, Marilyn. 2014. *Closely Watched Films: An Introduction to the Art of Narrative Film Technique*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Felleman, Susan. 1995. How High Was His Brow? Albert Lewin, His Critics and the Problem of Pretension. *Film History* 7 (4, Winter): 386–400.
Florin, Bo. 2013. *Transition and Transformation: Victor Sjöström in Hollywood 1923–1930*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
Forshaw, Barry. 2013. The British Influence. In *Gothic: The Dark Heart of Film*, ed. James Bell, 22–23. London: BFI.
Freund, Karl. 1934. Just What is "Montage"? *American Cinematographer* 15 (5, September): 204, 210.
Fujiwara, Chris. 1998. *Jacques Tourneur: The Cinema of Nightfall*. Jefferson: McFarland.
Gemünden, Gerd. 2014. *Continental Strangers: German Exile Cinema, 1933–1951*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Gemünden, Gerd, and Anton Kaes. 2003. Introduction. *New German Critique* 89 (Spring–Summer): 3–8.
Gergely, Gábor. 2012. *Foreign Devils: Exile and Host Nation in Hollywood's Golden Age*. New York: Peter Lang.
Greco, J. 1999. *The File on Robert Siodmak in Hollywood, 1941–1951*. Boca Raton: Universal-Publishers.
Guback, Thomas H. 1969. *The International Film Industry: Western Europe and America Since 1945*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Gunning, Tom. 2012. Preface. In *Jean Epstein: Critical Essays and New Translations*, ed. Sarah Keller and Jason N. Paul, 13–21. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
Hathaway, Henry. 2001. *Henry Hathaway*, ed. Rudy Behlmer. Lanham: Scarecrow Press.
Havis, Allan. 2008. *Cult Films: Taboo and Transgression*. Lanham: University Press of America.
Hayward, Susan. 2000. *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*. London: Routledge.
Herpe, Noël. 2008. Le drôle d'expressionnisme du cinéma français. In *Le Cinéma expressionniste: De Caligari à Tim Burton*, ed. Jacques Aumont and Bernard Benoliel, 127–140. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes/ La Cinémathèque Française.
Herzogenrath, Bernd. 2008. Introduction. In *The Cinema of Tod Browning: Essays of the Macabre and Grotesque*, ed. Bernd Herzogenrath. Jefferson: McFarland.
Higham, Charles. 1962–63. Hitchcock's World. *Film Quarterly* 16 (2, Winter): 3–16.
Higson, Andrew. 1986. "Britain's Outstanding Contribution to the Film": The Documentary-Realist Tradition. In *All Our Yesterdays: 90 Years of British Cinema*, ed. Charles Barr, 72–97. London: BFI.

———. 1999. Polyglot Films for an International Market: E.A. Dupont, the British Film Industry, and the Idea of a European Cinema, 1926–1930. In *"Film Europe" and "Film America": Cinema, Commerce and Cultural Exchange, 1920–1939*, ed. Andrew Higson and Richard Maltby, 274–301. Exeter: University of Exeter Press.

———. 2010. Transnational Developments in European Cinema in the 1920s. *Transnational Cinemas* 1 (1): 69–82.

Higson, Andrew, and Richard Maltby, eds. 1999. *'Film Europe' and 'Film America': Cinema, Commerce and Cultural Exchange, 1920–1939*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press.

Hochscherf, Tobias. 2011. *The Continental Connection: German-Speaking Émigrés and British Cinema, 1927–45*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Horne, Philip. 2008. About Thorold Dickinson: Two Exchanges with Martin Scorsese. In *Thorold Dickinson: A World of Film*, ed. Philip Horne and Peter Swaab, 23–34. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Horne, Philip, and Peter Swaab. 2008. Introducing Thorold Dickinson. In *Thorold Dickinson: A World of Film*, ed. Philip Horne and Peter Swaab, 3–22. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Horner, Avril, and Sue Zlosnik. 2012. Comic Gothic. In *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter, 239–251. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Jacobs, Lewis. 1939. *The Rise of the American Film: A Critical History*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & co.

James, Nick. 2010. Britain's Secret Brazilian. *Sight and Sound* 20 (8, August): 32–36.

Joyce, Mark. [1996] 2007. The Soviet Montage Cinema of the 1920s. In *Introduction to Film Studies*, ed. Jill Nelmes, 364–397. London: Routledge.

Jung, Uli, and Walter Schatzberg. 1993. The Invisible Man Behind Caligari: The Life of Robert Wiene. *Film History* 5 (1): 22–35.

———. 1999. *Beyond Caligari: The Films of Robert Wiene*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Kafka, Hans. 2003. What Our Immigration Did for Hollywood, and Vice Versa [1944]. *New German Critique* 89 (Spring-Summer): 185–189.

Koepnick, Lutz. 2002. *The Dark Mirror: German Cinema Between Hitler and Hollywood*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 2003. Doubling the Double: Robert Siodmak in Hollywood. *New German Critique* 89: 81–104.

Koestler, Arthur. 1954. *The Invisible Writing: An Autobiography*. New York: Macmillan.

Kracauer, Sigfried. 1946. Hollywood's Terror Films: Do They Reflect an American State of Mind? *Commentary* 2 (January): 132–136.

Kuleshov, Lev. 1974. Americanitis [1922]. In *Kuleshov on Film: Writings*, Trans. and Ed. Ronald Levaco, 127–130. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Landry, Lionel. 1988. Caligarism or the Theater's Revenge [1922]. In *French Film Theory and Criticism: 1907–1939,* Vol. 1, Trans. Stuart Liebman, ed. Richard Abel, 268–270. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Luhrssen, David. 2013. *Mamoulian: Life on Stage and Screen*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Lundemo, Trond. 2012. A Temporal Perspective: Jean Epstein's Writings on Technology and Subjectivity. In *Jean Epstein: Critical Essays and New Translations*, ed. Sarah Keller and Jason N. Paul, 207–226. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

McGilligan, Patrick. 2003. *Alfred Hitchcock: A Life in Darkness and Light*. New York: ReganBooks.

Miller, Gabriel. 2013. *William Wyler: The Life and Films of Hollywood's Most Celebrated Director*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Naficy, Hamid. 2001. *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Naremore, James. 1993. *The Films of Vincente Minnelli*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Nelson, Victoria. 2001. *The Secret Life of Puppets*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Palmier, Jean-Michel. 2006. *Weimar in Exile: The Antifascist Emigration in Europe and America*. Trans. David Fernbach. London: Verso.

Petrie, Graham. 2002. *Hollywood Destinies: European Directors in America, 1922–1931*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Phillips, Gene D. 1998. *Exiles in Hollywood: Major European Film Directors in America*. London: Associated University Presses.

Poe, Edgar Allan. 1840. *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard.

Pomainville, Harold N. 2016. *Henry Hathaway: The Lives of a Hollywood Director*. London: Rowman and Littlefield.

Portuges, Catherine. 2012. Hollywood on the Danube: Hungarian Filmmakers in a Transnational Context. *AHEA: E-Journal of the American Hungarian Educators Association* 5: n.p.

Prasch, Thomas. 2019. The Stranger in the House: Interwar Crisis Comes Home in Alfred Hitchcock's *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog* (1927). In *Horror Comes Home: Essays on Hauntings, Possessions and Other Domestic Terrors in Cinema*, ed. Cynthia J. Miller and A. Bowdoin Van Riper, 232–241. Jefferson: MacFarland.

Ramalho, Joana Rita. 2017. Mobile Maps: The Face of Death in 1940s Romantic-Gothic Films. In *From the Supernatural to the Uncanny*, ed. Stephen M. Hart and Zoltán Biedermann, 155–173. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.

———. 2020. The Uncanny Afterlife of Dolls: Reconfiguring Personhood Through Object Vivification in Gothic Film. *Studies in Gothic Fiction* 6 (2): 27–38.

Robertson, James C. 1994. *The Casablanca Man: The Cinema of Michael Curtiz*. London: Routledge.
Roger, Philippe. 1989. *Lettre d'une inconnue, de Max Ophuls*. Crisnée: Yellow Now.
Said, Edward W. 2001. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. London: Granta.
Sainsbury, Frank, 1940. Close-Ups – No. 7. Thorold Dickinson. *The Cine-Technician* 6 (27, August-September): 66–68.
Saunders, Thomas J. 1994. *Hollywood in Berlin: American Cinema and Weimar Germany*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Schneider, Roland. 1990. *Histoire du cinéma allemand*. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf.
Schroeder, David. 2012. *Hitchcock's Ear: Music and the Director's Art*. London: Continuum.
Scorsese, Martin. 1998. Foreword. In *Jacques Tourneur: The Cinema of Nightfall*, ed. Chris Fujiwara. Jefferson: McFarland.
Slide, Anthony. 1996. *de Toth on de Toth: Putting the Drama in Front of the Camera*. London: Faber and Faber.
Smedley, Nick. 2011. *A Divided World: Hollywood Cinema and É migré Directors in the Era of Roosevelt and Hitler, 1933–48*. Bristol: Intellect.
Spadoni, Robert. 2007. *Uncanny Bodies: The Coming of Sound Film and the Origins of the Horror Genre*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Spoto, Donald. [1983] 1987. *The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock*. New York: Ballantine Books.
Sterritt, David. 2011. From Transatlantic to Warner Bros. In *Companion to Alfred Hitchcock*, ed. Thomas Leitch and Leland Poague, 309–328. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
Stone, Peter. 2008. All About Joe. In *Joseph L. Mankiewicz: Interviews*, ed. Brian Dauth, 169–188. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
Sudendorf, Werner. 1993. Expressionism and Film: The Testament of Dr Caligari. In *Expressionism Reassessed*, ed. Shulamith Behr et al., 91–100. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Švankmajer, Jan. 2014. *Touching and Imagining: An Introduction to Tactile Art*. Trans. Stanley Dalby, ed. Cathryn Vasseleu. London: I.B. Tauris.
Taylor, John Russell. 1983. *Strangers in Paradise: The Hollywood É migrés, 1933–1950*. London: Faber and Faber.
Taylor, Richard and Ian Christie, eds. [1988] 2005. *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents, 1896–1939*. Abingdon: Routledge.
Thompson, Kristin. 1993. Eisenstein's Early Films Abroad. In *Eisenstein Rediscovered*, ed. Ian Christie and Richard Taylor, 52–62. London: Routledge.
———. 1996. National or International Films? The European Debate during the 1920s. *Film History* 8 (3): 281–296.
———. 2005. *Herr Lubitsch Goes to Hollywood: German and American Film After World War I*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
Tourneur, Maurice. 1923. Pictures: Tourneur Defends Director Control. *Variety* 71 (6, 28 June): 20.

Turim, Maureen. [1989] 2014. *Flashbacks in Film: Memory & History*. Abingdon: Routledge.
Turk, Edward Baron. 1989. *Child of Paradise: Marcel Carné and the Golden Age of French Cinema*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Turvey, Malcolm. 2008. *Doubting Vision: Film and the Revelationist Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Vincendeau, Ginette. 1988. "Des portes ouvertes seulement à contrecoeur". Les cinéastes allemands en France pendant les années trente. *Positif* 323 (January): 45–50.
———. 1992. Noir is also a French Word: The French Antecedents of Film Noir. In *The Movie Book of Film Noir*, ed. Ian Cameron, 49–58. London: Studio Vista.
Vuillermoz, Emile. 1988. Before the Screen: Aesthetic [1920]. In *French Film Theory and Criticism: 1907–1939*, ed. Richard Abel, vol. 1, 225–228. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Wall-Romana, Christophe. 2013. *Jean Epstein: Corporeal Cinema and Film Philosophy*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Watson, Devin. 2009. *Horror Screenwriting: The Nature of Fear*. Studio City: Michael Wiese.
Williams, James S. 2008. *Jean Cocteau*. London: Reaktion.
Wood, Robin. 2002. *Hitchcock's Films Revisited*. New York: Columbia University Press.
———. 2004. An Introduction to the American Horror Film. In *Planks of Reason: Essays on the Horror Film*, ed. Barry Keith Grant and Christopher Sharrett, 107–141. Oxford: Scarecrow Press.
Youngblood, Denise J. 1992. *Movies for the Masses: Popular Cinema and Soviet Society in the 1920s*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

CHAPTER 3

Memory-Objects and Journeys of Re-collection

A dark projection room. Bursts of white light cut through the darkness as an early Mickey Mouse cartoon short is projected onto a wide screen in the background. We cannot perceive it whole, though: lighting equipment and cables block most of the diegetic screen. An up-beat diegetic tune accompanies the black-and-white Disney picture. Shot from a low angle, we notice two figures, two men—a younger one, standing sideways to the camera, and another sitting behind a small desk, looking up whilst pensively scratching his head. Cigarette in mouth, the older man murmurs: 'Appleton, Appleton… '. In a medium shot, he continues: 'There were four Appletons. That was in… 19 … er… 02. They were clowns. They were very good, too'. A reverse shot reveals the younger man, Eben, eager to learn about Jennie's parents and, by consequence, her past. He interrupts the old man, Pete, gently reminding him that he is only interested in a family with a high-wire act from 1910. Cutting to a closer shot of Eben's interlocutor, we realise that he will not abide by Eben's wishes and calmly continues his narrative as though he had not heard him, recalling 'a Mike and Pat Appleton. Irishes', who 'did some songs' in 1904 'or maybe 1905'. Eben interrupts him once more, getting visibly impatient, and repeats: '1910'. 'Please', the man interjects, 'let me do it my way. I have to go backwards and then start from the beginning, you see. Otherwise, I will not remember and I don't like not to remember. Then I'll think I'm getting a little, er, old, you see'. Eben apologises for the trouble he is causing and the old man immediately replies: 'No trouble at

J. Jacob Ramalho, *Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film*,
Palgrave Gothic, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-73628-5_3

all. I've a very good memory. It's only sometimes that I don't remember things very well'. He pauses, thinks about the question for another second, and then adds somewhat cryptically: 'Clara will know'. At the mention of Clara's name, a violin invades the nondiegetic sonic space with Jennie's leitmotif (a violin arrangement of the flute solo from Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*). Pete gives Eben Clara's address, Eben says goodbye, and rushes out of the Rialto theatre, as Pete exclaims: 'Good memory, no?'.

William Dieterle's *Portrait of Jennie* (1948) tells the story of Eben, a penniless painter, who is mesmerised by, and later falls in love with, Jennie, an enigmatic young woman he chances upon one wintry evening. Every time they meet, Jennie, whom we first see as a child, seems to age abnormally fast: she is hurrying to grow up so she can be with Eben, she says. The acceleration of time and their eerie encounters in snowy parks, ice skating rinks, and misty streets convey the idea that no matter how fast she ages, their love can never be. From person to person, Eben tracks down Jennie's traces, longing to find out more about her. Jennie, we will come to realise, has long been dead and is doomed to relive her death year after year.

After the Rialto sequence, a fade-out / fade-in takes us to Clara's living room. She is pulling out a large photo album from a chest, and Eben sits down to look through the pages. Clara finds the trapeze act and, right there, facing down, stuck between the pages of the album, is a loose picture. Eben grabs it and turns it to him. The camera zooms in quickly on the picture and, as a photograph of a young Jennie is revealed, the haunting notes of her leitmotif fill the soundtrack. To Eben's utter disbelief, she looks exactly the same as when he first met her in Central Park; she is even wearing the same clothes. Clara's photograph, however, is decades old. Stressing her melancholy fondness for Jennie, while adding a layer of foreboding, the camera frames Clara in a close-up, looking away from Eben and into the distance as she recalls: 'She was a darling little girl, with big, sad eyes'. Continuing their conversation, Eben learns that Jennie's parents had been killed when a wire broke during their act, that Jennie was there when it happened, and that she might have been sent to a convent. Eben thanks Clara for her time, to which she replies: 'No, thank *you*, Mr Adams. It isn't often I have a chance to share my memories. I do hope you find Jennie'. The possibility to share memory, to transfer the personal or private to an external other, is treasured. In this process of transmission, the personal or individual memory becomes social: it is constructed via speech

acts, touch, and visual cues, through Clara's first-person narration of past events and her photographs. At this point in the story, Eben does not yet know that Jennie has been dead for many years. This sharing of memories between Clara and Eben therefore turns out to be a very significant leap forward in the latter's tireless journey to track Jennie's origins and her identity.

The most striking feature in the two sequences described above is the way Pete and Clara access memory and directly refer to their own acts of recollection. The whole film, in fact, is structured around individual and collective processes of remembering. Old Pete never does remember the right Appletons, but manages to direct Eben to Clara who, through objects (photographs), gives continuity to the chain of memories that brings the characters together and propels the narrative. From memory to memory, the other is slowly re-collected. Seen through a gothic aesthetic, the act of journeying is a quest, a deliberate and persistent process of re-membering, whereby the characters seize, and are seized by, the memories that have contaminated their surroundings.

I propose here an exploration of memory in relation to objects and the senses, while suggesting that the representation of memory and memoryscapes in the films is closely related to the affective experiences of wandering and uprootedness. Journeys of re-collection are the focus of this chapter, which explores the hoarding and retrieval of memories through what I shall call 'memory-objects'—objects that have not only been used to store recollections but have become themselves memories, such as photographs and wax figures. In its tangibility, memory runs the risk of being co-opted and becoming transmissible, destabilising identity. This strengthens my overarching argument that the aesthetic foregrounds an exilic discourse wherein the self becomes divorced or estranged from its identity as it tries to recover the past. As detailed in the previous chapter, the films of the travelling directors concede vital attention to the *photogénie* of objects and their mise-en-scène. A sustained connection to and fetishisation of meaningful objects as 'icons of homeland and of past' is a recognisable trope in accented cinema (Naficy 2001, 289), one which Laura U. Marks discusses through a Benjaminian-Deleuzian approach (2000, 77–126). In the films that concern me in this book, I argue, with Marks, that certain objects 'condense time within themselves' and 'encode material conditions of displacement as well as discursive ruptures' (77, 92). Unlike Marks, however, I will investigate how this happens by surface-reading moments of haptic contact between subject and object, rather than tracing

the (inter)cultural histories and trajectories of specific commodities. The two sequences from *Portrait of Jennie* will continue to provide the basis for an analysis of memory in the first section of this chapter, and I will subsequently rely on a range of other films to develop my investigation into memory-objects and re-collectors.

Memory

French historian Pierre Nora analyses contemporary memory and states that '[t]he quest for memory is the search for one's history' (1989, 13). To Nora, this type of memory (*lieux de mémoire*, or memory as personal history) has usurped traditional forms of memory as something 'communal, ritualistic, lived and living'—what he calls 'true memory' or 'milieux de mémoire' (13). The former are those places which remind us of past events, but which are not memories. The latter are the real places of our memories. The films of the travelling directors, I argue, engage in a creative manipulation of filmic expression to permit a minute exploration of subjectivity through a focus on human experience and memory. In so doing, they offer a hybrid type of memory: one that lives interstitially, presenting individual quests that are nonetheless communal (intersubjective) and ritualistic, and a search for a memory that is living and organic. Memory is unlocked and encountered in spaces of flows—physical, geographical, temporal, and psychological. These exercises in mobility occur in conversation with a persistent search for knowledge, identity, and belonging, and with the experiences of displacement—temporary or permanent; positive, negative, or both—that punctuated the lives of the directors.

My understanding of memory is indebted to the work of Edward S. Casey, especially as developed in *Remembering* (1987), which conceives of memory as a spatial and temporal environment that exceeds the mind and the physical human body and extends outward. Casey discusses three types of remembering that 'are not exclusively mentalistic, representational, or recollective': body memory, place memory, and commemoration (2000, xi). Given that I am concerned here with *representations* of, rather than embodied, memory, I will not ground my readings in Casey's definitions, but will refer to them when appropriate. Instead, I deploy the hyphenated term 're-collection', or 're-membering', to indicate the combination of different modalities of recall that emphasise the idea of

kinaesthesia as necessary to psychical and physical acts of remembering, as I shall detail further along.

Casey argues that 'remembering is at all times presupposed, […] because it is always at work: it is continually going on' (ix). Indeed, he adds,

> there are few moments in which we are not steeped in memory; and this immersion includes each step we take, each thought we think, each word we utter. Indeed, every fiber of our bodies, every cell of our brains, holds memories—as does everything physical outside bodies and brains, even those inanimate objects that bear the marks of their past histories upon them in mute profusion. What is memory-laden exceeds the scope of the human: memory takes us into the environing world as well as into our individual lives. (ix)

We inhabit memory. Memory envelops us, it informs our actions and offers itself to the touch through our sensory engagement with the objects, places, spaces, and people that surround us. We live in and through memory. As Casey's words elucidate, memory can be envisaged as more than a psychological and bodily phenomenon: it exists beyond the bounds of our bodies as a spatial and temporal environment, too. The films of the travelling directors navigate this 'immersion' in memory using the Gothic, an aesthetic of the surface, to probe the complexity of bodies, places, and objects as sites of mnemonic meaning.

Going back to *Portrait of Jennie's* Rialto theatre, a significant detail about Pete's inability to remember is his flawed, and ultimately unsuccessful, process of recollection. The old man searches the most recondite areas of his memory and carries on talking about previous families of performers, insisting that he must remember things this way—always going back to the beginning. Pete confronts us here with a question of origin and diachronic progression. Jennie's exact provenance will remain unknown and so the mnemonic exercise of going back to the beginning proves untenable. Like time itself, Jennie has no beginning and no end.

Pete's incapacity for precise, willed recollection further points to the non-linearity of personal, autobiographical memory, which poses a challenge to the recollection journey. In *How Societies Remember* (1989), Paul Connerton notes that, to experimental psychologists, 'literal recall is very rare and unimportant, remembering being not a matter of reproduction but of construction; it is the construction of "schema", a coding which

enables us to distinguish, and therefore, to recall' (27). More than reproducing or representing the past, memory constructs ways to interpret it. In this sense, it is helpful to consider memories as 'highly selective reconstructions', 'never a mirror image of the past, but rather an expressive indication of the needs and interests of the person or group doing the remembering in the present' (Erll 2011, 8). Alan J. Parkin reminds us of this 'fundamental axiom'—that memory retrieval 'is essentially a reconstructive process' which intermingles current experience and stored information (2017, 70). Pete's struggles to access the original memory attest to the fallibility of remembering as reproduction; moreover, he cannot 'construct' memories or establish links between past events, meaning his voluntary access to stored information is blocked. Pete's memory glitch therefore confronts us with the shortcomings of purposive memory and corroborates Adorno's observation that '[n]o-one has [memories] at his disposal in [a] free and voluntary way' ([1951] 2005, 166). It takes work to revive and retrieve a memory—except when it springs up on us, unsettling the orderly experience of everyday life. These two modes of remembering correspond, respectively, to voluntary and involuntary memory.

Voluntary memory, the literal or willed recall mentioned above, is a memory 'in service of the intellect' which, according to Walter Benjamin, 'retains no trace' of the past (1968, 158). Involuntary memory, on the other hand, is recovered suddenly as it bursts through consciousness, demanding our affective involvement. The phrase '*mémoire involontaire*', first coined by Marcel Proust in *Remembrance of Things Past*, refers to a non-cognitive type of memory: as with Proust's madeleine, it is spontaneously prompted by a vivid and unexpected sensory encounter with a material object. In his analysis of Proust, Benjamin considers that true (as opposed to intentional) memory is involuntary and it alone can transport us back to the past (158). Showing a clear preference for this type of memory, Benjamin describes *la mémoire involontaire* as a 'free-floating', 'rejuvenating force' (1999b, 244, 246), based on a kind of 'productive disorder' that stands opposed to the 'registry' that is voluntary memory (1999c, 211). A key idea, which I begin to explore here and will develop throughout this book, is that the gothic aesthetic deploys both types of memory, confronting conscious and systematic recollection with the shock and unpredictability of involuntary remembering. Both provoke a jolt of emotion that returns the past to us, yet they are also corrupted, corrosive, and dangerous. Once and again gothic characters either fail to associate a sensory stimulus with a memory or re-enact the tortuous process of calling

upon memories only to have their expectations of remembering thwarted or delayed, as evidenced in the many amnesiacs that populate the films, namely in *Juliette*, *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, and *While I Live*, which I explore in Chaps. 7 and 8.

To remember, in the Gothic, furthermore involves a social performance, a 'remembering *with others*' and via others; it is, to borrow from Casey, a way of 'get[ting] in touch with the past actively, thanks to concerted efforts at talking about it' ([1987] 2000, 105). The conversation with Clara illustrates this performative and intersubjective dimension of memory. While old Pete is clearly in an active position, trying to recount the past, the peculiar necessity to preserve the chronological order of lived experience in his retelling undercuts his attempts. Casey's distinction between reminiscing and recounting is relevant in this regard: unlike the close activity of 'recounting', which requires a structured narrative form, reminiscing is more organic and free from retelling events in the sequential order of their occurrence (106). Recounting, in this sense, appears closer to willed recollection, while the more anarchic and chaotic reminiscing seems more attuned to involuntary acts of remembering. Pete appears to be incapable of both reminiscing and recounting. His method of recall—going back to the distant past only to work his way up to a more recent past—relying on voluntary memory (not triggered by the senses) and its internal processes alone, is deemed unfit for purpose. The volitional sifting of the past is negated, and the cognitive unity of remembering is dismantled. In the Rialto theatre, the bright light that emanates from the film projector and disrupts the surrounding darkness might have stood as a metaphor for knowledge and enlightenment, 'as a symbol of intellectual clarity' (Wheelwright 1958, 404). As is, it produces the opposite effect. Its instability—the beams of light that flash and flicker—seem more accurately to obfuscate the mind of the character and obliterate his memory, signalling instead the fragility and precariousness of the act of remembering. All that appears to be left in that room is the memory of cinema itself, represented by the old Mickey Mouse cartoon.

The decision to include this one-reel short in the memory-laden mise-en-scène of the film is worth considering. The animated feature is *The Whoopee Party* (1932), starring Mickey and Minnie Mouse at a house gathering that gets gradually more frenzied. As Leonard Maltin explains, '[t]he music is virtually nonstop' and the 'whole cartoon moves to [it]'; 'when the party starts to jump, every single inch of picture is filled with dancing figures' (1973, 263). Even though the soundtrack of the cartoon

is muted, its light-heartedness is somewhat picked up by the film's orchestral score, comprising Russian exile Dimitri Tiomkin's arrangement of pieces by Debussy. This sonic element thus undermines the seriousness of the scene and magnifies Eben's child-like impatience. The 'general gaiety' of the animal characters (Watts 1997, 36), in turn, lends the image the movement which the slow-paced exchange between Eben and old Pete otherwise lacks, and it does so through boisterous excess: an excess of dancing and jumping; an excess of music, comedy, light, and movement. The conversation at the Rialto is central to Eben's search for Jennie and yet Dieterle chooses to draw the viewer's attention away from it and on to the Disney short, constructing the scene in such a way as to distract us from the plot. The low-key lighting that envelops the human characters in a gothic-noir atmosphere, along with Pete's broken dialogue, punctuated by hesitation and ellipses, further contribute to our visual neglect of the two men. In a way, the cartoon introduces a moment of respite from the plot, a moment of pause and homage to the cinema—to the films that breathe life into the past, animating it, bringing joy, music, and movement to lighten the burdens of the present.

The use of the mischievous Mickey Mouse—which, when the film was released in 1948, was already an affective icon of childhood, 'known and adored […] in every country in the world where there are motion picture screens' (Carr 1931, 55)—places the focus firmly on memory and the past. There is a possible link here to the experience of dislocation, if we read Mickey Mouse films as Benjamin does, as 'founded on the motif of leaving home in order to learn what fear is' (1999a, 545), a trope which resonates with the gothic literary and cinematic tradition. Benjamin might be referencing the fairy tale 'The Story of the Youth Who Went Forth to Learn What Fear Was' (1819) by the Brothers Grimm (*KHM* 4), but while the boy in the fairy tale left home 'to learn how to shudder' (2016, 12), exile filmmakers, for instance, left home because they had already learned how to do so. Mickey, a symbol of uncomplicated childhood fun, captivates the viewer's imagination, unlike Pete's entropic non-remembering which, in this regard, might be read as pointing towards a form of trauma—a deliberate refusal or medical inability to remember, to unlock the past. It is Jennie's leitmotif, emerging in the underscore, that pulls us back to the storyline as a soaring violin signals to the audience that Eben's journey can continue and that the truth of Jennie's past is ever closer.

Unlike Pete's method of recall, Clara's journey through memory relies, conversely, on a visual medium—photographs. The mediation of memory is effected through touch (her holding the album) and sight (the act of looking at the pictures), which enable her to quickly retrieve her memories, verbalise them, and share them with others. Both characters depend upon the same mode of remembering—voluntary memory—but Clara's takes its cue from the material, sensory world, heightening the acuity of recall. Assigning tangible imagery to a memory, then, might be the only way to ensure apposite recollection. Clara and Pete appear as the guardians of Jennie's memory, taking it from the past into the present, thus enabling Eben's detective work. As a consumer of memory, Eben can only move forward in his investigation and restore Jennie's history through direct manual and ocular contact with material repositories of memory. When untriggered by sensory perception, namely via virtual images, such as photographs and animation films, the characters cannot access memory. In its sustained foregrounding of the importance of multisensory mimetic and mnemic media, such as film, painting, and photography, *Portrait of Jennie* seems to make a case for memory as intimately cinematic, and for the cinema as a privileged purveyor, keeper, and creator of memories.

Ghostly Jennie is all fabricated memory. More pointedly, she embodies the Gothic's dwelling between states of remembering, imagining, and premonition. Eben's mind creates links between the many accounts of Jennie's life that he physically gathers throughout the film, but the exercise of 'filling in the blanks' in the different narratives pertains to the imagination, meaning that memory, the past, and imagination become entangled in re-membering journeys. Casey tells us that imagination is typically associated with the notion of futurity (with desired experiential events), while memory, on the contrary, points towards anamnesis, that is, the recalling of things past and of lived experiences. Imagination, he writes, 'projects us out beyond ourselves while memory takes us back behind ourselves' (2009, xvii). Recollected Jennie is, in this sense, as much a figure of the past as of the present, which is, in turn, already a future. Jennie, significantly, dispels the idea of the future as we normally understand it: 'Eben, do you think people can know what lies ahead? I mean, what's going to happen to them?' As she utters these words, the frame composition enhances her ethereality. Posing for Eben, she appears in the background of the shot, occupying the middle of the frame, her light-coloured dress matching the light-coloured studio walls and curtains. Three beams of light slightly blur her figure. In the foreground, we see

Eben's black, silhouetted profile painting, his hand movements contrasting with Jennie's stillness. 'You know how you feel sad about things sometimes?', she continues as the camera cuts to a soft focus, medium close-up of her face to the sounds of her leitmotif. 'About things that have never happened? Perhaps they're the things that are going to happen to us. Perhaps we know it and we're just afraid to admit it to ourselves'. This scene epitomises the pictorial representation of memory in a way that is thoroughly cinematic. Through the dialogue, it also equates the future with the past. Ungraspable—her identity an uncanny patchwork of memories—Jennie embodies a temporal, spatial, and mnemonic limen.

The Gothic's restless past is intimately connected to memory and perception. Henri Bergson theorises the relationship between the two concepts, stating that they constantly interlace with each other to the degree that past images (memory) 'complete our present experience, enriching it with experience already acquired' and may even replace our perception of the present (1911, 70–72). Merleau-Ponty develops the idea of an amalgamation between recollection, the present, and the past, arguing that memory 'is built out of the progressive and continuous passing of one instant into another, and the interlocking of each one, with its whole horizon, in the thickness of its successor' ([1945] 2002, 309–310). Similarly, Adorno suggests that 'memories cannot be conserved in drawers and pigeon-holes; in them the past is indissolubly woven into the present' ([1951] 2005, 166). The past is continually impressing upon the thickness of the present. Merleau-Ponty further clarifies that 'there would be no present, that is to say, no sensible world with its thickness and inexhaustible richness, if perception, in Hegel's words, did not retain a past in the depth of the present, and did not contract that past into that depth' ([1945] 2002, 279).

In line with Bergson, Merleau-Ponty, and Adorno, Timothy Mathews explains that 'perceptions of the present and in the present cannot be preserved or protected from their recollection, as much part of the now as perception itself' (2011, 328). By extension, memory traces are affective traces that reconfigure remembering as an experience of perception, of the present. An overall consequence of the immediacy of a perception that is always already past is the feeling of being permanently haunted, permanently in touch with all that has been and yet still lingers. It is to conceive of oneself as being already part memory—a repository of the bygone, a living testament to yesterday. Like the past, memory too is mobile and ever-changing. As Benjamin writes, 'an experienced event is finite—[…]

confined to one sphere of experience; a remembered event is infinite, because it is merely a key to everything that happened before it and after it' (1999b, 238). Remembering opens a passageway to the past and our every action is woven into the haunting, never-ending, all-encompassing fabric of memory.

Hitchcock's *Rebecca* offers a paradigmatic example of a living, haunting past in the narrator's morbid obsession with her husband's first wife and the housekeeper's pathological devotion to her former mistress, which culminates in her self-immolation. Tellingly, the titular character's fateful boat bears the ominous name 'Je reviens' ('I will return'), unsubtly materialising the past's unwavering hold on the present. As I will argue in more depth in Chap. 6, *Rebecca* aptly illustrates the paradoxical status of memory in the Gothic, showcasing, to appropriate Esther Leslie's words, the ways in which '[t]he past is re-worked, re-told, remembered, forgotten, mis-remembered, and subject to revision through the very fact of memory' (2003, 183). Memory is not the past. It is rather a form of engaging with the past, a past that is subjectively and partially retrieved because it has been sifted through personal experience and inexorably reshaped amid the interwoven textures of different temporalities.

Dieterle is invested in the staging of memory in its relation to identity, professional development, and personal fulfilment. The many close-ups of Jennie strengthen her existence as a memory and allow for a reading of the film as a social commentary on memory discourses and artistic inspiration—a reinterpretation of the *furor poeticus* (artistic frenzy) of Romantic poets, novelists, and artists, who alternated suddenly—and sometimes violently—between sane and insane patterns of thought. Inasmuch as it represents the familiar association of the Romantics with 'extreme solitude, an inward turn precluding popular comprehension or acceptance, or anything other than flight from the social universe', Dieterle's fictional painter encapsulates, to appropriate James Whitehead's words about Romantic poets, 'the solitary individualism of the avant-garde artist' touched by madness, 'the most solitary of afflictions' (2017, 2). The madness of divine inspiration is here enacted as a lone painter's obsessive quest for his muse, invisible to everyone else, in a narrative steeped in an atmospheric aesthetic that turns the screen, through superimposition, into an oil canvas at specific moments, so that the shots appear textured, fibrous, literally pictorialising the real by haptically fusing memory and representation, vision and touch, reality and myth, film and painting.

Read in the light of post-World War II America, Eben's lostness seems to visually echo the times, while the lingering sense of hope for the future (which Jennie brings him), paired with the haptic feel of the textured shots, generates a multi-layered temporality that allows for the emergence of the ghost-muse. Jennie's repeated, cyclical death takes on strong historical and political connotations, mirroring the cycles of war and peace and evoking the numerous victims of violent conflicts, both those who perished and those who had to grow up too fast, and are now stuck in between the past and the present, life and death. Jennie's hold over Eben and his unshakeable belief in the existence of the ghost might therefore signify the ephemeral, yet powerful, hope of a better, happier future. Thus interpreted, the deaths of both Jennie and Eben (the artist and his muse), could represent the death of the utopian dream, whose beauty and hopefulness are nonetheless preserved for future generations: at the end of the film, Eben's portrait of Jennie hangs in a museum to the delight of the visitors, who ask: 'Was she real?', echoing the conflation of memory and imagination.

Memory-Objects

The gothic aesthetic is thoroughly object-oriented. There is a keen obsession with things and an excess of attention to objects, which in the course of the narratives, become increasingly conspicuous and obtrusive.[1] The portrait of Jennie and the photograph that Clara shows Eben point towards an approach to memory that relates intimately to objects. The role objects play in the narratives, as stressed by the camera, the cinematography, and the plot is vital to the study of the aesthetic. The human reliance on objects as safe storage for memories signals a well-known phenomenological position. As Adrian Forty remarks in *The Art of Forgetting* (1999), 'the Western tradition of memory since the Renaissance has been founded upon an assumption that material objects, whether natural or artificial, can act as the analogues of human memory' (2001, 2). Forty goes on to say that, throughout the ages, there has been a wide consensus regarding the possibility of objects coming to stand for memories. I argue that, in the Gothic, the relationship between memories and objects denotes some singular specificities, namely that memory is more than (just) entrusted to objects and objects are thus more than material hosts of memory: in *Corridor of Mirrors*, Venetia's memory does not merely inhabit her portrait but, to Paul, it becomes the portrait. Objects become

physical forms of memory. Jacques Rancière addresses memory in this sense, asserting that it 'is an orderly collection, a certain arrangement of signs, traces and monuments. […] [The] Great Pyramid, the tomb par excellence, doesn't keep Cheop's memory. It is that memory' (2006, 157). This is to say that it is possible to analyse memory as something that is materialisable via objects, and that objects consequently emplace memory. Through objects, memory (which is traditionally regarded as a private space inside one's mind) is made concrete.

Understanding memory as a matter of concreteness means putting forward a phenomenology of the Gothic according to which memory is *placeable*—it is something tangible, tactile, which one can grasp and use. Suggesting that memory can reside in a foreign material reality, outside the human body, and that objects may consequently become memories has troubling implications, since it posits that memory can be co-opted by others and that the destruction of the object, the artefact, might result in the other's ultimate disappearance. Both issues, as we will see, are far more complex than they may at first appear.

Objects-turned-memories, or memory-objects, as I shall call them, contain spaces within them—the space of memory, of the other, and of the past—and act upon the films on a stylistic and narrative level.[2] In Chap. 2, I analysed the paramount position the French Impressionists allocated to objects and their *photogénie*, the Expressionists' minute attention to décor, and the political-ideological meaning objects can acquire through Soviet montage. Emerging out of the convergence of these different forms of representing the material world, objects—in the films of the travelling directors—make demands upon their percipients, giving renewed visibility and hapticity to a trope already key to gothic literature. Thomas Elsaesser singles out the importance of objects in the films of émigré directors—'mute objects' that exist as 'segments of space' and signal a 'metaphoric transfer' (1984, 282) between the object and the haunting absence it evokes. Defining objects as spaces, rather than places, signals their capacity to aggregate different worlds and temporalities within them. Katalin Pór's discussion of the Hungarian presence in the 1930s and early 1940s Hollywood industry echoes Elsaesser in her definition of objects as spaces of projection and self-revelation (2010, 245). Pór uncovers a relationship (one underscored by irony) between the alterity of objects and the instability of identity (241–242, 247–248). Even though the author is investigating comedies, I argue that the interdependence of objects and identity, and the ironic tension between them, applies likewise to films exhibiting a

gothic aesthetic. The charged objects on which the camera lingers 'become the mirror and repository of reaction and response' (Elsaesser 1984, 283), guiding the re-collection journeys.

The camera's attention to inanimate objects rearranges the temporal structure of the film's narrative, emphasising simultaneity (of past, present, and future) to the detriment of a linear timeframe. Looked at in this way, the past does not consist of a series of organised events, whose stability and historical linearity make it safe for retrieval and display, as in museums. It is, rather, ever-evolving and ever-changing. The past is mobile and malleable: it is in constant flow, travelling back and forth between a there-then and a here-now. Re-collection, in this context, does not simply entail a retrieval of memories, but a repetition of the past in the present. *Portrait of Jennie* depicts quite literally the idea of the past as reawakened, perceived, and relived in the narrative present by having the titular character incessantly come back to life, an embodied memory that refuses to succumb to oblivion.

The foregrounding of the past as paralleling the present is not a trope exclusive to the Gothic, but the aesthetic's uniqueness in representing this temporal simultaneity resides in a roving camera's systematic and pervasive transformation of objects into totems of memory as it explores the many sensorial spaces the characters navigate in their re-membering journeys. 'The past', Philip Rosen writes, 'is to be comprehended and constituted on the basis of perceiving something of it—seeing, holding, reading, contemplating objects in the present that actually existed in the past' (2001, 45). In this respect, the sensuous contact with certain objects precludes forgetting by reinstating the past into the lingering present. Furthermore, it confers upon the objects a vivid authenticity, for they 'actually existed in the past'. Rosen's argument draws attention to a foundational aspect of the cinematic gothic aesthetic: the interdependence between the dwelling body of the self, the senses, and objects, all working together to reconstruct the past and the other. This is not, however, just a matter of accessing the past through 'objects in the present', but about the co-presence and condensation of multiple temporalities activated via sensory perception. In the encounter between the object and the self, the past becomes present, gaining furthermore the ability to interfere with future events. In *The Ghost and Mrs Muir*, for instance, after spying the portrait of a sea captain in the house he owned until his death, Lucy Muir, who has purchased the property, seemingly summons the past in the form of the ghostly Captain Gregg, proving that certain objects exercise a kind of

life-changing pull, cannily seducing the percipient to exchange the realm of rational reality for an irrational dream-world.

Photographs, in memorialising someone's absence in the present, are especially significant in their rapport with time. Photography has often been regarded as a ghostly or memorial medium with 'resurrectional qualities' (Edwards 1999, 229); a 'small funerary monument' (Cadava 1997, 10) that 'embalms time' (Bazin 1967, 14) and thus safeguards the past from erasure, its 'aura of neutrality' (McQuire 1998, 124) and indexicality granting it 'evidential force' (Barthes 1981, 89) and allowing it objectively to re/present, and even replace, individual memory. Whereas, traditionally, photographs of the dead signal a return to and recovery of the past, in which people are restored to a spatio-temporal reality beyond their lifetime, photographs in the Gothic also restore the departed to a time and place in which they still exist, albeit sometimes in a somewhat different form—a ghostly form, for example. Portraiture performs a similar function to photographs, as both are singular in their relation to temporality and the human face. Unlike portraits however, photographs and film are both imprinted by their source, eliciting a sense of authority through their necessary relationship to the real. As memories of death and the dead—as Barthes writes, '*that* is dead and *that* is going to die' (96)—photographs point to a different time, an *elsewhen*. More precisely, they encapsulate a complex temporality, because despite having exceeded their original subject's lifetime, they remain active, complicating the Barthesian conception of the photograph as 'time defeated' and affecting the progress of the diegesis (1981, 96). Photographs re-temporalise memory but are also re-temporalised when 'brought into bodily contact with the trace of the remembered', Elizabeth Edwards suggests (1999, 228). The notion of 'bodily contact' is central to my investigation of memory, as is the idea that this direct contact engenders a memory which, when called upon or triggered by sensory experience, becomes subjective and retemporalised, as I will detail in what follows. Through the beholder's physical interaction with their materiality, certain objects act as loci of memory, insistently actualising the past in such a way that they create a simultaneity of presents, calling into question the notion of the past as having actually passed.

Corridor of Mirrors provides another example of the powerful thickness of concomitant temporalities. Shortly after the beginning of the film, Mifanwy travels to the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussauds Wax Museum in London where, her voice-over narration informs us, she is going to see her lover. Only Paul, we find out when the frame narrative

resumes at the end of the film, has died and is now a wax figure, a double of himself—a simulacrum of life embalmed, stilled. As a human-like, yet no-longer-human, object, he nonetheless manages to disrupt the present and shape the future. Mortimer, Paul's manservant, is at the museum to warn Mifanwy against Veronica, Paul's housekeeper, from whom she has been receiving threatening letters. Mortimer reveals that Veronica has been visiting Paul's effigy every night, just as the museum is about to close, to talk to him alone. From afar, Mortimer and Mifanwy observe as Veronica, like clockwork, she appears and stands before the wax figure. 'I'm late, Paul. We haven't much time', she remarks. As Veronica speaks, she is shot from a high angle, which creates the effect that Paul is looking down at (and on) her. This unusual subjective camerawork is completed when the camera offers a reverse shot of Paul's wax model, in a way granting him agency and making it seem as though he is listening to her.

Daniel Morgan describes this type of singular point-of-view shot as 'object-defined', meaning that the organisation of a scene and the movements of the camera are driven by 'the logic of the object' (2021, 92). Morgan argues that artworks in particular are prone to subjective shots that stage the tense and dynamic encounters between the percipient and the object 'as structured by the object itself' (93). The prevalence of these objected-oriented and object-defined shots is especially significant in gothic cinema, where the characters repeatedly find themselves in spaces that overflow with objects and where the look of the other frequently originates in the inanimate world. This technique generates a singular experience for the viewer, in that it displaces our identification with the human agent. In addition, this perceived agency affects the actions of the characters: Paul and Veronica's strange dialogue of looks, silence, and words has immediate repercussions in the narrative present, as we realise that Veronica is the one who committed the crime for which Paul is hanged. Her guilt is signalled aesthetically: the high-angle, object-defined shot frames her next to the shadow of a barred window, visually positioning her as a prisoner (and calling to mind Browning's similar framing of Renfield in his first encounter with Dracula). The physicality of Paul's memory (the wax figure) and an other's contact with it, leads not only to Paul's posthumous acquittal, but also to another death (thus influencing the remainder of the narrative): it is not long before we learn that Veronica has killed herself after confessing publicly to the murder. This example demonstrates that, through physical engagement with an object, the past travels and conflates with present events, entailing drastic consequences.

Veronica's encounter with the wax figure reveals how '[t]he lived present holds a past and a future within its thickness' (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 2002, 321) and how memory can be seen and touched.

The object-defined shot that simulates Paul's (wax figure's) point of view in *Corridor of Mirrors*, along with the zoom-in on Clara's photograph and its diegetic relevance to *Portrait of Jennie*, exemplify the cinematic primacy afforded to objects that underpins the aesthetic. Formally, the story's spatio-temporal dynamics are organised around memory-objects, and the characters' encounters with them structure and anchor subsequent narrative events. Memory-objects may be contained in a single space, they may travel with the characters, or they may be scattered around different locations—with films often combining these different modalities. An example of the former is the many pianos that conjure auditory memoryscapes in the films and thus trouble Elsaesser's description of objects as 'mute', as I will detail in Chap. 8. Other objects, in turn, overtly defy the contingencies of place and time: the magic glove that affords Belle the freedom to leave the castle in *La Belle et la Bête*, or the ring in *Peter Ibbetson*, which travels between the couple's shared dreams, and then from Mary's home to Peter's prison cell symbolising their *amour fou*, as I shall explore in Chaps. 5 and 6 respectively. Finally, the seeming aversion to empty spaces inside gothic houses often disperses a memory across various rooms, where a plethora of household objects, from painted and photographic portraits to mirrors, dolls, letters, and items of clothing, offer themselves to the house dwellers, concentrating affect. The imposing presence of such objects turns the rooms of the house into memorial chambers, as in *Rebecca* (discussed in Chap. 5) and *Laura*, where the rooms remain as they were when each eponymous character inhabited them, evidencing the immanence of time in memory-objects.

The visuals of time lingering are often paired with direct references to the feeling that time seems to have suddenly frozen. When Ann Hamilton, the heroine in Minnelli's *Undercurrent,* unknowingly meets her husband's estranged (and presumed dead) brother, whose memory she is striving to re-collect, she remarks: 'It looks… well, as though it were waiting for someone. I had a feeling coming in that time was standing still'. In its deliberate showcasing of the past in the confinement of an architectural structure, the gothic house can be paralleled with the museum. Both create their own temporal logic according to which memory and time are compressed into objects. Hinting at the museological quality of gothic houses, Barry Curtis writes that 'the contents of [haunted] houses are

imprinted with events in time', and claims that old things are integral to 'establishing links with previous times or distant places' (2008, 67). An insidious anachronism pervades gothic homes, which unfailingly reveal a penchant for the old, the hand-me-down, and the relic. Historically, Mark B. Sandberg observes, the technique of displaying discrete objects in a museum by re-situating them 'in an "unbroken" context [allows] spectators both accessibility and the illusion of an experiential connection with the objects of their vision' (1995, 325). This 'experiential connection' acquires a manual dimension in the gothic home, where the advertency against touching, that is, the general prohibitive contact between the hand and the object in the museum, does not apply, and where touch is required to retrieve the memory of the past. Despite the closeness that touch provides, the object remains nonetheless foreign, distant, exiled from the self. The gothic home is a space of memory and a place for re-membering—an archival temple where the characters create a kind of indoor cemetery.

In *Rebecca*, a haunted house/haunted mind narrative, Manderley devolves into a key performative space of memory—an imprisoning mausoleum, a panopticon, surveyed by the dead (*Rebecca*) and the living dead (Mrs Danvers, a spectral avatar of her beloved mistress). Despite the mysterious Rebecca being dead throughout the film, the narrator and the viewers are given the chance to glimpse into her past by means of the objects that were once part of her life, namely the monogrammed things that grab the camera's attention, with Rebecca's majestic 'R' calling forth the dead. Memory-objects represent signs of possession and contain the traces of someone's presence in a specific place at a particular time. Mrs Danvers's menacingly teasing rhetorical question—'Do you think the dead come back and watch the living?'—directed at the heroine, frames the narrative through a phantasmatic omnipresent gaze that intrinsically concerns objects. The dead, as it happens, do not often 'come back' in the works of the travelling directors: they never really left; they live in memory-objects. Rebecca *is* Manderley and its belongings.

Memory-objects externalise memories and, as posthumous tokens of an other, form a ligature between person, place, time, and space, providing a sort of pictorial guide or map to the other's past. Similarly to *Rebecca*, the fragmentation of the heroine's memory in Preminger's *Laura* is visually staged and exhibited in her personal belongings. Upon returning to Laura's flat out of hours, detective McPherson, tasked with solving Laura's supposed murder, indulges in a fetishistic encounter with Laura's things, touching them briefly only to put them down carelessly or roughly: first

the contents of the desk drawers in her study, then a delicate see-through handkerchief and a bottle of perfume in her bedroom. Preminger privileges the medium shot for the duration of the sequence, thereby giving equal footing to the character and the objects. Before exiting the bedroom, McPherson cannot help himself and opens Laura's wardrobe, shutting it close almost immediately. Catching sight of his reflection staring back at him in the mirrored doors, he seems to have regained self-awareness and realised he has gone too far. We know then that his visit goes well beyond any professional investigative duties: he did not return to the flat to look for clues as to Laura's disappearance, but purely to succumb to the pleasures of touch. The sensuous object geographies Preminger offers allow McPherson and the viewers to form an idea(l) of the enigmatic woman. Rebecca's and Laura's rooms thus create multiple niches of stillness within the passing of time from where the apperception of the other's life becomes possible.

Norma Desmond's mansion in *Sunset Boulevard* poignantly epitomises these niches of stillness: a museum-morgue, the house entombs the protagonist who dwells feverishly in her past. This mausoleum awakens the echoes of the long ago through film paraphernalia, Victorian furnishings, tunnel-like corridors, vast halls, and the crammed rooms that encapsulate what Kay Young has called 'suffocation-by-thing' (2004, 69). A former Hollywood diva, shunned in her wiser years by an industry that craves youth, Norma surrounds herself with the ghosts of her past: portraits, pictures, trinkets, awards, and her devoted manservant who fakes fan mail and singlehandedly maintains the fragile dome of illusion in which she lives, shielded from reality and, eventually, sanity. Through this active spatial negation of forgetting, we can argue, borrowing from Steve Vine, that 'the self becomes the cemetery of its own hopes, the graveyard of its own ambitions, the sepulchre of its own desires' (1999, 106).

Through memory-objects, gothic places therefore hoard the past, spatialise time, and disrupt temporality. The museum-like atmosphere of apparent stillness reveals an active display of memory that is all but stagnant. Functioning as a means to protect the self against oblivion, memory-objects offer the past a space where it can exist and retain a form of agency. Mythical and misfortunate Venetia, from *Corridor of Mirrors*, for instance, exists as a careful creation of brushstrokes and hues, kept alive in the portrait and through Paul's imagination. Sculpted in wax, Paul is immortalised in the space of the museum, and thus he himself remains a part of the present. The durability of memory is hence stretched, for memory is

not lost with death but lingers on, resisting erosion. In this way, memory-objects perpetuate someone's *undeadness*, connecting the dead and the living mentally and physically, which facilitates, on the one hand, an understanding of memory 'as a temporal and spatial environment we inhabit subjectively' (Albano 2016, xiv) and, on the other, an interpretation of objects as an afterlife for human beings.

Re-collectors

Whereas literature and the arts often supply modes of belonging to their audiences, exiled, migrant, or dislocated filmmakers inscribe into their gothic works a sense of forlornness and restlessness that manifests as diegetic journeying, suggesting a condition of in-betweenness. This condition, in turn, is expressed on the screen through lonesome characters that are constantly on the move: wandering foreigners, marginals, aliens othered by personal and social circumstances, their identities assaulted in myriad ways—a theme displayed in the recurring use of objects in relation to touch and memory. Throughout the films, the travelling subjects are compelled to collect the vestiges of memory they encounter, so that both the re-collector's and the camera's movements are directed towards searching and finding—a place, a time, and a person through memory's traces. Paul, for instance, chases after Mifanwy-Venetia through objects: period costumes, jewellery, a portrait, and other totems of the past which he commissions, collects, and hoards. Paul's drive to gather these objects, which Lisa Mullen analyses through Benjamin's work on the collector, is explicit in his 'hermetic isolationism', manifested in the creation of an artificial, enchanted realm where he can pursue his fantasy (2019, 153).

Memory is, in this way, equated with re-collection through kinaesthesia and the senses: '[t]he "art of memory"', Mary Carruthers writes, 'is actually the "art of recollection"', whose chief task is '*investigatio*, "tracking-down"' ([1990] 2008, 23). With Carruthers, and for the purposes of my study, I consider memory as praxis rather than doxis (15). Journeying incessantly while attempting to re-assemble a memory, gothic characters are depicted as obsessive re-collectors who take as their mission the reconstitution of a past. 'Anyone could become obsessed with the past', says *Vertigo*'s (1958) Scottie in a formulation emblematic of gothic protagonists. Indeed, the past and the memories it leaks into the present seem to sharpen the senses and confound the mind. In spaces thoroughly inhabited by or saturated with memory, there is an urge to gather and piece

together the memory of a particular individual, rescuing it from its present fragmentation.

The process of reconstructing a memory, however, is not as straightforward as it might at first seem. In other words, it is not an unproblematic journey of gathering dispersed objects that will, in the end, allow unrestricted access to the other. *Laura*'s McPherson, for instance, idealises the woman in the portrait, aided by the objects in her flat and the words of those who knew her. Bound to re-membering the other through a variety of memory-objects and aural accounts, a certain degree of loss will inevitably happen—a loss mitigated by his use of imagination in reconstructing an idea of Laura. The notion of memory as construction, which frames re-collection as inevitably partial and subjective, gains renewed currency and new contours when understood through imagination, as the latter decisively alters retrieved memories. It does so by expanding memory beyond acts of recall. The oneiric activity of the imagination augments memory by introducing desired and confabulatory constructions that become entwined with the lived past, con/fusing experiential and fabricated experiences. Imagination therefore interferes directly with memory and affects the way in which the characters both acquire and form new memories. The (desired) future can thus influence the perception of the past just as much as the past has the power to influence the future. Memory and imagination are the two interlocking, complementary, and often conflating poles that subtend gothic narratives.

McPherson's Laura, then, is almost all dream: Preminger stresses this by having the missing woman appear while the detective is asleep. Ten years later, Hitchcock would use a similar strategy when introducing Grace Kelly's character in *Rear Window* (1954). The raw, realist intensity of noir melds with the fantastical element of the dream incarnate, and real Laura's intrusion upon the narrative is disturbing not only because she seems to have returned from the dead, but because she distinctly lacks the aura of the traditional femme fatale, as well as the sophistication and mysticism of the object that eternalised her—her portrait. This demonstrates that, when memories become objects (or vice-versa), personal memory is never fully materialisable or retrievable, that is, a transformation inevitably takes place when the self apprehends the memory of the other. In this way, memory-objects confront the self with the irreducible otherness of human beings. Like a tale that is passed down from generation to generation, so is memory altered and subjectivised as it is re-membered. Object by object, place by place, a new memory of someone is slowly put together—a memory

that is neither completely fictional nor the exact memory of the absent other. In McPherson's imagination, Laura becomes someone else: it is not the real-world Laura whom he sees, but rather his patchwork version of her—a mixture of reality and fantasy.

Re-membering, then, is a spatial act that is always fragmented—a gathering of clues that concerns spatial, temporal, and psychological travels and ultimately leverages reality against imagination, hopelessly undermining its viability as a wholly reliable process. Because a memory is never whole when it is found and retrieved, inferring a past history from a memory-object necessarily involves a certain level of fancy or fabrication, of letting imagination fill the gaps in one's knowledge of an other's life. More precisely, imagination makes the other exist as a construct of the percipient's mind. The collection of data resultant from journeys of re-membering is therefore inevitably distorted and involves the creation of a new, or different, someone—someone in-between a real, actual memory and its forever incomplete re-constitution by an alien consciousness.

This is where the Gothic, which builds heavily on an overall Proustian notion of memory, diverges from it. In Proust, the past is accessed through sensory connections to objects that trigger involuntary bodily recollections of time and place; an intellectual search for this past ensues. The past, in this context, means personal lived experience, which is brought back suddenly to the individual in the present. It is our past haunting our present. The gothic cinema of the travelling directors, alongside this Proustian recalling, produces sensory encounters between disjointed subjects and memories, meaning that the memory or personal experience that is recollected often does not belong to the one who triggers and re-collects it, as occurs in *Portrait of Jennie*, *Laura*, and *Corridor of Mirrors*, with Eben, McPherson, and Paul re-collecting the memories of Jennie, Laura, and Venetia, respectively. It is someone else's past haunting the self's present. The impossibilities and frustrations that arise from such encounters present memory and modes of re-membering as structural aesthetic and narrative elements.

A more precise way of describing memory in the films would therefore be to move towards the idea of a re-membering discourse, in the sense that the plots are, stylistically and narratively, based on long journeys of recall through successive processes of re-collection. In an analogous role to historians, detectives, or investigative reporters, the re-collectors treat objects as fragments of a memory to be reconstructed. The process is effortful and strategic, minutely conducted across interflows of spaces,

temporalities, perceptions, and subjectivities. In the cognitive sciences, the intentional search for memory is defined as controlled and generative (Harris and Berntsen 2019). While these studies refer to the task of retrieving the self's autobiographical memories, rather than those of an other, the concept of 'generative retrieval' supports my understanding of journeys of re-membering as a process, or task, of memory construction. With memory reduced to a series of bits and pieces, the characters carry out a journey of re-collection that helps to recreate and contextualise an other's memory and, by proxy, the self's own life. They do so methodically (as in *Corridor of Mirrors*), impulsively (as in *Portrait of Jennie*, *Rebecca*, and *Laura*), or passively (as the philandering pianist in *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, whose re-membering is performed via reading).

Ellen Moers characterises the female gothic heroine as a 'travelling figure' who experiences both indoor and outdoor travels (1976, 126–27). As we have seen, such travels comprise male and female agents alike and their travelling reflects a persistent quest that is spatial, temporal, and psychological at its core, in that it supposes the physical movement of the searching body, the confrontation of the self with the intersecting temporalities of past, present, and future, and a seemingly unappeasable and, at times, borderline pathological obsession that overtakes the thoughts and the actions of the characters. Travelling is therefore not a mere motif or theme: the films build on the multiple and multifaceted travels of their protagonists.

In their relentlessness, the journeys of the re-collectors resemble the quests of classical and medieval hero myths. Considering 'the mythological tradition of such travels', Martin M. Winkler explains, 'the hero's ultimate goal is the attainment of self-knowledge and the ideal of achieving moral goodness' (2001, 128). On the contrary, for the haunted heroes of the Gothic, the re-collection quests portray a journey not so much of honourable heroism, altruism, and personal growth as one of obsession, failure, and narcissism, often ending in death. *Corridor of Mirrors* encompasses all the above: Paul's delirious and obsessive infatuation with a face on a painting sets off events that lead to an unfulfilling quest for a dead woman (Venetia) and the desperate need to possess her double, Mifanwy, who eventually scorns him. In other films, the search is frequently a disenchanted move towards professional accomplishment and personal fulfilment. 'I have to find something', Jennie tells Eben in Dieterle's film. 'Like what?', he asks. 'I'm not sure, but I think I'll know someday. I think I'll know when I find it'. She pauses briefly before adding: 'Do you know

what? I think you'll know too'. It is this incompleteness and lostness within the self, along with the somewhat paradoxical belief in the eventual achievement of some kind of wholeness or peace of mind, that motivates the re-collector's search. Jennie acts as Eben's muse (or consciousness) and her prescient words refer, of course, to Eben; it is he who must find something. Ultimately a search for ephemerality (for a memory, a ghost, childhood, success…), Eben's pursuit leads to the inscription of perpetuity in the form of a portrait—the portrait of Jennie—that will bring him posthumous fame.

Giuliana Bruno's play on the words 'voyeur' and 'voyageur' in her definition of the cinema as a medium applies especially well to the Gothic (1997, 10; 2002, 15–16). Positioning 'sight' and 'site' as inseparable concepts, Bruno argues that the film spectator cannot remain a simple 'voyeur', fixed in space, but must become a 'voyageur' who 'traverses a haptic, emotive terrain' (2002, 16). Looking beyond a psychoanalytic framework, which favours an optical stance and focuses on the primacy of the gaze, the 'spatio-corporeal mobilization' that cinema demands of the spectator urges one to engage with filmic space through touch; in Bruno's words, 'one must use a traveling lens and make room for the sensory spatiality of film' (16). This 'traveling lens' is particularly suited to the gothic cinematic experience, where the intensity of the travels is such that it underscores the entirety of the stories, involving not only the spectators, but also the filmmakers and the characters. Concurrently 'voyeurs' and 'voyageurs', the onscreen bodies are actively called on to watch, touch, search, and find.

Through the mobile transience of the cinematic image, the travelling filmmakers transposed their journeying onto celluloid and constructed self-reflexive narratives of travel that, by means of a heightened awareness of visual, thematic, and sonic compositions, insist upon memory and touch, making each viewer a traveller too, moving through the illusory tangibility of the fleeting images and journeying on with the characters. One can therefore draw a parallel between the intense travelling experienced by the fictional re-collectors in the stories and the cross-border movements of filmmakers, techniques, and ideas, so that one can be viewed as reflecting the other. The individual experiences of the travelling directors, whether émigrés, exiles, or professional travellers, overlap in their recourse to an aesthetic of displacement, distance, loss, and sustained re-collection. Sharon MacDonald employs the term 'memory complex' to refer to 'an assemblage of practices, affects and physical things' (2013, 6);

in their gothic films, the travelling directors 'expand the otherwise limited memory complex from one nation to a wider, transnational inventory of memories' (Baumgartner and Boczkowska 2020, 15). Such an 'inventory of memories' is constructed, as we have seen, through obsessive journeys of re-collection which are also 'journeys of identity', to use Hamid Naficy's expression (2001, 37). Yet, while Naficy indicates the 'return journey to the homeland' as a characteristic of accented cinema (37), in the productions of the travelling directors, I argue that it is precisely the *impossibility* of return that further accents the films: 'We can never go back to Manderley again', *Rebecca*'s narrator tells the audience at the beginning of the film. Borrowing Catherine Lupton's words, 'the exile of remembering an inaccessible past does not translate straightforwardly into rosy nostalgia for lost Edens. Going back is not merely impossible, it is also undesirable' (2004, 47). Aesthetically, Ophuls's Vienna in *Letter* conveys this sentiment, with the Edenic city becoming increasingly darker and less homely as the narrative advances. *Rebecca*'s Maxim de Winter, in turn, overtly expresses to his new wife how 'undesirable' remembering is in du Maurier's novel: 'A little while ago you talked about an invention […] for capturing a memory. You would like, […] at a chosen moment to live the past again. I'm afraid I think rather differently from you. All memories are bitter, and I prefer to ignore them'. Yet, he concedes, '[it] does not always work' ([1938] 2015, 42). In the film, Maxim's reaction to the protagonist's wish to 'bottle up a memory' is more affective: 'Sometimes, you know, those little bottles contain demons that have a way of popping out at you, just as you're trying most desperately to forget'. The fantasy of bottling up memories speaks to the instinctive drive of gothic characters to re-collect, whereas Maxim's animosity towards acts of remembering points to the perils inherent therein, which I will detail in the ensuing chapters. Re-membering, we can conclude, is not only a long and labouring process, but often utterly undesirable, reinforcing the distance gothic films keep from nostalgia.

In line with French Impressionism, German Expressionism, and Soviet montage, objects benefit from a special status in the Gothic. The camera privileges their materiality and interacts with them, generating a particular aura that melds reality and fantasy, affording them a somewhat supernatural power: a photograph confirms Jennie's ghostliness, a wax figure extracts a confession of murder, Laura's portrait seduces and bewitches, and Rebecca's household objects effect her stronghold on the living. In this sense, memory-objects affect temporality and the circumambient space,

and gain a degree of agency through the re-collector's unwavering search. Returning to Bruno's embodied voyages and Rosen's definition of the past as perception and reconstruction, I argue that the Gothic too 'is to be comprehended […] on the basis of […] seeing, holding, reading, contemplating objects' (Rosen 2001, 45). In the films of the travelling directors, plagued as they are by memories of an ultimately inaccessible past, objects appear as spaces of self-reflection, curiosity, and comfort, sources of fixity that contrast with the fluidity of memory, identity, and temporality. Still, rather than providing an antidote to existential disquiet, a refuge from the disenchantment of the everyday and the commonplace, objects in the Gothic constitute yet another iconographic motif of exile, a reminder of the irretrievability of the past and the impossibility of a future. This chapter has analysed the Gothic's aestheticisation of memory and emphasised the importance of the physical encounters between re-collector and memory-object. The role of the senses, however, specifically the exploratory, agential role of the hand's touch in relation to memory-objects, warrants closer inspection. This will be the overarching focus of the remaining chapters.

Notes

1. For a taxonomy of human-like inanimate objects, see my article 'The Uncanny Afterlife of Dolls: Reconfiguring Personhood Through Object Vivification in Gothic Film.' *Studies in Gothic Fiction* 6 (2): 27–38.
2. Memory-objects differ from Laura U. Marks's 'recollection-objects', which depart from the Deleuzian 'recollection-image' and pertain, in Marks's definition, to the socio-historico-political specificities of transnational objects in the context of intercultural cinema, that is, objects that have been displaced and represent collective memory (2000, 77–85).

References

Adorno, Theodor. [1951] 2005. *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*. Trans. E.F.N. Jephcott. London: Verso.

Albano, Caterina. 2016. *Memory, Forgetting and the Moving Image*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Barthes, Roland. 1981. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang.

Baumgartner, Michael, and Ewelina Boczkowska. 2020. Introduction. In *Music, Collective Memory, Trauma, and Nostalgia in European Cinema After the*

Second World War, ed. Michael Baumgartner and Ewelina Boczkowska, 1–21. Abingdon: Routledge.

Bazin, André. 1967. Ontology of the Photographic Image. In *What is Cinema?* Vol. I. Trans. Hugh Gray, 9–16. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Benjamin, Walter 1968. On Some Motifs in Baudelaire. *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn, 155–200. New York: Schocken.

——— 1999a. Mickey Mouse [1931]. In *Selected Writings, Vol. 2, Part 2: 1931–1934*. Trans. Rodney Livingstone et al., ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, 545–546. Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard University Press.

——— 1999b. On the Image of Proust [1929]. In *Selected Writings, Vol. 2, Part 1: 1927–1930*. Trans. Rodney Livingstone et al., ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, 237–47. Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard University Press.

——— 1999c. *The Arcades Project*. Trans. H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin. Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard University Press.

Bergson, Henri. 1911. *Matter and Memory*. Trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer. New York: The Macmillan Co.

Bruno, Giuliana. 1997. Site-seeing: Architecture and the Moving Image. *Wide Angle* 19 (4): 8–24.

———. 2002. *Atlas of Emotion*. London: Verso.

Cadava, Eduardo. 1997. *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Carr, Harry. 1931. The Only Unpaid Movie Star. *The American Magazine* (March): 55–57, 122.

Carruthers, Mary. [1990] 2008. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Casey, Edward S. [1987] 2000. *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

———. 2009. *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Connerton, Paul. 1989. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Curtis, Barry. 2008. *Dark Places: The Haunted House in Film*. London: Reaktion.

du Maurier, Daphne. [1938] 2015. *Rebecca*. London: Virago.

Edwards, Elizabeth. 1999. Photographs as Objects of Memory. In *Material Memories*, ed. Marius Kwint et al., 221–236. Oxford: Berg.

Elsaesser, Thomas. 1984. The German Émigrés in Paris during the 1930s: Pathos and Leave-Taking. *Sight and Sound* 53 (4, Autumn): 278–283.

Erll, Astrid. 2011. *Memory in Culture*. Trans. Sara B. Young. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Forty, Adrian. [1999] 2001. Introduction. In *The Art of Forgetting*, ed. Adrian Forty and Susanne Küchler, 1–18. Oxford: Berg.

Grimm, Jacob, and Wilhelm Grimm. 2016. The Story of the Youth Who Went Forth to Learn What Fear Was [1819]. In *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales*, 12–18. New York: Chartwell Books.

Harris, Celia B., and Dorthe Berntsen. 2019. Direct and generative autobiographical memory retrieval: How different are they? *Consciousness and cognition* 74: n.p.

Leslie, Esther. 2003. Absent-minded Professors Etch-a-Sketching Academic Forgetting. In *Regimes of Memory*, ed. Susannah Radstone and Katharine Hodgkin, 172–185. London: Routledge.

Lupton, Catherine. 2004. The Exile of Remembering: Movement and Memory in Chris Marker's *San Soleil*. In *Cultures of Exile: Images of Displacement*, ed. Wendy Everett and Peter Wagstaff, 33–48. New York: Berghahn Books.

MacDonald, Sharon. 2013. *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Maltin, Leonard. 1973. *The Disney Films*. New York: Crown.

Marks, Laura U. 2000. *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. London: Duke University Press.

Mathews, Timothy. 2011. Reading the Invisible with Cees Nooteboom, Walter Benjamin and Alberto Giacometti. In *Tradition, Translation, Trauma: The Classic and the Modern*, ed. Jan Parker and Timothy Mathews, 317–332. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McQuire, Scott. 1998. *Visions of Modernity: Representation, Memory, Time and Space in the Age of the Camera*. London: Sage.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. [1945] 2002. *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge.

Moers, Ellen. 1976. *Literary Women: The Great Writers*. London: Doubleday.

Morgan, Daniel. 2021. *The Lure of the Image: Epistemic Fantasies of the Moving Camera*. California: University of California Press.

Mullen, Lisa. 2019. *Mid-century Gothic: The Uncanny Objects of Modernity in British Literature and Culture after the Second World War*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Naficy, Hamid. 2001. *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Nora, Pierre. 1989. Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire. Trans. Marc Roudebush. *Representations* 26 (Spring): 7–24.

Parkin, Alan J. 2017. *Memory: Phenomena, Experiment and Theory*. London: Routledge.

Pór, Katalin. 2010. *De Budapest à Hollywood: Le théâtre hongrois et le cinéma hollywoodien, 1930–1943*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.

Rancière, Jacques. 2006. *Film Fables*. Oxford: Berg.

Rosen, Philip. 2001. *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Sandberg, Mark B. 1995. Effigy and Narrative: Looking into the Nineteenth-Century Folk Museum. In *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, ed. Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, 320–361. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Vine, Steve. 1999. Romantic Ghosts: The Refusal of Mourning in Emily Brontë's Poetry. *Victorian Poetry* 37 (1, Spring): 99–117.

Watts, Steven. 1997. *The Magic Kingdom: Walt Disney and the American Way of Life*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Wheelwright, Philip. 1958. The Intellectual Light. *The Sewanee Review* 66 (3): 397–412.

Whitehead, James. 2017. *Madness and the Romantic Poet: A Critical History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Winkler, Martin M. 2001. Tragic Features in John Ford's *The Searchers*. In *Classical Myth and Culture in the Cinema*, ed. Martin Winkler, 118–147. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Young, Kay. 2004. A Woman's Space Is in the Home: Architecture, Privacy, and Melodrama in *Pamela* and *Gaslight*. *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 2 (2): 51–74.

CHAPTER 4

Memory as Touch: The Hand, Amputation, and Sensory Contagion

The cinematic gothic aesthetic is intricately multisensory. With their highly sensorial images, by which I mean images that appeal vividly to the senses, gothic films facilitate and promote experiential engagement in their viewers. Touch, in particular, holds a privileged place in the gothic imagination, with the image of the hand featuring as a recurring iconographic motif in re-collection quests. Luís Rocha Antunes claims that '*the medium [of film] is audiovisual, yet our experience is multisensory*' (2015, 48). I suggest that, in the Gothic, this 'multisensory' affect is anchored in the sense of touch and that, by switching the focus from sight to touch, we can better understand how certain films create the multi-layered sensory spaces that prove fundamental to the aesthetic in their use of the human sensorium as both a narrative strategy and a stylistic device. By appealing to multiple sensorial fields, the Gothic conveys to the re-collector the disquieting aliveness of the other's memory in the narrative present. The cinematic Gothic negotiates complex and multisensory exchanges between the self and the other, and between inner and outer reality, during the course of which the characters (and, by proxy, the viewers) perceive places, people, and objects as intimately connected to their sensate bodies.

Elizabeth D. Harvey starts her edited collection of essays on touch and tactility in the early modern period by observing that touch 'occupies a complex, shifting, and sometimes contradictory position in the representation of the five senses in Western culture' (2003, 1). Throughout

J. Jacob Ramalho, *Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film*,
Palgrave Gothic, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-73628-5_4

history, Harvey explains, touch has been depicted in myriad ways, either hailed as the most invaluable sense or, conversely, as the basest (2003, 1). In scholarly criticism of gothic cinema, the sense of touch has so far remained underexplored, with priority being given to sight and the eye, along with the co-related notions of 'voyeurism' and 'the gaze', frequently examined through a psychoanalytic angle. Although sight—seeing and being seen—is a key component of the aesthetic, there is much to learn from the careful exploration of other sensory modalities. Isabella van Elferen has detailed the multi-layered dimensions of the auditory in the Gothic (2010, 2012, 2016, 2019), and olfactory states have received scholarly attention as well (Colella 2009). Touch, I argue, is especially pertinent to the study of the aesthetic in that the films adamantly and repeatedly expunge the historical link between seeing and knowing. Indeed, while the horror genre necessitates the eye and creates its visual vocabulary from optical shock, its paradigmatic image being the razor slicing through the eye in Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), the Gothic evolved by constantly challenging sight as a reliable source of knowledge. Dethroning 'the conceptualizing powers of the eye' in favour of the 'kinesthetic functions of the hand' (Messbarger 2010, 128), which acts in conjunction with or against the will of the re-collectors, weaves an intricate web of closely connected characters, spaces, and temporalities by means of ever-present tactile encounters. Investigating touch allows me to avert the bias of ocularcentrism or gaze-centric approaches to gothic fiction while also calling into question the conventional relationship between the eye and the hand, the (mobile) self and (static) objects.

This chapter posits that the Gothic's penchant for surface-probing is first and foremost anchored in touch. Sight, which is usually accorded this probing role, 'slips over the world's surfaces', Ralph Rugoff observes, 'while a more intensive knowledge of things requires a tangible exploration' (2004, 168). In other words, as Walter Sorrell affirms in his study of the human hand, '[i]n our amazing development into *homo complexus* […], we may have lost some of the keenness of certain senses. […] But we have outdistanced any other creature in the development of touch'. Significantly, he continues, '[o]nly the tactile sense can achieve the corporeality. The eyes perceive an object in its spatial existence, but its physical totality is revealed to us by the touching, grasping hand' (1968, 256). Jacques Aumont opposes the haptic to the optic too and claims that the hand 'assures the contact with the material world that the fine arts aim to

materialise', whilst the eye 'surveys, compares, and foresees but always at a distance, because an eye cannot *touch* anything' (1998, 20).

Following this line of reasoning, we could argue that the hand offers greater proximity to objects than the eye. In the cinematic gothic aesthetic, however, I suggest that the issue is qualitative and should not be defined in terms of degrees of closeness or separation. In other words, the boundaries between sight and touch exceed a consideration of object perception from an angle of proximity or distance. While an eye 'cannot *touch* anything', as Aumont notes, the percipient subjects in the films can, figuratively, touch a painting with their eyes through an intensity of looking engendered by the camera. Allied with haptic visuality, that is, 'the way vision itself can be tactile' (Marks 2000, xi), the pervasiveness of touch becomes all the more enveloping. This understanding does not contradict or undermine my purpose of focusing on the hand rather than the eye. It means to elucidate the overarching role of touch in guiding, subtending, or complementing other sensory modalities.

Take the example of *Vertigo*'s Scottie, who quietly watches as Madeleine contemplates 'The Portrait of Carlotta' in a picture gallery. Similarly to the Madame Tussauds sequence in *Corridor of Mirrors*, *Vertigo* features the act of spying on a character in a museum, while the camera establishes close links between humans and objects presented as doppelgängers. The camera follows Scottie's look as he gradually becomes aware of the similarities the two women share. The use of careful framing, shot-reverse shots, and quick zoom-ins adds a dramatic optical dynamic to the images, which cut rapidly between Madeleine's bouquet on the gallery bench and the one Carlotta holds in the portrait, and between the women's identical hairstyles. The editing, the camera movements, and the succession of different textures—the canvas, the oil strokes, the perfectly coiffed hair, up in a bun, the flowers—create a haptic space where the onscreen voyeur and the audience can experience perceived objects manually through the visual. Yi-Fu Tuan engages with this phenomenon, advancing that 'most tactile sensations reach us indirectly, through the eyes', and that seeing and touching 'are so closely wed that even when we are looking at a painting it is not clear that we are attending solely to its visual qualities' (2005, 76–77). Hitchcock's camera establishes a haptic bridge between Scottie, Madeleine, the painted portrait, and the viewers, foreshadowing doubling as central to the narrative from the outset. Besides sight and touch, the scene in the museum appeals likewise to the sense of smell through the focus on the flower bouquets. In this silent interplay of looks, Scottie spies

Madeleine while she indulges in her own voyeuristic pleasures. Touch acquires unique contours in a museum, a place traditionally known for censoring and preventing touch. This impossibility therefore places greater importance upon tactility as experienced through the eyes.

Overall, my analysis follows Marks's (2000) and Fredric Jameson's understanding of the senses as purveyors of memory (2007, 2), a useful lens through which to explore tactility in gothic films. Specifically, I assert that tactile motifs and a sustained attention to the manual subtend the aesthetic, which builds on the uncanny, terrifying, and sometimes horrifying potential of touch. The aesthetic is 'haptically driven', to borrow from Giuliana Bruno (2002, 16), and the films of the travelling directors offer a perspective on the world that is grounded in and propelled by a tendency 'to emphasize tactile sensibilities' (Naficy 2001, 28). As I will argue, this emphasis, through which physical and psychological displacement is conveyed, accents the films. The camera creates a succession of haptic spaces that disclose the strangeness of a world experienced through manual perception and position touch as the chief means via which to analyse the relationship between memory-objects and the travelling body of the self. Touch can rearrange experience in verifying and discerning the qualities of surfaces and can also restore the past to the present.

The gothic aesthetic, I suggest, mirrors Jean d'Udine's argument in his 1910 study on sensorial hierarchy, according to which touch is at the centre, while the other four senses are seen to emerge from haptic perception—what d'Udine calls a 'plastic reflex' (82, 89–92). Touch furthermore ensures that communication among the other senses is possible. I do not mean to extrapolate a hierarchical structure whereby sight is subjugated to touch, but to position touch as uniquely suited to the creation of a gothic atmosphere and as an element integral to the aesthetic. Unlike any other sense, touch is boundless—we can touch with our whole body—, so while the hand serves as its most versatile and iconic tool, touch has no such limits. Pioneering Italian wax sculptor Anna Morandi (1714–1774) describes the sense of touch as 'permeat[ing] the entire human body, being each part possessed of it and furnished with many nerve fibers that render it sensitive to any contact with a foreign object and, in accordance with the delicacy or harshness of that object which surprises it, cause it to react and move, yet, even more properly does this sense reside in the hand' (qtd. in Messbarger 2010, 128). In Morandi's words we uncover the idea

that in tactile sensation there lies a notion of contagion that does not pertain to other sense organs. Gothic cinema builds on this potential for contagion and uses the hand to generate a layered and complex account of memory, identity, affect, and their breakdown.

Since the 1990s, many scholars have researched the experience of watching film as a singular, embodied act of perception (cf. Walton 2016; Antunes 2015, 2016; Beugnet 2012; Elsaesser and Hagener 2010; Barker 2009; Marks 2000; Sobchack 1991, 2004), often in connection to the audience's visceral responses to horror (cf. Aldana Reyes 2016; Ndalianis 2012; Hanich 2010; Powell 2005). My analysis breaks with the methodological tradition of looking at the sensing bodies of the viewers and how the moving images affect them, favouring instead the filmic diegesis and the circulating bodies on the screen. In addition, the visceral intensity of body horror moves beyond the kind of evocative cinema that concerns me here. Rather, I concentrate on the tactile journeys of the characters and examine the ways in which touch is used to convey a sense of terror. Paul Rodaway employs the expression 'sensuous geographies' to convey the idea that the senses constitute a privileged lens through which to address the physical rapport between the human body and its surroundings (1994, 4). The Gothic, I argue, can be productively read in terms of a sensuous geography, whereby the senses guide both the actions of the characters and our experience of the stories. Moreover, as I will explain, underlying the Gothic's sensuous geographies is a resilient process of sensory contagion between bodies, places, and objects specifically triggered and propelled by touch. Mark Paterson reminds us that touch 'is a sense of communication' (2007, 1), and I will demonstrate how gothic films treat this 'communication' in frightening terms—as a matter of contamination, of the self becoming infected by the other via sensory contact—so that to explore the vast sensorium of the Gothic is also to engage with broader questions surrounding the construction and fragmentation of memory, body, and identity. Through a close reading of touch, hapticity, and hand amputation as portrayed in Robert Wiene's *Orlacs Hände* (1924) and Tod Browning's *The Unknown* (1927), this chapter draws on disability studies to interrogate the complication of identity in relation to a body that has become othered and exilic through injury. Based on the work of, among others, Karen Barad, Monika Pietrzak-Franger, and Thomas Fahy, I analyse the wounded body as a discursive site that is fundamentally political.

Disability and *The Unknown* (1927)

Gothic hands draw attention to themselves. They become things (in Bill Brown's sense of the term), either uncanny or utterly abject in their conspicuousness, asserting their presence suddenly and disturbing our normal perception of the world (2001, 3–4). Gothic fiction has long accorded an unusually intense attention to hands and touch. Already in the first self-titled gothic story, Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, we have the 'gargantuan hand that portends Manfred's fall' and which offers both moral critique and socio-political commentary on the oppressive legacies of outdated systems of power and control (Rowe 1999, 117). Gothic films build on this literary tradition and are replete with manual imagery, often shot in close-up, of hands carrying keys, holding mirrors, opening tombs, emerging out of coffins, turning door handles, searching drawers, scratching walls, digging out corpses, and strangling women; hands wearing gloves, writing letters, caressing rings, clutching knives, and holding lit candles; hands that paint and sculpt, that hurt and comfort, that reach out but cannot touch. Restless, curious hands that apprehend their surroundings but that, unlike the eye, the ear, the nose, and the tongue, can modify external reality, reminding the percipient subject, as Yi-Fu Tuan notes, 'that we are not only observers of the world but actors in it' (2005, 79). Touch is incessantly exploratory and intrusive in gothic cinema. In this context, the hand figures as a trope of detection that problematises notions of memory and identity. The films position manual iconography as central to their gothic effects and affects—from the frightening long nails and emaciated hands of Count Orlok in Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922), who in the film's coda, 'clutches his fist over Ellen's heart in a symbolic moment of possession' (Aldana Reyes 2020, 83), through the close-up of Bela Lugosi's transgressive hand slowly turning a doorknob in Browning's *Dracula* or the overhead shot of a white hand spiralling down a dark banister in Hitchcock's *The Lodger* (1927) to later examples, such as the metallic prostheses of Tim Burton's helpless tragic hero in *Edward Scissorhands* (1990) and the creepy shadow of the creature's talons in Jennifer Kent's *Babadook* (2014). The camera lingers, often languidly, on the characters as they manipulate objects. The role of hands in cinematic works has been pivotal, in fact, since the earliest film experiments in gothic storytelling, namely George Méliès' *Le Manoir du diable* (1896), wherein the plot unravels to the rhythm of the protagonist's magician or

maestro-like hand gestures. Hands, digits, and arms were at the fore throughout the silent period and have remained so since.

Roman rhetorician Quintilian, in his *Institutio Oratoria* (95 CE), argues that hands 'are almost as expressive as words' and 'may almost be said to speak' (289–91, book XI, section 85). Cocteau is less tentative and represents the idea of a speaking hand literally in *The Blood of a Poet* (1930). Jean-Louis Leutrat is likewise assertive and claims that one reason why hands abound in silent films is 'because they speak', pointing to the proximity that the onscreen depiction of hands establishes between the perceptual body of the viewer and the moving images (Leutrat 1995, 85). A case in point is the ghostly circle of white, homogenous hands placed around a séance table in Lang's *Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler* (1922), which 'forms a somewhat monstrous and phosphorescent beast' (85), the frame having momentarily excluded the bodies to which the hands are attached, so that the many digits touching one another appear to have an uncanny agency. The socio-historical connection between hands and the supernatural that Lang depicts so effectively, granting a gothic uncanniness to the film's hapticity, transpires in the space of the séance. Mediumship is reliant upon the hand and touch for 'vision', so that the dead other runs through the physical body of the medium-vessel, ultimately emerging from within it. The idea that hands may serve as an entry point for the dead—the abject other—to pollute and infect the self recurs in the Gothic, especially in amputation narratives.

Scholars have tended to interpret narratives which represent, more or less sensationally, the self rendered other as reflecting, sanctioning, and disseminating an ableist ideology based on eugenics, which equates corporeal difference with degeneracy and threats to the nation-state—the differently abled body is viewed as poisonous matter that can infect society and lead to the social and moral ruin of the community. The abject, amputated body on the screen which, in Frankensteinian fashion, is sometimes sewed back together with foreign (donor) organs and tissues can nonetheless be fruitfully examined in a different light, as constituting an important sociological, political, medical, and historical document on the othering of the self, loss and (surgical) trauma, gender relations, the disintegration of subjectivity, and social stigma.[1] In this regard, I join Thomas B. Hoeksema and Christopher R. Smit in arguing that there is a diverse range of cinematic depictions of people who are differently abled, both negative and positive, which can shed light on popular culture and cultural beliefs (2001, 35).

Historically, the Latin verb *amputare* refers to a corporeal punishment: the act of cutting off the hands of criminals (Kirkup 2007, 1), so that the association of hand amputation with crime did not originate in either literary or filmic sources. Similarly, the suggestion of a link between disease and disability 'predate[s] the cinema by centuries' and is 'informed to a large extent by negative attitudes toward disabled people', as Kim Wolfson and Martin F. Norden remind us (2000, 244). While the medium has been complicit, since its inception, in cultivating derogatory stereotypes about people with disabilities, gothic cinema, in contrast, has invited us to explore, rather than exploit, these characters, approaching disability from a more productive perspective. As Ian Olney observes, a gothic film 'represents a network of competing and conflicting discourses that is not reducible to a single ideological imperative' nor abides by a binary logic, according to which 'if a work of fiction or film in any way reflects or propagates the values of the dominant social order, then it cannot also embody a critique of those values' (2006, 295). Much like physical impairment, and amputation in particular, creates 'a multifaceted relational experience that cannot be contained in a single narrative' (Grayson and Scheurer 2021, 5), so does a gothic aesthetic generate a multitude of meanings and affects through a range of tropes, technologies, and haptic storytelling that should not be readily dismissed as nefarious.

From an aesthetic and historical point of view, the development of the cinematic Gothic is indebted to the conflicted appropriation and use of the impaired body. Among the early gothic films that feature characters with disabilities, the hands and handless characters in Browning's *The Unknown* (1927) and *Freaks* (1932) stand out. Reprising the role of an amputee in *The Unknown*, following Wallace Worsley's *The Penalty* (1920), Lon Chaney plays circus wonder 'Alonzo, the Armless', a knife-thrower who undergoes an elective double amputation of his secretly functional arms to win the love of a fellow circus artist, Nanon. Film critic Ted Zehender praises the skill with which Browning's camera, 'remarkably' fluid for the time, 'spins a fabric of suspense' where '[n]othing is wasted, nothing is superfluous'; crucially, the number of title cards is 'surprisingly small', giving the audience only the necessary information, so that the pace of the film 'never falters' (1970, 452–53). The focus throughout is on the images.

Nanon suffers from a severe hand phobia, which is sharply highlighted in the film's cinematography, editing, and intertitles. After a performance, as Nanon retires to her trailer, her suitor, strongman Malabar, proclaims his love while flexing his arms and boasting about their strength. From the

top of the steps, by the trailer's open door, Nanon looks down on him, a medium close-up stressing her upset expression. She begins to turn to enter the trailer, but Malabar suddenly takes her right hand. A medium shot reveals Nanon's terrified look, as Malabar places his other hand on her wrist. Cutting to a medium long shot, the camera directly contrasts the two characters, placing each one on opposite sides of the frame, their arms and hands occupying the centre of the screen (Fig. 4.1). Malabar's hands wrap around Nanon's right hand and arm, as her left hand firmly holds on to the door frame. She recoils but he does not let go and instead tightens his grip, pulling her to him. He then brusquely releases her arm and she enters the trailer alone. 'Why doesn't he keep his hands off me?', she wonders, frantically shaking her hands and looking at them, distraught, until finally exclaiming: 'Hands! Men's hands! How I hate them!'. She concludes her rant with the wish that God would take the hands from all men. Nanon's aversion stems from years of harassment, with men 'tr[ying] to put their beastly hands on [her]'. Alonzo's (h)armlessness makes him a

Fig. 4.1 Malabar clutches Nanon's hand and arm, triggering her hand phobia

Fig. 4.2 'Alonzo the Armless' firing a rifle with his feet as part of his act

safe choice for a friend, and she treasures his company. His dexterous feet function as visual analogues to hands, throwing knives, holding cigarettes, playing guitar, shooting rifles, and gesturing as he speaks (Fig. 4.2).

The crucial role of hands is further accentuated through the revelation that Alonzo's armlessness is, in fact, a performance—an act to ward off the police: Alonzo's non-normative physicality, manifested in his thumb polydactyly, is the unique marker of a wanted killer's identity (Fig. 4.3), so he hides his difference by wearing a straitjacket to bind his arms. After Nanon witnesses the impromptu murder of Zanzi, the circus owner and her father, by a man with a double thumb (whose face she could not see), Alonzo decides that amputation is the only way to truly be with Nanon and blackmails a physician to go through with the surgery. Following his recovery, however, when he goes to find Nanon hoping at long last to propose to her, she has in the meantime overcome her hand phobia and is betrothed to Malabar. Unrequited love quickly turns to hate and culminates in Alonzo's Grand Guignol-style death when his revenge plan to tear

Fig. 4.3 Thumb polydactyly: Alonzo's congenital malformation

apart Malabar's arms during a performance goes awry. Where hands portray the possibility of affect and interpersonal communication, the choice to have one's own uninjured hands and arms severed cannot go unpunished. The film appears to bring forward a twisted cautionary message, reminding the audience that nothing—not even love—is worth losing the capacity for manual touch. Moreover, it highlights the immorality of faking disability and of gratuitous, unethical, self-inflicted amputation.

In *Freaks* (1932), Browning strips the film of the performing element and casts real-life circus performers with corporeal disabilities, throughout blurring the lines of decency and maleficence, normative and subversive, monster and hero. Set, like *The Unknown*, in the marginal, exilic space of the circus, the film's ostracised others represent a close-knit community that sticks together against discrimination and abuse—an example of functional bodies that are nonetheless exilic in their non-conformity to extant socio-cultural canons. The powerful visual hapticity of the narrative is violently stressed even before the narrative begins, when a hand breaks through the title card and tears it—a literal 'Cine-Fist' to appropriate Eisenstein's term (2010, 64). By focusing on the characters' everyday actions and their affective states, *The Unknown* and *Freaks* seem to be less

concerned with the pathologisation and criminalisation of difference than with representing realistic, *in extremis* situations and their traumatic repercussions.

Infected Hands: *Orlacs Hände* (1924)

While Browning's films focus on ability through disability, other productions take a far more sombre approach to amputation that precludes normal and normative manual touch. Perhaps the most extreme use of unsettling hand imagery in early cinema is accomplished in Robert Wiene's *Orlacs Hände* (1924), an Austrian gothic horror film based on French author Maurice Renard's novel *Les Mains d'Orlac* (1920), in turn inspired by Arthur Train's title story in *Mortmain* (1907). In it, Paul Orlac, a famous concert pianist, loses both hands in a train crash, which his surgeon replaces with those of a recently executed robber and murderer, Vasseur—or so Orlac is led to believe. As the plot develops, the pianist gradually starts to lose control over his mind and body, certain that those damned, transplanted hands will eventually kill again. When a murder occurs and Orlac's fingerprints are found at the scene, the protagonist is convinced of his guilt. The notion of villainy inherited through organs and tissue is familiar since at least Shelley's *Frankenstein*, in which the creature receives the brain of a criminal. Shifting the maligned culprit to the hand and the digits, which can physically perpetrate crimes, allows for a close haptic engagement with the images and the narrative's sensitive content. Moreover, that the hand emerges as the amputated limb of choice adds to the dramatisation of an overpowering loss of control over the body that is structural to the Gothic and is represented, for instance, in the myriad werewolves, panthers, vampires, and other human-animal composites that populate the texts, as well as in the many 'falling dreams' the protagonists often experience in early to mid-twentieth century films (Redling 2015, 189–216).

Les Mains d'Orlac has been adapted to the screen four times, three of those by travelling directors. In addition to Wiene's film, there is German émigré Karl Freund's *Mad Love* (1935), shot in Hollywood, and *The Hands of Orlac* (1960), a British-French production directed by professional traveller Edmond T. Gréville. Olney reads Renard's novel and its film adaptations as 'subversive reversals in the depiction of physical disability', in that they complicate the familiar Manicheist approach to disabled characters by displacing villainy from the mutilated protagonist to

the able-bodied antagonist (297)—even if ultimately, he concludes, the works do perpetuate problematic stereotypes (302). The representation of Orlac's artificial, prosthetic hands as visual markers of devilry and criminal intent—as well as 'flawed, inadequate, and deeply troubling compensations for the disabled natural body', to borrow from Ivan Raykoff—indeed characterises a stereotypical view of surgical transplants and physical disability (2013, 78). Crucially, however, it may also bring to the fore a more complex view of disability which, through gothic aesthetics, works to challenge standard assumptions about the figuration of bodily difference in popular culture. Raykoff, for instance, reads the different instalments of the Orlac narrative as 'fictional representations of the Romantic pianist's hand troubles' (76), enacting the well-known arm or hand injuries of Robert Schumann and other virtuosos (176). The devolution and eventual breakdown of Orlac's piano-playing skills and technique channel the iconic image of the gifted, sensitive genius whose entrancing virtuosity eventually drives him to madness.

Instead of shying away from post-surgical trauma, the film dramatises the recipient's body as 'both enabled and undone by medical intervention' (Wasson 2020, 128). The film's use of cinematic techniques and gothic tropes to represent disability stands out for its nuanced reframing of normative perceptions about bodily difference. This is achieved, for example, through the construction of spaces of interaction between normate and non-normate bodies, the use of close-up shots of Orlac's face in non-climactic moments to promote proximity and draw pathos, and a reworking of the curability trope that does not rely on a straightforward happy ending. Shifting between the poetic and the psychotic, Wiene's camera reveals the unstable borders of identity, making hands speak, to come back to Leutrat (1995, 85) (Fig. 4.4).

Recalling Conrad Veidt's somnambulist, Cesare, in Wiene's earlier *Caligari*, the post-operative medium long shots of Orlac (also played by Veidt) before he is discharged liken him to a mannequin or robot, with arms hanging inert beside his body, capped with the foreign hands, their fingers unnaturally outstretched, carefully avoiding contact with the rest of his body. Throughout, the camera often splits the hands from Orlac's body, so that the renegade appendages appear to crawl or float in the frame. Composition and chiaroscuro cinematography foreground Orlac's isolation, cutting him off from other characters and from his surroundings, engulfing him in darkness (Fig. 4.5). Full and wide shots accentuate his helplessness, as do the omnipresent shadows cast upon walls that

Fig. 4.4 Hands that speak: through careful framing, Orlac's right hand visually resembles an open mouth

double his hands, multiplied as well in the mirrored surface of the grand piano's lid, which Orlac painfully opens only to find his muscle memory gone and his virtuosity a distant recollection. Other techniques stressing forlornness include the blurring of a shot when Orlac reads in the newspaper that the 'treacherous fingerprints' of the (supposed) murderer Vasseur had been found on the victim's body, thereby proving Vasseur's guilt. The blurred image is suggestive of the collapse of the borders between body and mind, reality and confabulation, so that Orlac and Vasseur dilute into one. The episodic structure of iris-in and slow iris-out shots that introduce and end each section lends the film a sinister musical cadence, further haunted by the mute piano. The intertitles also consolidate Orlac's despair and underscore the story's gothic excess. Their purpose is not simply 'transcribing the words the medium cannot yet make audible'; much like the moving images, the intertitles are visual elements (Cornu 2014, 223) and are therefore thoroughly aesthetic: by suddenly pausing the action

Fig. 4.5 Contrast lighting magnifies Orlac's isolation, his pale hands seemingly puppeteering his body

and refocusing the eye towards the written words, the latter take a subservient position to the images, made gradually brutal through characterisation and Veidt's emotionally nuanced performance. All these elements combine to create a sense of inescapable hapticity, which brings viewers closer to the protagonist and the rawness of trauma, facilitating identification and encouraging them to grieve not for, but with, Orlac. The film thus offers, as Sara Wasson explains in the fascinating *Transplantation Gothic* (2020), 'deeply moving embodied expression to communicate fear, yearning, and acceptance around recipient experience' (143), countering the stereotypical 'cultural encoding' of bodily diversity (Thomson 1997, 5).

Twice a victim, of a catastrophic train derailment and, subsequently, of brutal psychological manipulation on the part of the real (abled) murderer, Orlac is not the villain of the story; his struggles as he questions his own agency can, in fact, be seen to replay the experience of many amputee

patients and limb recipients. The uncomfortable cinematic encounters with disability may therefore at times allow the audience to 'dis-identify' with and 'be *horrified*' by ableist culture (Hall 2016, n.p.), all the while opening up a space for validating patient suffering and enabling viewer engagement with particularly harrowing experiences. And if the 'subversive reversal' in representing the aesthetics of disability that Olney identifies is not fully articulated in the film, its ethical, ontological, and epistemic debates remain nonetheless compellingly unresolved. In interrogating the vulnerabilities of trauma and identity construction, the 'fleshy materiality and agency of ill, sick and pained bodies' in Wiene's picture moves beyond an oversimplistic binary dichotomy (Douglas et al. 2020, 399). Instead, Wasson notes, it grapples with 'ontological and affective aspects of tissue incorporation' that refute a supernatural explication while highlighting the mental state of the recipients and their response to dread and grief (2020, 138). These are 'extraordinary bodies', in the sense that Rosemarie Garland Thomson (1997) describes them; bodies where difference is not shorthand for depravity.

With its roots in Victor Frankenstein, the horrific association of medical malpractice and the Gothic has been well established since the Victorian era—a time, Wasson summarises, when 'medicine itself was an incorrigibly Gothic project' (2015, 1). Following a rise in amputation cases after gunpowder reached Western Europe and, more decisively, after the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815) and the American Civil War (1861–1865), medical knowledge in the field of transplantation experienced a significant boost, one which accelerated after the outbreak of the Great War (Kirkup 2007, 48, 91). In the wake of the conflict, however, experimental transplant surgery stagnated, hastened by 'an element of complacency in the surgical world', with many physicians lauding a holistic approach to medicine (Hamilton 2012, 129). In the 1920s, surgeon and historian David Hamilton elucidates, 'good transplant science [was] sidelined' and 'the work of uncritical enthusiasts flourished unchecked' (125). Unsurprisingly, writers and filmmakers drew on this 'anarchy' and lack of scientific rigour in transplantation studies (xiv), exploiting the monstrous potential of skin grafts and organ transplants to stitch together a grotesque image of the medical profession as uncoupled from morality and accountability. Amputation, prosthetics, and transplantation fantasies became familiar topics to readers and filmgoers in the early twentieth century (Wånggren 2021, 52–53). The surge in upper and lower limb amputations during World War I (Kirkup 2007, 91–92), the publication of Renard's novel in

1920, and the film's release four years later, facilitate a reading of the effects of war on the body and family life and of Orlac as a variation on the disabled veteran.

The analogy between the narrative and the impact and ramifications of the war are not merely speculative or a 'historical fallacy', as defined in the introduction to this volume—a willingness to see films as necessarily related to events contemporaneous with their production. Renard, in fact, authored a range of literary works, such as 'The Phony Man' (1923), which deal directly with soldiers returned from the battlefield, and would today fall nicely into the categories of 'body horror' and 'medical Gothic' in their tackling of issues of organ transplant and mad scientists. It adds to this that Wiene's style remains somewhat naturalistic, situating the film just outside the expressionist canon and within a more realistic framework (Jung and Schatzberg 1999, 116–18). With reference to a hospital scene in the aftermath of the train accident, Huckvale acknowledges in passing the visual links Wiene establishes between Orlac's ordeal and the war, noting that the protagonist, with his bandaged head and 'virtually mummified' hands being 'wheeled out to convalesce in the sunshine', could well pass for 'a casualty of the war that had ended only six years' prior (2020, 82). This association is carefully curated via pictorial detail and aesthetic parallelism; in other words, it is available to a surface reading that renders Orlac doubly visible, his figure doubly occupied, as victim of a train accident and injured veteran.

Thus understood, Orlac's war-body becomes politicised and the abjection of its wounds challenges normative boundaries, disturbing 'identity, system, order' (Kristeva [1980] 1982, 4). Jasie Stokes observes that the wounded combatant's body records the conflict's gruesome outcomes and 'further acts as a political, social, and cultural symbol of the state' (2015, 121). The veteran's injured body is therefore a highly discursive site. Postwar gothic literature and film, through life-changing injuries, capture the horrors of armed conflict and fears of 'a society afraid of difference' using 'freakishness to shatter naive assumptions about war as noble and glorified, and […] suggest[ing] that true healing is hampered by social prejudices' (Fahy 2006, 15). As Thomas Fahy explains, the association of physical disability with war reframes the former, in that 'visible wounds [are used to] represent physical and psychological trauma, not heroism and valor', thus de-romanticising and subverting early war propaganda images of the young, toned bodies of soldiers (53). Orlac's injuries thus also raise questions about the dis/abled body put on display. His

pianist-body was all spectacle, offered publicly to his audience, as is his amputated and transplanted body. Postwar Germany—isolated, disillusioned, and fundamentally changed by collective trauma—did not offer much opportunity for healing, its soldiers 'irrevocably changed by their traumatic experiences of combat, injury, and death' (Hans 2010, 103). Even after medical reconstruction, which makes him less threatening to an ableist society by removing the physical markers of difference (the stumps), Orlac replays social stigmas surrounding physical disability by rejecting his own injured body. In doing so, he also stresses the marginalisation of the returning veterans, whose damaged bodies 'guaranteed exclusion' (Fahy 2006, 59). If we read the surface of Orlac's spectacularised body as representative of the mangled 'body' of a defeated Germany, his wounds, which the mind refuses to heal, serve as a painful and horrifying reminder of the atrocities of war.

In understanding the injured body as political, it is productive to consider Monika Pietrzak-Franger's discussion of the 'political utility' of ill bodies as 'sites of alternative figurations' and reconfigurations of the world that make visible 'the nodes of relations obscured by dominant apparatuses' (2021, 110) and whose corporeality/materiality involves the state, which 'has to "solve" their problem' (108). The author reads the ill body as 'a phenomenal entity that is inherently relational and bound with the apparatuses that produce it: medical practices, socio-economic needs, educational and technological potentialities, treatment possibilities, and so on' (2021, 110, 217–220). Pietrzak-Franger's approach constitutes an application of Karen Barad's posthumanist materialism to a consideration of diseased skin. Materiality and discursivity, according to Barad's 'agential realism' are always coupled together, 'conjoined' in a relationship of 'mutual entailment' (2003, 822–823). Bodies, Barad proposes, are 'material-discursive in nature', that is, 'particular material (re)configurings of the world with shifting boundaries and properties that stabilize and destabilize' in a state of ongoing intra-active becoming (818–822). Injured or ill bodies, then, destabilise the orderly discourses of normate society by drawing attention to the practices that produce them, their unstable borders, and the circumstances of their reception.

Alonzo's and Orlac's bodies negotiate between a range of intra-acting 'material-discursive forces' (Barad 2003, 810)—social, cultural, medical, economic, physical, political, and sexual: both offer a (re)configuring of the (socio-political) world in their abjection, connoted with infection and contagion, informing longstanding cultural fears pertaining to dominant

ableist perceptions of physically different bodies, probed and voyeuristically gazed at by medical practitioners and abled bodies. Faking amputation and thus monetising difference to elude arrest and earn a living (Alonzo) or being unable to return to his profession due to the surgical procedure (Orlac), the existence of these bodies is firmly positioned in the fabric of economic relations. In addition, Alonzo's desperate act of self-mutilation for love and the shift in matrimonial dynamics after Orlac's surgery denote a strong investment of the injured body in sexual politics.

Furthering the socio-political surface reading, Olney analyses the reversal of the gender dynamics and related power structures set at the beginning of the film, observing that the qualities of (masculine) strength and stature, initially ascribed to the virtuoso pianist, are progressively transferred to his wife-caretaker, Yvonne, who at first occupied a position of passivity (2006, 299–300). The damaged body, then, 'becomes a metaphor for the broken communities and families around them' (Fahy 2006, 15). In addition, we can uncover a parallel between the fact that Yvonne immediately and resolutely takes charge of the couple's household and financial affairs after the accident and the changed role of women who joined the war effort by stepping into jobs traditionally reserved for men. As Orlac's mind and body grow weaker, Yvonne perseveres and even succeeds in warding off creditors. Her actions fuse the care and devotion of a loving wife with the validation and assistance of a healthcare professional that soldiers returning from battle were often denied. At the end of the film, after the real murderer, Nera, is arrested, Yvonne resumes her former role and faints from all the commotion, embodying the image of the stereotypical swooning heroine, while her husband appears to have overcome his identity crisis (Jung and Schatzberg 1999, 119). With traditional social and gender hierarchies seemingly restored, the film's final shot is especially revealing: in a close-up, Paul's hands caress and then half-cover Yvonne's face, including her eyes and her mouth, digitally indicating the silencing of the dutiful wife, 'with the reaffirmed man literally effacing the "New Woman"' (Hans 2010, 112). The tentacle-like fingers that envelop Yvonne's face and head might be read, as Anjeana Hans observes, as visually foreshadowing 'some level of continued aggression' towards her (2010, 112) (Fig. 4.6). This, in turn, suggests that the deterioration of subjectivity, the crisis of (male) identity, and the fundamental destabilising of patriarchal gender roles reflects the traumatic response of men and women to the changing postwar society (112–113).

Fig. 4.6 The manually striking ending, with Yvonne's head imprisoned by Orlac's hands

From the outset, the couple's relationship positions the hand as the locus of love. The film opens with Yvonne reading a letter from Orlac: 'I want to hold you in my *arms*. My *hands* will glide over your hair and I will *feel* your body trembling beneath my *hands*' (my emphasis). The act of holding the letter, paired with its emphatically manual contents and the sight of Orlac's handwriting, anchor professional and marital happiness in touch, at once energetic and sensual. The transplanted, infected hands consequently destroy not only Paul's livelihood but threaten his marriage as well. Shortly after the accident, Yvonne's sheer horror at the surgeon's elliptical announcement—'his hands…'—followed by her anguished 'his hands are more than his life', immediately hints at a somewhat supernatural force or agency contained in hands and foreshadows the toll that such a loss will have on their marriage. A brief but powerful action encapsulates the pianist's post-surgical misfit status: a close-up of the hands as Orlac tries, in vain, to push the wedding band down his finger (Fig. 4.7). Through the surface—the ring and the skin—Wiene literalises (rather than

Fig. 4.7 The wedding band that no longer fits

symbolises) the disintegration of marriage. Other factors align to endanger life and love through the manual. Instructed by Nera to 'seduce his hands', Orlac's maid abides, only to push the pianist away when he roughly fondles her head with hands 'like those of a murderer'. Seemingly acting on Vasseur's muscle memory, the hands appear to replay the convicted murderer's strangulation proclivities. The loss of both hands, therefore, renders Orlac uncommunicative, not only in his identity as a pianist, but as a husband, too. Tellingly, Gábor Gergely identifies the diseased body and bodily failure through deformity or mutilation as a trait of the exilic body, resulting in the disruption or breaking of social bonds (2012, 89). We realise, then, that the horror of loss and grief that amputation creates in gothic narratives delineates a cultural framework in which conventional gender roles, along with personal, professional, social, and sexual identity, self-worth, morals, and ethics are closely tied to the skin.

Gothic films dealing with transplants and amputation enact a unique and multi-layered process of re-collection, for the fragmented memory that needs to be re-collected is one's own. Orlac is therefore never too far

from his piano or his wife. The camera's unrelentless focus on hands and tactility binds him to affective spaces of touch, signalled by the memory-objects—the piano and wedding band—signifiers of his identity and his past. The process of re-membering becomes quite literal here; it is about one's limbs and the reconstitution of the body. The search is psychological (internal, bordering psychosis), medical (tissue rejection), physiological (the new limbs are different to the amputated ones), and biological (resulting in a fight against the body), as well as technical (piano playing) and technological (the musical instrument). The identity of the self (an accomplished pianist with a loving wife) faces disappearance and competes with haunting (yet false or constructed) memories of murder that appear as the embodied memories of an other's past sins.

To Olney's suggestion that, in the film, the human becomes posthuman through medical intervention, I would add that the fears surrounding the unnatural manipulation and reassemblage of body parts express Western culture's concern with the dissolution of boundaries between human and animal, human and machine, male and female, life and death. Replantation surgery was not successfully performed until 1962 (Kirkup 2007, 143), and hand transplantation between a living person and a cadaveric donor, first accomplished in 1998, remains rare nowadays (Squier 2004, 193), so it is not surprising that the idea of hands as cursed, contaminated, possessed appendages has fuelled the gothic imagination. The removal and reattachment of limbs remind us that our bodies are not safe from mutilation and corruption; that our sense of wholeness or selfhood is constantly threatened and subject to medical, criminal, voluntary, or accidental alteration. 'Possession transfer Gothic', Wasson observes, is 'about revealing that the body and subject were never stable but always porous, permeable, other' (2020, 138). Self-otherisation as a response to trauma and disability adds to the film's realism. The episode with the maid hints at an irrevocably changed identity, a direct outcome of the disintegration of the protagonist's mind as a result of his physical disintegration (the loss of both hands). 'Dismemberment', Huckvale notes, is a worse horror than death itself because the physical horror of dismemberment is the gateway of an even more profound existential horror—that of identity' (2020, 78).

The erasure of identity is especially horrifying when it is conveyed via manual dismemberment. As Michael Neill explains, in reference to the hand as the most characteristically human body part and a presumed locus of self-knowledge since Antiquity, 'to know the hand [is] to know the self' (2000, 170). The disconcerting strangeness of experiencing touch via

sensory receptors that are not wholly his own delineates an ontological dilemma for Orlac, raising the question, 'Am I still myself when I am also partly other?'. Drew Leder's *The Absent Body* (1990) examines some of the body's inherent paradoxes, namely that when pain or disease, for example, disrupt the body's normal functioning, we experience it as 'alien', 'as a force that stands opposed to the self' (3–4). From the perspective of disability studies, Thuy-Phuong Do and Patricia Geist likewise remark upon the conflicting dualities of selfhood, or intimacy, and otherness, observing that, 'in wellness and illness, in ability and disability', we transit between states of 'embodiment and disembodiment', 'of presence and absence'—a body conscious of itself but also of its own 'alien nature' (2000, 43). The title character of *Orlacs Hände* no longer feels embodied or secure in his sensorimotor capacities after the surgery, which is strikingly depicted through a nightmare in which a giant clenched fist descends upon his sleeping body (Fig. 4.8). Touch and proprioception become dysfunctional signifiers of horror and the otherness within. Another instance of injured

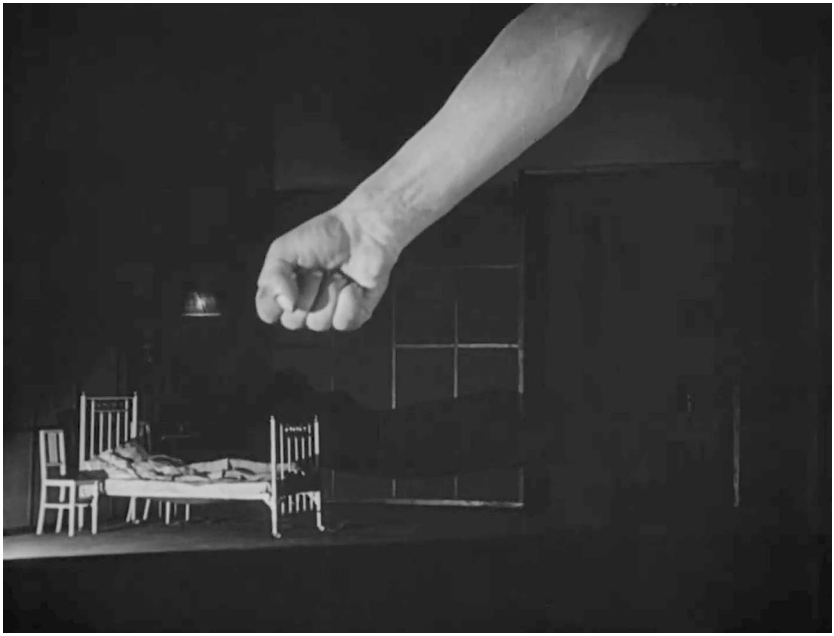

Fig. 4.8 The murderous clenched fist haunting Orlac's post-operative dreams

hands and bodies becoming alien and destabilising identity is set up in Michael Curtiz's *Mystery of the Wax Museum* (1933) and in its 1953 remake, *House of Wax*, directed by fellow Austro-Hungarian émigré Andre de Toth. In both films, an arson fire causes an accomplished wax sculptor and museum owner to suffer disfiguring burns that irremediably damage his hands, thereby disabling touch and impairing his career. The story offers a contentious commentary not only on greed, artistic practice, and vengeance, but on the experience of disembodiment following trauma and a life-altering disability, directly linking the passionate sculptor's inability to perform fine movements with his hands to his othering into a remorseless murderer. The loss of identity is exacerbated by an excess of memory: as with Orlac, remembering the pre-injury body and the present incapacity to re-member it and force it to function as before triggers an existential disruption that positions the self between states of embodiment and disembodiment.

In his analysis of horror films, Éric Dufour describes the uncanniness of alterity thus: 'if, on the one hand, my body is absolutely mine', as evidenced by the twin phenomena of pleasure and pain, it is also at once a 'radical strangeness, subject to laws that I […] ignore but […] to which I myself am chained' (2008, 148). This strangeness is 'radical', he argues, when it overwhelms the self's body and carries it towards death. Dufour locates such feelings of bodily otherness in one's flesh, arguing that the skin is a mere mask, 'a negligible coating, which conceals unsuspected depths' (148). While I agree that flesh is central to horror films, and the splatter subgenre in particular, I consider the skin, the dermis, to be far more fundamental to the Gothic than the flesh, and that its contamination or impairment entails innumerable perils that will endanger and might irrevocably damage the self. Skin, blood, and tissue become sites of contagion through which the self is othered, much like Jarrod, whose loss of 'coating', to quote Dufour, confirms his physicality as monstrous, or Orlac, whose grafted 'coating' he believes to have been infected with the identity of the murderer. In *Orlacs Hände*, in the process of getting to know his new skin, the hand of the artist, the pianist, is at first gruesomely opposed to the hand of the convicted criminal, until the two become one at the cost of the former's sanity. The 'ultimate boundary', as Jack Halberstam defines it, skin 'houses the body' and 'becomes a kind of metonym for the human', so that 'the hide no longer conceals or contains, it offers itself up as text, as body, as monster' (1995, 7). Skin engenders the production of meaning.

Framing mental and physical fragmentation in terms of tissue rejection—in *Orlacs Hände* a rejection that is not, in fact, biological but located in the mind—disavows scientific and medical discourses in favour of 'a kind of physical schizophrenia', to use Huckvale's words, predicated as we have seen on the idea that identities and personalities are interchangeable along with body parts (2020, 97). The loss of control over one's corporeality, sensorimotor abilities, and mind manifests as a loss of the self through the loss of limbs and the inability to tame the surgically reconstructed body. Orlac's body-dysmorphic supplication to his doctor—'Remove them now! I don't want them, these wretched things'—foregrounds the perception of the hand as an alien and potentially autonomous entity, independent from the body to which it is physically attached. His transplanted hands, which Orlac believes can act of their own volition based on an automatic, built-in response, devolve into violently abject synecdoches of human action and social relations that capture our attention because they have stopped functioning and have consequently turned into repugnant, 'wretched things'. Xavier Aldana Reyes's phrase, 'limbic mutiny' (2014, 46), aptly describes Orlac's hands which, through expressionist lighting, set design, framing, and Veidt's performance seemingly puppeteer the rest of his body, dragging it along unwillingly, his face contorted, his 'spidery arms' outstretched (Huckvale 2020, 82).

The sorrows and existential dilemmas of the differently abled protagonists in *The Unknown* and *Orlacs Hände*, which find visual reference in wounded war bodies, used and then disposed of by the state, tell a painful story of trauma and loss. Depicting loss (of love, of an ability, of a career) as a visceral and extreme somatic experience, amputation imparts a uniquely affective charge and defines the subject in negative terms, in the sense that it draws attention to what is *not* there. In the Gothic, the visual absence of hands or the grafting of an other's hands onto the self's body triggers a harrowing journey into memory that evidences the porosity of identity. The association of hands and absence indicate an overall loss of control and a sense of estrangement not just from community and family, but also from one's own body and mind. The exilic gothic body that emerges from these tensions is one which adamantly rejects Romantic myths of individualism, perfectibility, and wholeness of self. In their fragmentation, hands (historical signifiers of power, control, organisation, and affect) pictorially mirror the fragmented body, whose state of incompletion, self-otherisation, and isolating loss of control is accentuated by the uncanny kinaesthetic performance of gothic hands, which disclose an inherent paradox in the conception of human action, at once

strengthening and challenging the idea of autonomous agency. In doing so, the films suggest a fundamental duality in the image of gothic hands, one which aligns touch with both selfhood and otherness. This ambivalence marks the starting point for my discussion of manual spaces and sudden shifts of agency in the next chapter.

Note

1. A detailed examination of the moral and ethical complexities and controversies surrounding fictional depictions of transplant practices and disability is beyond the scope of this book (see Norden 1994, 2001; Longmore 2003; Smith 2011; Sutton 2014).

References

Aldana Reyes, Xavier. 2014. *Body Gothic: Corporeal Transgression in Contemporary Literature and Horror Film*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

———. 2016. *Horror Film and Affect: Towards a Corporeal Model of Viewership*. London: Routledge.

———. 2020. *Gothic Cinema*. London: Routledge.

Antunes, Luis Rocha. 2015. Neural Correlates of the Multisensory Film Experience. In *Neuroscience and Media: New Understandings and Representations*, ed. Michael Grabowski, 46–61. New York: Routledge.

———. 2016. *The Multisensory Film Experience: A Cognitive Model of Experiential Film Aesthetics*. Bristol: Intellect.

Aumont, Jacques. 1998. *De l'Esthétique au present*. Brussels: De Boeck Université.

Barad, Karen. 2003. Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter. *Signs* 28 (3, Spring): 801–831.

Barker, Jennifer M. 2009. *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Beugnet, Martine. 2012. *Cinema and Sensation: French Film and the Art of Transgression*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Brown, Bill. 2001. Thing Theory. *Critical Inquiry* 28 (1): 1–22.

Bruno, Giuliana. 2002. *Atlas of Emotion*. London: Verso.

Colella, Silvana. 2009. Olfactory Ghosts: Michel Faber's *The Crimson Petal and the White*. In *Haunting and Spectrality in Neo-Victorian Fiction: Possessing the Past*, ed. Rosario Arias and Patricia Pulham, 85–110. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cornu, Jean-François. 2014. *Le Doublage et le sous-titrage: Histoire et esthétique*. Presses Universitaires de Rennes.

d'Udine, Jean. 1910. *L'Art et le geste*. Paris: Félix Alcan.

Do, Thuy-Phuong, and Patricia Geist. 2000. Embodiment and Dis-Embodiment: Identity Trans-Formation of Persons with Physical Disabilities. In *Handbook of Communication and People with Disabilities: Research and Application*, ed. Dawn O. Braithwaite and Teresa L. Thompson, 41–54. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Douglas, P., et al. 2020. Living Dis/Artfully with and in Illness. *Journal of Medical Humanities* 41: 395–410.

Dufour, Éric. 2008. *Le Cinéma d'horreur et ses figures*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Eisenstein, Sergei. 2010. The Problem of the Materialist Approach to Form [1925]. In *Sergei Eisenstein: Selected Works, Writings 1922–34*, ed. Richard Taylor, 59–64. London: I.B. Tauris.

Elsaesser, Thomas, and Malte Hagener. 2010. *Film Theory: An Introduction Through the Senses*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Fahy, Thomas. 2006. *Freak Shows and the Modern American Imagination: Constructing the Damaged Body from Willa Cather to Truman Capote*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Garland Thomson, Rosemarie. 1997. *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Gergely, Gábor. 2012. *Foreign Devils: Exile and Host Nation in Hollywood's Golden Age*. New York: Peter Lang.

Grayson, Erik, and Maren Scheurer. 2021. Introduction: Amputation and the Semiotics of "Loss". In *Amputation in Literature and Film: Artificial Limbs, Prosthetic Relations, and the Semiotics of 'Loss'*, ed. Erik Grayson and Maren Scheurer, 1–17. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Halberstam, Jack. 1995. *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. Durham: Duke, University Press.

Hall, Melinda. 2016. Horrible Heroes: Liberating Alternative Visions of Disability in Horror. *Disability Studies Quarterly* 36 (1, Winter): n.p.

Hamilton, David. 2012. *A History of Organ Transplantation: Ancient Legends to Modern Practice*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Hanich, Julian. 2010. *Cinematic Emotion in Horror Films and Thrillers: The Aesthetic Paradox of Pleasurable Fear*. New York: Routledge.

Hans, Anjeana. 2010. "These Hands Are Not My Hands": War Trauma and Masculinity in Crisis in Robert Wiene's *Orlacs Hände* (1924). In *The Many Faces of Weimar Cinema: Rediscovering Germany's Filmic Legacy*, ed. Christian Rogowski, 102–115. New York: Camden House.

Harvey, Elizabeth D. 2003. Introduction: The "Sense of All Senses". In *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Elizabeth D. Harvey, 1–21. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Hoeksema, Thomas B., and Christopher R. Smit. 2001. The Fusion of Film Studies and Disability Studies. In *Screening Disability: Essays on Cinema and Disability*, ed. Anthony Enns and Christopher R. Smit, 33–43. Lanham: University Press of America.

Huckvale, David. 2020. *Terrors of The Flesh: The Philosophy of Body Horror in Film*. Jefferson: McFarland.

Jameson, Fredric. 2007. *Signatures of the Visible*. London: Routledge.

Jung, Uli, and Walter Schatzberg. 1999. *Beyond Caligari: The Films of Robert Wiene*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Kirkup, John. 2007. *A History of Limb Amputation*. London: Springer.

Kristeva, Julia. [1980] 1982. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. L.S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press.

Leder, Drew. 1990. *The Absent Body*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Leutrat, Jean-Louis. 1995. *Vie des fantômes: le fantastique au cinema*. Paris: Editions de l'Etoile/Cahiers du Cinéma.

Longmore, Paul K. 2003. *Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Marks, Laura U. 2000. *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. London: Duke University Press.

Messbarger, Rebecca. 2010. *The Lady Anatomist: The Life and Work of Anna Morandi Manzolini*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Naficy, Hamid. 2001. *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ndalianis, Angela. 2012. *The Horror Sensorium: Media and the Senses*. London: McFarland.

Neill, Michael. 2000. *Putting History to the Question: Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Norden, Martin F. 1994. *The Cinema of Isolation: A History of Physical Disability in the Movies*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

———. 2001. The Hollywood Discourse on Disability. In *Screening Disability: Essays on Cinema and Disability*, ed. Anthony Enns and Christopher R. Smit, 19–32. Lanham: University Press of America.

Olney, Ian. 2006. The Problem Body Politic, or "These Hands Have a Mind All Their Own!": Figuring Disability in the Horror Film Adaptations of Renard's *Les mains d'Orlac*. *Literature/Film Quarterly* 34 (4): 294–302.

Paterson, Mark. 2007. *The Senses of Touch: Haptics, Affects, and Technologies*. Oxford: Berg.

Pietrzak-Franger, Monika. 2021. Reading Victorian Skin: Perspectives in (English) Literary/Cultural Studies and Medical Humanities. In *Victorian Surfaces in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture: Skin, Silk, and Show*, ed. Sibylle Baumbach and Ulla Ratheiser, 97–115. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Powell, Anna. 2005. *Deleuze and Horror Film*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Quintilian. 1922. *Institutio Oratoria*, Vol. IV, Book XI. Trans. H.E. Butler. London: William Heinemann.

Raykoff, Ivan. 2013. *Dreams of Love: Playing the Romantic Pianist*. Oxford University Press.

Redling, Ellen. 2015. Gothic Nightmares Then and Now: The Oneiric Descents in Edgar Allan Poe's Short Stories and Falling Dreams ad extremum in Christopher Nolan's Film Inception. In *Gothic Transgressions: Extension and Commercialization of a Cultural Mode*, ed. Ellen Redling and Christian Schneider, 189–216. Zurich: LIT.

Rodaway, Paul. 1994. *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place*. London: Routledge.

Rowe, Katherine. 1999. *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Rugoff, Ralph. 2004. The Telltale Hand. In *Speaking with Hands: Photographs from The Buhl Collection*, ed. Jennifer Blessing et al., 153–168. New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

Smith, Angela M. 2011. *Hideous Progeny: Disability, Eugenics, and Classic Horror Cinema*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Sobchack, Vivian. 1991. *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

———. 2004. *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sorrell, Walter. 1968. *The Story of the Human Hand*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Squier, Susan Merrill. 2004. *Liminal Lives: Imagining the Human at the Frontiers of Biomedicine*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Stokes, Jasie. [2015] 2016. Fragments of a Great Confusion: Abjection, Subjectivity, and the Body in Mary Borden's *The Forbidden Zone*. In *Corporeality and Culture: Bodies in Movement*, ed. Karin Sellberg et al., 115–126. Abingdon: Routledge.

Sutton, Travis. 2014. Avenging the Body: Disability in the Horror Film. In *A Companion to the Horror Film*, ed. Harry M. Benshoff, 73–89. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. 2005. The Pleasures of Touch. In *The Book of Touch*, ed. Constance Classen, 74–79. Oxford: Berg.

van Elferen, Isabella. 2010. Haunted by a Melody: Ghosts, Transgression, and Music in "Twin Peaks". In *Popular Ghosts: The Haunted Spaces of Everyday Culture*, ed. Maria del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren, 282–295. New York: Continuum.

———. 2012. *Gothic Music: The Sounds of the Uncanny*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
———. 2016. Sonic Horror. *Horror Studies* 7 (2): 165–172.
———. 2019. Gothic and Contemporary Music: Dark Sound, Dark Mood, Dark Aesthetics. In *The Edinburgh Companion to Gothic and the Arts*, ed. David Punter, 229–242. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Wånggren, Lena. 2021. Complicating the Semiotics of Loss: Gender, Power, and Amputation Narratives. In *Amputation in Literature and Film: Artificial Limbs, Prosthetic Relations, and the Semiotics of 'Loss'*, ed. Erik Grayson and Maren Scheurer, 43–58. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Walton, Saige. 2016. *Cinema's Baroque Flesh: Film, Phenomenology and the Art of Entanglement*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
Wasson, Sara. 2015. Useful Darkness: Intersections Between Medical Humanities and Gothic Studies. *Gothic Studies* 17 (1, May): 1–12.
———. 2020. *Transplantation Gothic: Tissue Transfer in Literature, Film, and Medicine*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Wolfson, Kim, and Martin F. Norden. 2000. Film Images of People with Disabilities. In *Handbook of Communication and People with Disabilities: Research and Application*, ed. Dawn O. Braithwaite and Teresa L. Thompson, 238–250. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
Zehender, Ted. 1970. The Unknown. *Films in Review* 21 (7, August–September): 452–454.

CHAPTER 5

Tactile Travelling, Manual Space, and the Duality of Gothic Hands

The degree of autonomy the hands enjoy 'in the complex system of our body' well surpasses that of the other extremities, Walter Sorrell remarks (1968, 222). This unique faculty characterises the manual appendages as unusually ambiguous. The ways in which this ambiguity is portrayed in the gothic aesthetic and what it can tell us about ourselves and our exchanges with others and the material world will be the focus of this chapter. Art historian Rose Marie San Juan wrote, *à propos* wax models of hands, that they 'appear not only as three-dimensional entities in space, but also as part of a body elsewhere' (2011, 435). In most cases, she argues, there is an implicit but unavoidable presumption that the hand is always represented as part of the body to which it belongs, which in turn implies that one cannot exist without the other. Consequently, and conversely, the fragmented perception of a hand—an exclusive human attribute—empties the limb of humanity by presenting it as disembodied and independently capable of agency. Freud lists 'dismembered limbs, […] a hand cut off at the wrist' as 'peculiarly uncanny', 'especially when […] they prove capable of independent activity' ([1919] 1955, 244). As is well known, Freud associates this uncanniness with the castration complex. In keeping with my surface readings of film aesthetics and how they may elucidate not just artistic, but socio-political, cultural, and affective aspects of the narratives and the Gothic more generally, I consider severed and self-willed hands

J. Jacob Ramalho, *Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film*,
Palgrave Gothic, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-73628-5_5

uncanny from an alternative, non-Freudian, standpoint. San Juan explains the uncanny ambiguity of the hand as follows:

> When a hand moves, there is always something of the stranger in it. Perhaps it is because the hand rarely seems to be in sync with the rest of the body, […] always casting doubt on the unifying power of consciousness. The hand has a tendency to stray, one moment disregarding the resolve of the body to which it is connected, the next directing it as if it knows better. (2011, 435)

The otherness that San Juan detects in the hand suits the gothic worldview, in that it stresses the idea of defamiliarisation through movement, that is, the transformation of the habitual perception of body parts into something strange or foreign because of how they move. Hands create a terrifying threshold space that exposes the presence of the unfamiliar—the other—within the self's body, sometimes seemingly acting as if independent from it (435). This is what happens in Wiene's *Orlacs Hände*: as discussed in Chap. 4, the transplanted hands are not removed from the body but do not appear subordinate to it either. In this sense, the hand indicates both self-possession and dispossession of mnemonic, cognitive, and sensorimotor faculties (Rowe 1999, xiv; Messbarger 2010, 132). Long associated with the uncanny through 'esoteric practices like palmistry or legerdemain to their status as asymmetrical twins, suspect mirror images', hands—including one's own—are often 'rendered strange or alien in appearance' (Rugoff 2004, 154). Difficulties in hand self-recognition have intrigued psychologists and neuroscientists since at least the second half of the twentieth century. Many experiments have shown that study participants struggle to detect photographs of their own hands (Wuillemin and Richardson 1982; Ferri et al. 2011; D'Amour and Harris 2020) or fail to recognise visually the discrepancy between their 'kinesthetical/tactile hand' and an 'alien hand', misjudging the alien hand as theirs (Nielsen 1963; Daprati et al. 1997). Moreover, one study reports that when participants are 'shown an image of a hand and asked whose it is, the default assumption appears to be that it is not theirs, and good evidence is required for them to respond "self"' (Holmes et al. 2022, 2230). The misattribution of the alien hand to the self has implications at the level of personal identity: the perceptual conflict the participants experience indicates that identity 'can be shaken and broken down completely in laboratory experiments' (Nielsen 1963, 230). The often unsettling

self-response to human hands as strange or unfamiliar and as a threat to identity stability in gothic works thus seems to have an accurate scientific grounding.

The use of severed hands is a recurring and well-known transnational horror trope that runs through multiple subsets of the Gothic and through generic categories aligned with its aesthetics, from lyric poetry and early gothic literature to ghost stories, weird tales, fairy tales, cartoons, television series, and feature films. In his native France, Maurice Tourneur directed *La Main du diable* (Carnival of Sinners, 1943), based on Gérard de Nerval's eponymous 1927 novel, which imbues the hand with supernatural, talismanic properties to tell a story of vengeance resulting from a Faustian pact. A more well-known disembodied, murderous hand that crawls about wreaking havoc is British surgeon and author W.F. Harvey's 'The Beast with Five Fingers' (1919), adapted to the cinema in 1946 by French émigré Robert Florey. Émigré Luis Buñuel recounts a curious anecdote *a propos* this adaptation, according to which he would have been the one to suggest 'a scene that shows the beast, a living hand, moving through a library' (1983, 189). Unlike Florey and exile Peter Lorre, the lead actor, it seems the producer was not keen on the idea. Buñuel, who watched the film when he was already living in Mexico, writes of his desire to sue the producers when he saw his scene on the screen 'in all its original purity' (189). Its veracity impossible to ascertain, this anecdote remains nonetheless interesting for the connections it establishes between travelling directors, the fragmentation of the body, and the surrealist horrors of a human hand's unexpected agency.

Charles Addams, in his Addams Family cartoons for *The New Yorker* (1937–1988), refashions this traditionally evil device by giving it a comedic edge, and introduces the character that will come to be known as 'Thing': the disembodied (and often inappropriate) wandering hand which blatantly and nonchalantly destabilises the boundaries between human and non-human, horror and humour. According to Horner and Zlosnik, 'it is the Gothic's preoccupation with "surface" that enables it so easily to embrace a comic as well as a tragic perspective', and such a preoccupation is vividly emphasised in the portrayal of Thing and the unseemly Addamses (2005, 9). Producer David Levy's sitcom (1964–1966) for ABC, based on Addams's cartoons, transposes San Juan's point about the hand's 'tendency to stray' literally to the screen. The humorous approach to dismemberment pioneered by Addams's witty cartoons about a disarming, deviant family expresses an anxiety not over the loss of limbs but over

difference more generally. The gothic aesthetic in the television series and the 1990s film franchise (1991, 1993, 1998) serves mostly to satirise American society in a light-hearted way, particularly the discrimination against and ostracisation of non-conforming individuals, offering a compelling example of the disruptive power of the aesthetic's visual language. This odd family, both in colour and black-and-white, is all artifice and convention, and it is through its 'hyperbolic *un*reality, even *surreality*', which Jerrold E. Hogle defines as the 'exaggerat[ion of the Gothic's] own extreme fictionality', that the narrative unfolds and performs its cultural function and social critique (2002, 14).

Based on a sensory exploration of the '*un*reality' and '*surreality*' of manual interactions in Jean Cocteau's *La Belle et La Bête* (1946) and William Wyler's *Wuthering Heights* (1939), this chapter investigates the socio-cultural critique the films advance through the deployment of the dead hand device. Central here is an understanding of the hand as a locus of sublime terror, exile, and uncanny absence that challenges the integrity of the subject by violently emphasising its constructed nature and, consequently, its easy disassembly and destruction. Guided by Georges Braque's notion of 'manual space' (Danchev 2005, 88) and Katherine Rowe's 'unexpected clutch' and 'mortmain control' (1999), I examine the shifting discourses of power in the Gothic. The sudden reversals of agency in the interaction of the characters with dead hands complicate the ordinary distance between self and other, autonomy and dependency, life and death. In doing so, they direct our attention to the uncanny, disorienting, and disabling experiences of human action.

The Disembodied Clutch: *La Belle et La Bête* (1946)

The use of a wandering hand as social critique pervades late nineteenth-century and twentieth-century gothic fiction. In her gripping study of 'dead hands', Katherine Rowe claims that, through this curious device, the 'stories map the differences between person and thing, servant and master, ape and human onto the narrative distance between speaker and audience' (1999, 111–12). Rowe perceptively reads the disembodied hand's 'unexpected clutch', an expression she borrows from Elias Canetti's *Crowds and Power* (1960), as signalling differences of condition, class, and intellect which, in turn, aligns the gothic aesthetic—and the literary or cinematic effect of uncanniness—with social commentary (112–13). Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête* materialises the differences and distances Rowe discusses:

the Beast, who is of a higher social class than Belle, is both object and subject, servant and master, ape and human. Belle, in turn, directly equates social status and beauty with the hand, replying to her brutish suitor Avenant's 'You mustn't go on slaving day and night […]. Why don't your sisters work?' with a gentle 'My sisters are too beautiful. Their hands are too white'. A two-shot later in the scene shows Avenant taking hold of and trying to kiss Belle in a medium close-up while her hand, in the middle of the frame, presses against Avenant's mouth as she pushes him away. This moment, which takes place at the beginning of the film, underlies the role of the manual in the narrative's unfolding, namely in the portrayal of character dynamics, by verbally and pictorially contrasting servitude and beauty, possession and protection.

The presence of an uncanny 'clutch' visually pervades the film, from the chalk-drawn opening credits, which Cocteau's authorial hand writes on a blackboard, to the smoky gloves on the ground at the end of the film. Even before we first see him, the Beast is introduced to us via an excess of hapticity: a handwritten opening crawl informs the reader-viewer that children believe 'the hands of a human beast will smoke when he slays a victim'. It is therefore unsurprising that it is a hand's transgressive act—Belle's father picking a rose without permission—that conjures the Beast. The continuous display of beastly, dismembered, and disembodied corporeal imagery throughout Cocteau's hypnotic production suggests the imminent possibility of an 'unexpected clutch', thereby 'generate[ing] a frisson of anxiety', to borrow Jennifer Blessing's expression (2004, 20). The uncanny haptic and the mystifying properties of the hand are illustrated with incomparable poetry in the long, slow-motion sequence in which Belle enters the Beast's castle.

A large, heavy wooden door opens into a darkened, half-lit corridor. An orderly row of what appear to be human hands, each holding a candelabra, adorns the otherwise empty walls. As Belle rushes past, moving towards the camera in a long shot, the bodiless hands, which seem to float eerily amid the darkness, turn steadily in her direction, one by one, vigilantly following her every step while also pointing the way forward. The camera's placement, at a low angle just below eye level, stresses the tangible sense of manual entrapment that subtends Cocteau's visual storytelling. Hands, in this film, are not just about touch—they continually perform other sensory functions, surveying the heroine and sensing her body from a distance; they serve as a form of spatial mapping that guides Belle's movements. Moreover, these *membra disiecta* constitute mnemonic traces

which Belle's re-collective hands explore, bridging the distance between the real and the fantastic, the human and the not-quite-human other. The pervasive feeling of gothic eeriness derives, in part, from the ambiguity of these unsettling hands, which are simultaneously welcoming and repulsive, offering a sense of safety but also of sinister surveillance. While, in *Orlacs Hände*, hands convey horror because the other is feared to have become an integral part of the self (the other in/as me), eventually leading to madness due to the loss of identity, in *La Belle et la Bête*, they accentuate physical strangeness and instil awe because they are separate from, yet gesture dangerously towards, the re-collector's body. Both films diagnose a tendency for bodily corruption and identity breakdown by introducing from the outset a binary opposition between the hand (as other) and the (rest of the) self's body.

This effect is heightened after Belle leaves the strange corridor and, framed in a full shot, heads towards a long staircase, her cape sweeping the floor as she goes.[1] In the foreground, we notice a table laid for a meal and an empty chair. The camera then follows Belle from behind as she ascends the stairs. When she reaches the upper floor, her back still to the camera, she stops before an imposing passageway guarded by two disembodied hands firmly wielding swords that cross and touch—tactile space becomes increasingly menacing as Belle continues her journey. On seeing the swords, the heroine, still filmed in slow motion, stands back, frightened, and turns around—but only for an instant: the hands lift the swords seconds after, making the next room accessible to her. Contrary to what would be expected though, once the hands allow Belle to pass, the camera does not immediately follow her—it stands still just long enough to show us both hands resuming their initial position, effectively enclosing the heroine in the unknown place she has just entered, so that she is momentarily out of our sight. The farther she ventures into the depths of the castle, the more overpowering the sense of imprisonment and exile from the outside world becomes. Although this is a familiar theme, recurrently analysed in connection to gothic spaces and the gothic house in particular, the vital contribution of objects to the creation of an atmosphere of restricted freedom remains underexplored. While the architectural layout of the Beast's abode is important, the objects that populate it, including the severed hands, are even more so. The hands appear as guardians of the castle, conferring upon its interstices a quiet strength. Their protective function, however, might turn them into obstacles, making it difficult for the heroine to escape, should she want to. Through their inescapable

connection with touch, the hands are ambiguously constructed as seductive and perilous entities that entrap the characters. The downwards motion of the sword-wielding manual appendages further adds to the film a tone of fatality and predestination that subtends gothic depictions of re-membering.

The feeling of enclosure that the descending movement of hands imparts to the yet invisible place that lies beyond them is quickly contrasted with the startling openness of the corridor the camera cuts to next. On one side of the corridor, we see a series of doors, each paired with a window on the opposite side, fully demarcating the limits between the interior and the exterior of the house, the built environment and the natural world. There is a hauntingly ethereal *photogénie* to this sequence, achieved by having the actress placed in a trolley with castors as the wind blows full-length white voile curtains against her. The billowing curtains recall Epstein's *La Chute de la maison Usher* and the use of slow-motion, here given rhythmic continuance with the trolley, further emulates the rendering of mental images in impressionist films. These movements contribute to a sense of the gothic nature of the house, where the secret, the fantastic, the numinous, and the ghastly meet and sensory exchange takes place. Floating through the restless corridor, willowy Belle appears almost ghost-like—intangible and immaterial—while gently gliding by.

The sensorial field reaches an increasingly complex level through the layering of different sensory registers: tactile properties are attributed to inanimate objects (the curtains that touch Belle) and the sense of sight is sharpened when the intermittent strokes of light and shadow from the world outside bring the house's unlit, bare walls to life, creating a singularly haptic space for the viewers. Equally, there is a sense that the disembodied hands, visually absent from this scene, are nonetheless there, pushing Belle's body forward. Cinematographer Henri Alekan's 'virtuoso use of chiaroscuro', in the words of Marina Warner, and the production design of Christian Bérard and Lucien Carré, intensify the film's allure, so that its 'fine-spun aesthetic erotics' unfold 'to a perfectly poised slow tempo in surreal settings' (2013, 155). Adding to the 'erotics' of the scene is Georges Auric's spellbinding orchestral score, which fills the sonic space with such intensity that it reaches an organic symbiosis with the visuals. The use of a trolley provides aesthetic continuity with the previous slow-motion shots and enhances the film's haptic visuality, allowing the viewer to 'seiz[e] the unrolling of images to sense more voluptuously, more lastingly their loss' (Fleischer 2008, 31). The *ralenti* therefore accentuates

the 'erotics' of the surface (Sontag 1966, 14), whereas the trolley, in replicating a similarly slow-paced movement, further underscores the idea that the heroine has stepped into a magical realm where she is being led by the house to a specific, pre-determined place inside it.

Like the Otranto castles of yore, the Beast's partakes of an uncanny geometry 'that perplexes its […] visitors', 'yields mystery, precludes human control and endows the building with a power beyond its strictly physical structure'—it is, as Manuel Aguirre points out, 'a product of the vitalistic conception of nature' (1990, 92). In gothic cinema, inanimate things often become (or appear to become) active, alive, and human-like. David Punter and Glennis Byron identify this perception of objects as sentient—animism—as a subset of the uncanny (2004, 284–85). Animism, along with anthropomorphism, one of its subspecies, figures widely in the Gothic, and Cocteau employs it here to stress the idea of the house as a breathing organism, composed of the interrupted lives of its different inhabitants, with the many hands, candelabra, and swords that emerge from its interstices invoking the borderless communion of building and body. There is a further link here to Epstein's *photogénie*, which lauded the cinema for its powers of animism, for the creation of a poetic world where '[o]bjects take on airs' and '[a] hand is separated from a man, lives on its own, suffers and rejoices alone' (Epstein 2012, 290).

The materiality of the Beast's castle and the continuous, sensory-laden exchanges it establishes with the corporeality of the characters are crucial, I argue, to an understanding of their discursivity. The psychoanalytic model, which conceives of the house 'as a magnifying mirror for the psychic disturbances of its occupants' (Sencindiver 2010, 21), proves therefore too reductive as an investigative approach for it subsumes the material and the body under the narcissistic weight of the ego's turmoiled consciousness. A surface reading, then, goes likewise against Anthony Vidler's assertion that the uncanny is not 'a property of the space itself nor can it be provoked by any particular spatial conformation', but is instead, 'in its aesthetic dimension, a representation of a mental state of projection' (1992, 11). Gothic space and the objects it houses, I contend, do not 'act […] as representations of estrangement' (12): fear and uncanniness pertain to the architectural; they are displayed and choreographed spatially by the physical structures of the gothic house. This is best encapsulated in the words of Mark Lamphere, the Bluebeard villain in Lang's *Secret Beyond the Door*: 'The way a place is built determines what happens in it'. In this way, Mark attributes to architectural design the role of sole agent responsible

for shaping the feelings and actions of the dwellers—a more extreme iteration of the commonplace idea that '[a]rchitecture is a way of defining relationships' (Upton 1998, 13). Mark's dictum overtly acknowledges the significance of the living organicity of the built interior. The cursed anthropomorphic objects in Cocteau's film concretise this organicity and behave as percipient subjects that seem to come to life when they sense Belle's presence, from the candelabra-holding and sword-wielding hands to the waving curtains, which, like disembodied fingers, caress Belle's skin. Significantly, Belle does not try to avoid contact with the curtains that touch her, but rather touches them back. This interaction visually replicates Belle's earlier caressing of the house with her billowing cape: the house is getting to know her, just as she is getting to know the house. By reciprocating each other's actions, the house and the self engage in a sensuous game where fear of and fascination for the forbidden and the unknown mesh and blend.

The unexpected, but harmonious, reciprocity of sensorial cognition reveals the Romanticism within the film's atmospheric uncanny and prevents the narrative from ever becoming truly terrifying. Belle, even if startled by the animate, grotesque body parts that line the castle walls, does not seem to question the provenance of such supernatural manifestations of agency. The fairy-tale ambience in Cocteau's film heightens the sense of enthralling unease and thereby diminishes the gothic monstrosity of the mutilated hands (and of the Beast's feral physiognomy), effectively containing and taming the horror which threatens to irrupt from the images. As viewers familiar with the language of the Gothic, we are conditioned to expect that Belle will be fearful, so her unforeseen positive response to sublime touch is disconcerting. The disembodied hands are unexpectedly 'disconnected from the body, from reality, from logic, from time, and given new meaning as fragments that remind us both of how things usually are and of how things might be in [a] truncated, fragmentary world' (Hoving 2004, 112). Yet, in suggesting a break from the unity of the physical body, they also offer, in Surrealist fashion, an entry point to the marvellous.[2] To appropriate Breton's concept, the film exudes a 'convulsive beauty' ([1937] 1987, 13), with dismemberment provoking estrangement and fascination through the spatialisation of the 'omnipotence of dream' ([1924] 1972, 26). Laura Hubner posits that fairy-tale tropes 'can help feed hope into films that are otherwise overwhelmingly bleak or horrific' (2018, 2). Belle's disarming curiosity and ease with the unsettling predicament in which she finds herself certainly seem to bring to the

narrative a feeling of hope. From this perspective, it is the complementary union of self, objects, dwelling space, and the senses that paradoxically creates and constrains the Gothic in *La Belle et la Bête*.

Rosemarie Buikema and Elisabeth Wesseling comment on the symbiosis between the body, the architectural, and perception, stating that houses and castles are made uncanny 'in that the fantastic, the magical and the unheard-of insinuate themselves into everyday reality', so that 'the familiar becomes strange and the strange familiar. Things […] are not what they seem' (2007, 156). Indeed, in the confined, yet seemingly endless, space of the Beast's castle, where there should be apathy and inertia, we find liveliness and movement; where there should be distance and silence, we find proximity and sensorial interchange; and where gory imagery of amputated limbs should dissuade the character from exploring the unknown, she instead chooses to coalesce with it. The gothic aesthetic builds on this unexpectedness of actions and on the way the camera creates a sensorial space for the characters, that is, a space where their senses are shown to interact closely and continually with the objects around them. Borrowing the expression from Georges Braque, I call this space of objects—of things—'tactile space' or 'manual space' (Danchev 2005, 88). The construction of such a space in the films is the result of the recollector's journey. In Cocteau's film, the manual space of the ubiquitous hands, which are external to Belle but internal to the house, establish a connection between two different planes of sensorial interaction: that of the edifice, which acquires agency and interacts with the self through its extensions (hands, candelabra, curtains, swords, and other objects), and that of the self, who willingly engages in a sensory dialogue with the house and its belongings.

One outcome of this sensory co-dependency is the fact that, through her physical contact with the body of the house, Belle appears as the creator of an almost endless succession of spaces. In other words, Belle's passing through the house's rooms gives the illusion that the area in front of the camera's recording field derives from the self's multisensory exploration of space. Space, in this regard, responds organically to a human presence, so that the dwellings of the character in the house trigger reactions from the house itself. The camera, as it advances deeper into the castle, corridor after corridor, room after room, in a way reflects this idea, expanding space as it moves. Read in this way, we can consider Belle's movements to extend the physical space of the house, in the sense that the places in it only become alive and visible to us because of Belle, that is, they come into

organic existence as a consequence of her being there. This observation, in turn, allows for a reading of the house as an extension of the wandering re-collector. We can therefore conclude, with Louis Marin, that more than simply being animated by the movements within it, space can be understood as the actual effect of those movements: space can be thought of as deriving from dwelling (1991, 170).

Martin Heidegger famously addresses the symbiotic relationship between the self and the architectural, claiming that 'we do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built because we dwell, that is, because we are *dwellers*' ([1951] 1971, 148), thus framing the human need for moving spatially as an existential question. The films of the travelling directors, with their continuous flows of movement and exilic characters inhabiting exilic spaces, reflect these complex dynamics especially well. Dwelling in the Gothic occurs 'within a self/other dialectic', in which to dwell always means to dwell with present and absent others by means of a sensory-based language (Baumlin and Meyer 2018, n.p.). In the manual spaces of wander and wonder that make up the Beast's castle, the body of the self and the body of the house (which contains, in both senses of the word, the bodies of cursed others) develop a singular relationship over the course of which Belle alternately appropriates and is appropriated by her material surroundings.

From this analysis, it emerges that the gothic experience is not only multisensory, as discussed in Chap. 4, but cross-modal at its core, denoting a concomitancy of different senses and sensory modalities—the classic five senses alone cannot account for all the sensory registers deployed in the film. Luís Rocha Antunes discusses three additional sense modalities—thermoception, nociception, and the vestibular sense—broadly understood, respectively, as the ability of organisms to perceive temperature; detect potentially harmful stimuli; and orient themselves spatially. Antunes adds that, in watching a film, any film, our perception always 'overlaps with other senses, modalities and functions' (2015, 48). Gothic cinema discovered, since its inception, the aesthetic advantages of exploiting the medium's cross- and multisensory capabilities and, in typical gothic fashion, has continued to distort, confuse, and exaggerate them ever since, not least by combining the physiological (immediate stimuli) with the intellectual (perceptions mediated via memory and imagination). In Cocteau's film, we are not dealing with 'a simple translation from one sense to another' (Paterson 2007, 94), but with a synaesthetic (con)fusion of the senses; in the space of the castle, the world is experienced by means of a

complex matrix of sensations where one sense continually calls up and takes on the properties of another.

The synaesthetic element is epitomised in a scene that occurs just over halfway through the film. Holding a lit candelabrum, Belle presses her ears against her bedroom door. With Auric's suspenseful music, we perceive ruffling sounds and heavy breathing. Upon opening the door, a medium full shot reveals Belle's terrified expression. Immediately, the image cuts to the Beast's face, zooming in quickly from a medium close-up to an extreme close-up as he growls madly, his head half shrouded in smoke. Belle bravely steps out of her room and reproaches him for hovering and being covered in blood. A reverse shot frames the Beast between the back of Belle's head and the candelabrum, its lit candles visually matching the smoke the creature's body emits, directly connecting the two characters and further exposing the Beast's supernaturality. After apologising to her, Belle tosses him a silky, see-through shawl, telling him to go clean himself. The delicate fabric the Beast holds to his face sharply contrasts with his tattered shirt. Suddenly, he recoils and the camera zooms out as he demands that she stop staring at him: 'Your look burns me', he cries out. His face is then engulfed in shadows, only his smouldering shoulder, piercing sad eyes, and furry claws remain visible. Sight becomes a noxious stimulus that activates nociceptors and results in physical pain.

Belle's and the audience's experience of the strange hands that keep the heroine in equal parts mesmerised and mortified likewise encompasses mixed sensory modalities. Appealing vividly to the sense of sight through the brightness of the flame on each candle they hold and the aggressiveness of the weapons they wield, the mutilated hands see and guide the heroine, congregating in themselves multiple sensory experiences. The impending threat of an unexpected clutch (nociception) that the appendages pose, in their severed existence, is emphasised by the burning flame of the candles and the cool steel of the swords (thermoception), which makes Belle quickly turn her head, stop, and reposition her body (the vestibular sense). This entails an understanding, from texts such as Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) or Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), of gothic spaces as built around an intricate network of stimuli where the dwellers struggle to navigate circumambient space and where the fear of pain—of sudden attacks to (female) bodily integrity—prevails. Cocteau's direction accentuates the impact of the intermingling levels of sensory experience, counterposing the intense forward motion of the heroine's body to the constricted movements of the limbs attached to the

walls and pairing the use of slow motion with long shots. This allows the viewer more time to take in all the movement in the frame and the sensations it elicits, from the impatient flickering of the candle flames to the soft touch of the curtains. On this, Warner attributes Cocteau's 'specifically cinematic brilliance' to the continuous flow of movement that transpires in every frame, so that 'his Beast' and, I would add, the enchanted castle, 'is all aquiver with life' (2013, 152). Seeing and touching, alongside nociceptive, thermoceptive, and navigational experiences, operate in tandem and merge.

All the scattered hands that watch Belle's progress through the house are hands that do not, and cannot, touch—no more than Tim Burton's lonely hero with scissors for hands can touch his beloved Kim. The impossibility of touch is visually emphasised by their holding swords, which deter intruders from trespassing, and candelabra with lit candles: fire will burn the hand that tries to touch it. This creates proximity and distance simultaneously—proximity between Belle and the place she is in, for the light from the candles allows her to inspect her surroundings, and distance because steel and fire create a barrier that prevents her from ever coming too close. These elements therefore stress the inability of the hand to perform its primary function—to engage in direct, unmediated tactile contact. The ambiguous and exilic status of the hands that see but do not touch highlights a crucial aspect of Belle's slow-motion entrance into the castle: the idea of unexpected absence. Each disembodied limb invokes, as San Juan suggests, something that is conspicuously missing: the rest of the body, so that the full human body is imagined in relation to the dispersed manual iconography. For the duration of the film, none of the hands is shown as belonging to a corresponding body; they are never re-membered and so remain incomplete, partial, unstable—a decontextualised fragment of human life. They belong to no one, and, moreover, we are not sure if they ever did. Observed closely, the whole sequence seems to be characterised by an absence where one would expect a presence: the absence of a servant opening the massive doors of the castle, the absence of a host greeting the incoming guest, the absence of eyes in the hands that somehow seem to spy on Belle, the absence of fingers in the curtains that touch her, and the absence of a person sitting at the table laid for a meal that Belle runs past. In his discussion of objects in the films of émigré directors, Elsaesser comments on the mise-en-scène of absence and argues that 'pictorial detail is charged not with symbolism but rather with the tensions of a setting from which people are absent but where their presence is always

implied' (1984, 282). Diegetic tensions, according to Elsaesser, are articulated aesthetically, on the surface of the image. When the slow-motion sequence ends, the film reinforces these tensions in the mise-en-scène by using human voices to anthropomorphise inanimate objects, such as a door and a dressing table mirror. These voices denote additional absences, their aural presence recalling Michel Chion's 'complete acousmêtre', that is, a voice we cannot connect to a body (1999, 21). The source of the voice, however, is not simply hidden or invisible in this case: it seems more accurately to have been displaced from a human subject onto an object. The Beast's physiognomy itself concretises an absence—that of a recognisably fully human form.

The feeling of absence thus imbues the castle with a distinct sensate quality that consistently frustrates our sensorial expectations of seeing, hearing, touching, and being touched. In effect, amidst all these absences, the house becomes itself 'a way of looking, a surveillance device monitoring the possessions that occupy it', including its inhabitants (Wigley 1992, 341). Mark Wigley equates this kind of generalised surveillance within the house with the patriarchal gaze, ceaselessly controlling the female guest-prisoner. Psychoanalytic readings have long established a connection between the house and the female subject, whereby the former is analysed as a metaphor that exposes the patriarchal repression of the women and their subjugation to the dominant male ideology and authority (cf. Gilbert and Gubar 1979; Showalter 1977, 1991; Ellis 1989; Milbank 1992). A reading of the castle as both lived space and living space, in turn, affords new perspectives from which to problematise the staging of affective dynamics through the architectural. The fact that the active surveillance of the heroine is effected through animate household objects and genderless human appendages stresses the eerie atmosphere of a film where the female character is literally manipulated by the house-(as)-master. The agency of the house is so powerful that, in the trolley scene, the building appears to take hold of the character's body, pushing it forward, and seemingly stripping it of any free will. The profusion and aggressiveness of phallic objects, such as swords, graphically match the sensory with the sensual and exacerbate the feeling of (sexual) danger, leading the audience to question the heroine's safety. Here we have a space so thoroughly contaminated by the Beast's haptic presence that Belle first becomes acquainted with him through the sensory contact with his house and its belongings. In this way, the sensorial conversation the house establishes with Belle acts as a surrogate for the Beast's touch. The carefully choreographed ballet Belle

performs as she enters the castle is therefore as much a dance with its living interstices as with the Beast. Cocteau depicts these connections visually (via the surface) by making the built environment human, sentient, affective.

Later in the film, a further iteration of the severed or disembodied hand appears in the shape of a glove, as one of the magic items the Beast gives Belle, along with a key—yet another object that directly demands touch. A formal-aesthetic analysis of the cinematographic privileging of manual space and intensely manual objects, specifically disembodied hands, gloves, and keys, visually aligns the castle with a pervasive, omnipresent touch, which could be interpreted as reifying the Beast's physical and psychological hold over Belle. These elements, however, possess rich and often conflicted meanings. If, on the one hand, the glove can 'articulate distinctions in wealth or status', on the other, it is a long-established marker of honour, seduction, and courtship that can 'reveal something of the owner's temperament' (Green 2021, 85, 7). The right-hand glove in particular 'denoted an authority able to reward or punish', as S. William Beck explains (1883, 197). 'Mute ambassadors', often 'sent to bridge over breaches of friendship, and bind up broken ties' (227), the removal and gifting of one glove may be construed as deferring power to the recipient—as when the Beast entrusts his glove to Belle. Worn on the right hand, it transports her wherever she wishes. The key, in turn—an ill-reputed motif in the gothic tradition, associated with patriarchal control, entrapment, and oppression—is here resignified and given away as a token of trust and choice: Belle can decide whether or not to return. Much like the living castle and the fateful rose, these are memory-objects, pieces of the Beast's past, imbricated in his present, and implicated in his future. By gifting her these objects, he puts his fate and his powers in Belle's hands. Throughout, the story and the camera give her far more agency than the Beast. From the beginning of her stay in the castle, the Beast indeed tells her that she is the 'master', that all he owns is hers, and that all her whims shall be attended to. The shot of the Beast's smoky gloves on the ground when he regains a human shape at the film's close visually indicates the Beast's freedom, the end of his imprisonment, of his exile. Alongside the ambiguity of the castle's severed hands and *acousmêtres*, these objects 'complicat[e] any simplistic alignment between the house and patriarchy' (Ng 2015, 27). In this regard, rather than envisioning keys and gloves as straightforward metonymic indicators of male authority and control, or psychoanalytic symbols of the Beast's curse-induced castration, it is

productive to consider them in their sensuous indeterminacy—as solicitous of touch, suggestive of both proximity and absence, shame and desire; memory-objects that inhabit a convoluted and cross-sensory discursive arena that exposes the complexities of a liminal existence.

Cocteau's adaptation therefore eschews easy moralising. Through stunning if unsettling visuals, Cocteau depicts the human desire for love, acceptance, and forgiveness by shattering the body into dispersed fragments which Belle gradually pieces together: the house physically prompts Belle to re-member the Beast. Read in this way, the fantastical space of the castle is integral to the Beast's fantastical body, which supports a reading of the house as an extension not just of the re-collecting dweller-visitor, but of its hybrid owner-inhabitant as well. Its cautionary overtones disclose a piercing commentary on human relationships, with the gruesome body imagery warning us that 'what can be constructed can easily be deconstructed, leaving us with no identity' (Huckvale 2020, 79). The disembodied hand trope 'estranges the conventional intimacies between persons and things that shape human identity', Rowe observes, revealing obscured relationships and dynamics (1999, 9), namely by highlighting the unnerving chasm the human limbs expose between body, mind, and agency. The hands' missing bodies materialise, in absentia, the idea of self-alienation and the breakdown of controlled—and controllable—action, for volition becomes independent from the mind that wills the act and the body that performs it.

Mortmain Agency in *Wuthering Heights* (1939)

The opening sequences of Wyler's *Wuthering Heights* attend to the elaborate textures of agency while trading in highly cross- and multisensory imagery that counterposes interior and outside spaces. At the beginning of the film, a man seeking shelter from a raging blizzard walks into Heathcliff's eponymous estate. When he opens the door, the outside world suddenly invades the interior space of the house, as wind and snow enter the fire-lit room. The light emanating from the fireplace contrasts sharply with the darkness outside, the chilling gusts, and the freezing night air. Both fire and the violent snowstorm, in this context, signal danger and immediately oppose Heathcliff and Lockwood, the unannounced guest. These natural elements (fire, water, and air) elicit specific sensory reactions with their distinctly pleasant and unpleasant connotations. Much like the duality associated with hands, other sensory imagery also vacillates between

diametrically opposed effects; in this case, the comfort of the fireplace, and the sublime beauty of snow become gothic through the depiction of their inherently disruptive and destructive power. The viewer's abrupt encounter with the natural elements, along with the menacing sound of barking dogs and the sight of the sad, sunken faces of the house's inhabitants, heightens the affective power of these sensory images and introduces a mournful feeling from the very beginning of the narrative, which starts in media res, with a prematurely aged Heathcliff unable to overcome Cathy's death.

The multisensory experience turns synaesthetic shortly after Lockwood's arrival. 'You see, I had a dream', he recounts. 'I thought I heard a voice calling. I reached out to close the shutter and something touched me. Something cold and clinging, like an icy hand. And then I saw her, a woman'. Lockwood is describing an incident we witnessed only moments earlier, following his arrival in Wuthering Heights. Disturbed by the noise of the shutter beating against the window (hearing), Lockwood rises from the bed, holding his coat tightly to shield himself from the bitterly cold air (thermoception). On his way to the window, still half-asleep, he grabs the bedpost (touch) to help him navigate the space (the vestibular sense), which does not prevent him from bumping into an obscured metallic piece of furniture (hearing). As he attempts to close the shutter (kinaesthesia), he is surprised by the faint sound of a voice calling (hearing) and feels a gelid hand grasping his (thermoception, touch, and nociception). Looking out of the window, he makes out the shape of a woman (sight). Once Lockwood has narrated these events to Heathcliff, who rushes out of the house, he verbalises them again to Ellen Dean, the housekeeper, concluding significantly: 'Then my senses must have become disordered because the falling snow shaped itself into what looked like a phantom'. What we are presented with here, then, is an unusual instance of a character remarking upon his own synaesthetic experience of an uncanny event. After all, the ghostly, Tom Gunning asserts, brings one's 'senses of vision and perception […] to a crisis' (2007, 116). As in *La Belle et la Bête*, this crisis of perception, I argue, originates in the sense of touch. The threat of the tactile (the undesired touch of the ghost) is, once again, closely attached to memory—in this case, to Heathcliff's memories of Cathy and to Cathy herself as a present-absent memory. The sensory overload the viewers and the characters experience culminates in Heathcliff's crossing the threshold—between love and loss, memory and imagination, the past

and the future, life and death—and walking off the house and into the storm to his death, upon hearing Lockwood's story.

Touch, in the form of the 'unexpected clutch' Rowe analyses, again appears as the primary and decisive element in the film's construction of its sensuous geographies. The paradox of being able to access the sensorial and yet be deprived of physicality is, arguably, the central feature of the ghost. Indeed, ghostly apparitions, or bodiless memories, manage to affect the tactile sense. The touch of a ghost, L. Andrew Cooper argues, 'signifies the cold of death' and 'can convey the horrors of its condition as well as the horrors it threatens for those it haunts' (2010, 155). That 'cold' touch establishes a connection between life and the afterlife, so that to experience it means to be momentarily placed in a dangerous threshold. When the ghost crosses the boundary of the sensorial, it becomes all the more powerful and terrifying, bringing a taste of death to the living. An apparition—a term etymologically related to sight—should not be able to cross the ultimate divide between the living and the dead; it should never be able to touch.

If a ghostly formation eludes intangibility, it becomes too human; in other words, it becomes susceptible to the reciprocal nature of touch, whereby that which can touch can also be touched. In 'Nightmare-Touch', Lafcadio Hearn writes about the dream haunters that 'would enter [his bedroom], gibbering soundlessly,—and put out hands,—and clutch [him]' (1900, 243). In the introduction to this story, he warns us: 'the imagined Supernatural is dreaded mainly because of its imagined power to touch. Only to *touch*, remember!—not to wound or to kill' (237). I would extend Hearn's observation to gothic horror fiction in the Lewisian vein, where the supernatural eschews a Radcliffean explanation and cannot be neatly classified as simply 'imagined'. Even when the frightful supernatural is real within the story world, it is dreaded mainly because of its assumed power to touch—to corrupt, infect, and contaminate. Borderline horror lies in the idea that to bridge the fundamental distance between human and supernatural, or self and other, is to endow the dead with inalienable properties of living beings.

In *Wuthering Heights*, then, the contact with that 'icy hand' endangers the ontological boundary between being and non-being. Wyler's film opens this door but has Lockwood blame imagination ('I had a dream', 'I thought I heard') and synaesthesia, or faulty stimuli ('my senses must have been disordered'), for his supposed auditory, tactile, thermal, and visual

perceptions. His rationalisation of events, which establishes the Todorovian 'hesitation' as to what is real or imagined, constrains the more horrific possibilities of the narrative (1975, 24–5). Lockwood's incredulity about whether a ghost has actually touched him does not allow full-fledged horror to erupt and firmly positions the film in the realm of suspenseful ambiguity. Synaesthesia adds to the eeriness while reducing the sense of physical disgust: it is impossible to determine if there really was a ghost and if it touched Lockwood's hand. Brontë's prose is far more horrific, introducing abjection via the powerful image of ghostly blood dripping from the broken pane and soaking the bedding. The film instead privileges terror and the blurring of lived and dreamed experiences.

Cathy's touch can be further illuminated through the deployment of the notion of 'mortmain' or 'dead hand' control which, Rowe explains, denotes the 'oppressive grasp' of the past on the present (1999, 116). Originally used in 'medieval legal statutes […] which gave the church and other corporations inalienable rights to lands or tenements', in modern usage 'the term retains a sense of improper and inimical seizure' (116). In the nineteenth century, Rowe continues, 'the phrase invoked any attempt by a testator to posthumously control the uses of the property he or she bequeaths' (116). The 'cold and clinging' hand of Heathcliff's beloved which, to borrow from Rowe, 'reaches so threateningly into the present figures the dependence of self-consciousness, desire, and action on an oppressive struggle with the tangible structures of the past' (116). In other words, it can be read as materialising the unbreakable bond between the present and the past in gothic fiction. The past, represented by Cathy's dead hand, can thus exert posthumous control over the living characters, not unlike the severed hands that seem to both shelter and trap Belle within the castle walls, which could be seen to exact the 'coercive will' of the Beast (116)—a historically grounded reading that can be extended beyond the film to the oppressive legacy of patriarchal politics. Conversely, however, these creeping, clutching hands also undo authority, lacking the propriety of a body and a mind to command them. Dead hands, then, 'symbolise the loss, theft, or withering of an individual's capacity to act with real political or personal effect', Rowe argues (4). In gothic films, agency—historically associated with the hand—is therefore drastically impaired (as with Orlac's transplanted limbs or Cocteau's disembodied hands) or else radically changed or displaced (Cathy's fearful clutch or the Addams's Thing).

Connoted with power and control, namely the hold of the patriarchy over the female body, and the strength of affect, which lingers posthumously, the male, female, or gender-neutral wandering hand spatialises the fragmentation (and thus potential dissolution) of authority. In other words, when embodied in the severed hand, discourses of power continuously undermine themselves. The question of origin and/or ownership that haunts depictions of this trope—where does it come from? Whose property is it?—reflects those shifting discourses. Vasseur's hands, for instance, become Orlac's, but he only acknowledges his control over them at the end of the film, when he realises his new hands do not belong to a killer. The dismembered limbs in the Beast's castle remain unidentifiable, neutral hands that acquire qualities alternately associated with the masculine and the feminine, disrupting an assumed patriarchal grasp through a highly sensory courtship in which Belle possesses more freedom and agency than the Beast. Cathy's frightful, intrusive touch signals desire, affect, and the inescapability of the past while 'stag[ing] sudden reversals of control […] that direct us to the disabling, dependent, and self-alienating experiences of the acting self' (Rowe 1999, xi). These are literally performed at the beginning of the film, with the shift of grip from Lockwood, who first grabs the ghostly hand, to Cathy, who then seizes him. These competing agencies further disturb the separation between self and other, wilful and autonomous non-human action.

The human faculty of volition and the integrity of identity are disrupted by the unpredictability of our relationship with others and the material world, which the disembodied hand articulates, ratifying the fundamental volatility of ever-changing social relations and power hierarchies. From a moral and ethical point of view, the uncanny figuration of independently mobile hands as alienable body parts begs the question: who is accountable for their actions (12–13)? The conflicted answer denotes the difficulty and, at times, the sheer impossibility of linking intention and action, mind and body, and power and submissiveness in the Gothic. The alienating disjunction of intent and agency, as well as the intense affect the gothic aesthetic places upon the hand through the spatialisation of scattered memory, represented in the complex mise-en-scène of distances and absences, is further illuminated when rational thought gives way to obstinate re-membering, uncovering yet another facet and function of tactility, which will be explored in the next chapter.

Notes

1. Three years after the premiere of Cocteau's film, the sequence in which Belle first enters the Beast's castle is replayed in Dickinson's *The Queen of Spades*. Here too, when Countess Ranevskaya enters St. Germain's mansion, where she will sell her soul to the devil in exchange for the power to always win at cards, the door opens by itself, letting the heroine in. She is wearing a floating, full-length cape and is greeted by servants holding lit candles in the darkened hallway.
2. There is an important caveat in associating Cocteau and Surrealism. As Dudley Andrew notes, the Surrealists 'excoriated the life and work of Jean Cocteau with whom they loathed to be linked' (1995, 44). *La Belle et la Bête* is perhaps formally closer to poetic realism than Surrealism; both, however, overlap in transmuting the everyday lives of ordinary people and the spaces they inhabit 'into something extraordinary' (49).

References

Aguirre, Manuel. 1990. *The Closed Space: Horror Literature and Western Symbolism*. Manchester University Press.

Antunes, Luís Rocha. 2015. Neural Correlates of the Multisensory Film Experience. In *Neuroscience and Media: New Understandings and Representations*, ed. Michael Grabowski, 46–61. New York: Routledge.

Baumlin, James S., and Craig A. Meyer. 2018. Positioning Ethos in/for the Twenty-First Century: An Introduction to *Histories of Ethos*. *Humanities* 7 (3), n.p.

Beck, S. William. 1883. *Gloves, Their Annals and Associations: A Chapter of Trade and Social History*. London: Hamilton, Adams & co.

Blessing, Jennifer. 2004. Photophilia. In *Speaking with Hands: Photographs from The Buhl Collection*, ed. Jennifer Blessing et al., 13–58. New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

Breton, André. 1972. Manifesto of Surrealism (1924). In *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane, 1–48. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

———. [1937] 1987. *Mad Love*. Trans. Mary Ann Caws. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Buikema, Rosemarie, and Elisabeth Wesseling. 2007. Gothic Engineerings in Childrearing Manuals and Feminist Novels: Benjamin Spock Meets Renate Dorrestein. In *Nostalgia or Perversion? Gothic Rewriting from the Eighteenth Century until the Present Day*, ed. Isabella van Elferen, 152–167. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press.

Buñuel, Luis. 1983. *My Last Sigh*. Trans. Abigail Israel. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
Chion, Michel. 1999. *The Voice in Cinema*. Ed. and Trans. Claudia Gorbman. New York: Columbia University Press.
Cooper, L. Andrew. 2010. *Gothic Realities: The Impact of Horror Fiction on Modern Culture*. London: McFarland.
D'Amour, Sarah, and Laurence R. Harris. 2020. The Perceived Size of the Implicit Representation of the Dorsum and Palm of the Hand. *PLoS ONE* 3, March: 1–12.
Danchev, Alex. 2005. *Georges Braque: A Life*. London: Hamish Hamilton.
Daprati, E., et al. 1997. Looking for the Agent: An Investigation into Consciousness of Action and Self-Consciousness in Schizophrenic Patients. *Cognition* 65 (1): 71–86.
Ellis, Kate Ferguson. 1989. *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
Ferri, Francesca, et al. 2011. Motor Simulation and the Bodily Self. *PLoS ONE* 6 (3, March): 1–6.
Fleischer, Alain. 2008. *Les Laboratoires du temps: écrits sur le cinéma et la photographie*. Paris: Galaade Éditions.
Freud, Sigmund. 1955. The Uncanny [1919]. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. 17. Trans. and Ed. James Strachey, 217–256. London: Hogarth Press.
Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. 1979. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University.
Green, Anne. 2021. *Gloves: An Intimate History*. London: Reaktion.
Gunning, Tom. 2007. To Scan a Ghost: The Ontology of Mediated Vision. *Grey Room* 26 (Winter): 94–127.
Hearn, Lafcadio. 1900. Nightmare-Touch. In *Shadowings*, 235–246. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.
Heidegger, Martin. [1951] 1971. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Trans. Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row.
Hogle, Jerrold E. 2002. Introduction: The Gothic in Western Culture. In *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle, 1–20. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Holmes, Nicholas P., et al. 2022. No Self-Advantage in Recognizing Photographs of One's Own Hand: Experimental and Meta-Analytic Evidence. *Experimental Brain Research* 240: 2221–2233.
Horner, Avril, and Sue Zlosnik. 2005. *Gothic and the Comic Turn*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Hoving, Kirsten A. 2004. "Blond Hands over the Magic Fountain": Photography in Surrealism's Uncanny Grip. In *Speaking with Hands: Photographs from The Buhl Collection*, ed. Jennifer Blessing et al., 93–113. New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

Hubner, Laura. 2018. *Fairytale and Gothic Horror*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Huckvale, David. 2020. *Terrors of The Flesh: The Philosophy of Body Horror in Film*. Jefferson: McFarland.
Marin, Louis. 1991. Classical, Baroque: Versailles, or the Architecture of the Prince. Trans. Anna Lehman. *Yale French Studies* 80: 167–182.
Messbarger, Rebecca. 2010. *The Lady Anatomist: The Life and Work of Anna Morandi Manzolini*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
Milbank, Alison. 1992. *Daughters of the House: Modes of the Gothic in Victorian Fiction*. London: Macmillan.
Ng, Andrew Hock Soon. 2015. *Women and Domestic Space in Contemporary Gothic Narratives: The House as Subject*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Nielsen, Torsten Ingemann. 1963. Volition: A New Experimental Approach. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 4: 225–230.
Paterson, Mark. 2007. *The Senses of Touch: Haptics, Affects, and Technologies*. Oxford: Berg.
Punter, David, and Glennis Byron. 2004. *The Gothic*. London: Wiley-Blackwell.
Rowe, Katherine. 1999. *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Rugoff, Ralph. 2004. The Telltale Hand. In *Speaking with Hands: Photographs from The Buhl Collection*, ed. Jennifer Blessing et al., 153–168. New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.
San Juan, Rose Marie. 2011. The Horror of Touch: Anna Morandi's Wax Models of Hands. *Oxford Art Journal* 34: 433–447.
Sencindiver, Susan Yi. 2010. Fear and Gothic Spatiality. *Fra Akademiet* 2: 1–38.
Showalter, Elaine. 1977. *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
———. 1991. *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*. New York: Penguin.
Sontag, Susan. 1966. Against Interpretation [1964]. In *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, 3–14. New York: Noonday Press.
Sorrell, Walter. 1968. *The Story of the Human Hand*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
Todorov, Tzvetan. 1975. *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. Trans. Richard Howard. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Upton, Dell. 1998. *Architecture in the United States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Vidler, Anthony. 1992. *Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*. Cambridge: MIT.
Warner, Marina. 2013. La Belle et la Bête. In *Gothic: The Dark Heart of Film*, ed. James Bell, 152–155. London: BFI.

Wigley, Mark. 1992. Untitled: The Housing of Gender. In *Sexuality and Space*, ed. Beatriz Colomina, 327–389. Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press.
Wuillemin, Dianne, and Barry Richardson. 1982. On the Failure to Recognize the Back of One's Own Hand. *Perception* 11 (1): 53–55.

CHAPTER 6

Pathological Journeys, Gloves, and 'Affect-Logic'

The frame narrative of *Wuthering Heights* suggests that gothic films often construct memory as an oppressive, suffocating, and all-consuming force which acquires the Aristotelian sense of 'phantasm'—'an "appearance" which is inscribed in a physical way upon […] the body' (Carruthers [1990] 2008, 19) and which reaches us and the characters visually through the hand's touch. Heathcliff's refusal to let go of Cathy's memory, as discussed in the previous chapter, gradually develops into bitterness, frustration, and purposelessness, which culminate in his physical disappearance. In other words, memory and Cathy's reaching hand direct the self towards death. Along with Lockwood's confounded words and actions, this demonstrates that our sensory registers are not mere passive stimuli receptors, but 'are actively involved in the structuring of that information and are significant in the overall sense of a world achieved by the sentient' (Rodaway 1994, 4). Sensory perception can, in this regard, reconfigure spaces and memory, and shape how we understand them.

In the Gothic, the tactile sphere of experience, which includes visual hapticity and manual touch, invites a particular conception of memory as the disorganised web of past events made meaningful through careful and purposeful sensory re-collection. Thus conceived, as noted in Chap. 3, memory is inextricably tied to the agents of re-collection and their necessarily subjective and, therefore, biased emotional response to the other, to manual space, and to memory-objects. The ongoing interaction between

J. Jacob Ramalho, *Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film*,
Palgrave Gothic, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-73628-5_6

emotion and cognition, triggered by perception, filters and reconfigures re-membering processes. Unreliable historians of the other, the re-collectors perform their investigative task through an affective-cognitive dynamics, meaning that their behaviour is never objective and may undergo abrupt changes, modulated by environmental factors. This is clear when we think back to Heathcliff's fatal abandonment of reason after Lockwood's synaesthetic encounter with the ghost or to Orlac, whose life was de/stabilised by internal (emotional) processes and external influences.

This chapter proposes an investigation of the connections between memory, emotion, and rational thinking through a close reading of visual and manual hapticity in Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940) and Henry Hathaway's *Peter Ibbetson* (1935). The general postulates of the affective-cognitive metatheory of Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist Luc Ciompi (1982) provide a useful framework to analyse the pathological element that underscores the re-collection journeys of the characters. Ciompi develops the integrative, transdisciplinary concept of 'affect-logic' (*Affektlogik*) in the context of pathological conditions, specifically schizophrenia spectrum disorder.[1] Affects, defined as 'global psychosomatic states', which include the full range of human emotions, and cognition, which includes sensory perception and memory, are complementary and continually interact in all mental activities (1997, 160). Logic, then, depends on affects, that is, on the dominant affective states underlying our experience at any given moment.

Significantly, a sudden increase in emotional tension may drastically alter one's normal affective-cognitive patterns, leading to non-normative behaviour. According to Ciompi, when 'emotional tensions in a mental or social system reach a critical level which cannot […] be processed by the habitual modes (or "channels") of thought and behaviour', the prevailing ways of feeling, thinking, and behaving may undergo sudden nonlinear changes from an 'everyday logic' to a 'psychotic logic' (2023, n.p.). This abrupt change, depicted in very different ways in both films, results from a sustained attempt to achieve control over a foreign or otherwise hostile environment. Mnemonic spaces, accessed through transgressive *curiositas* in *Rebecca* and shared telepathic dreams in *Peter Ibbetson,* devolve into imprisoning structures that feed the subject's obsession with re-collecting an other's memory. Exclusion from a particular environment or, conversely, the construction of a sense of belonging are both signalled by the intervention of intensely manual memory-objects, such as gloves and rings. In both films, the need to touch, possess, and transgress spatial,

temporal, and psychological boundaries is directly linked to the nexus between home and exile, one which is haunted by an acute preoccupation with memory.

Haptic Transgressions: Hands and Gloves

The rapid descent into a 'psychotic logic' is powerfully represented in *Rebecca*, in which the re-collector's investment in the memory of the other is so intense that it becomes borderline pathological and threatens to overtake the narrator's identity. Gina Wisker aptly describes Maxim's second wife as '[v]ampiric', referring to how she 'feeds off Rebecca's memory' (2003, 91). Hitchcock fills the manual space of the film with the memory of Rebecca and the second Mrs de Winter's obstinate persistence in physically taking possession of Rebecca's things. As Helen Hanson explains, 'there is a play around the revealing and concealing of the woman in the past—Rebecca—that is perpetuated through a tantalising trail of visual clues' (2007, 77). To this, I would add that these visual clues are portrayed as intensely haptic. 'The hand that touches […] adds sensible meaning to what we see', Rebecca Messbarger notes, so that '[t]he reiteration of touch and the accumulation of hands-on knowledge serve to reinforce our interpretative powers' (2010, 132). At each step of her journey while residing in Manderley mansion, the new Mrs de Winter is repeatedly depicted as touching—with her eyes and her hands—all that had once belonged to her husband's first wife, restlessly perusing everything around her: every room, every object, every person, as if this cumulative action would bring her closer to unravelling the buried secrets of the past. Hers is a quest for knowledge, as Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik point out (1998, 103). The narrator's eager tactile expeditions through Manderley to gather 'hands-on knowledge', nonetheless gradually revive the dead Rebecca, precipitating the erosion of the narrator's subjectivity.

Rebecca is a memory text, a distressing and evocative discourse on the failures of memory, the challenges of re-membering, the unwillingness to recount and reminisce, the refusal to let go, the impetus to forget, and the dangers of recontextualising a largely unknowable past. It is through the centrality of the senses, specifically touch, that the gothic situation is set up here. At the beginning of the film, while describing the dream that took her back to a desolate Manderley, the narrator recounts: 'And then a cloud came upon the moon… and hovered an instant, like a dark hand before a face'. This simile, pictorially reminiscent of Orlac's spidery hands blotting

out Yvonne's face at the end of Wiene's film, portends tragedy, tainting the image of the hand ('dark'), while challenging our field of vision ('before a face'). This Manderley, Hanson remarks, 'is produced by and through the heroine's dream, conditioned by her memories' (2007, 70). Du Maurier firmly grounds her narrative in memory by using the device of the dream, which Hitchcock keeps in his transmedial adaptation, as a 'memory-frame', that is, the setting or frame within which the specific contents of what we remember are presented (Casey [1987] 2000, 68). Throughout, Hitchcock's camera faithfully translates du Maurier's sharply haptic prose to the screen: the morning-room, the blotter, the candlesticks, the clock, the vase, the pictures on the walls, '*her* writing', '*her* glass', '*her* handkerchief'—'they were there for me to see, for me to hear, for me to feel', the exasperated narrator declares ([1938] 2015, 154). Similarly, Rebecca is, visually, everywhere in the film: from the hand-sewn monogram on the handkerchiefs at the dining table to the ubiquitous Mrs Danvers, the 'keeper of Rebecca's memory' (Hanson 2007, 69), to Jasper, the faithful dog that disturbs the heroine and 'signifies the lingering dominance of Rebecca' (Light 2022, 129). Rebecca's present absence clings mercilessly onto things and people.

In a space contaminated with Rebecca's memory, the camera consistently positions the heroine as an outsider from the start. A tell-tale sign of her inadequacy is her lack of control over her hands, which remain both clumsy and curious throughout, in clear contrast to Rebecca's 'capable clever hands. Hands that could steer a boat, could hold a horse. Hands that arranged flowers, made the models of ships, and wrote "Max from Rebecca" on the fly-leaf of a book' (du Maurier [1938] 2015, 262). On the car drive to Manderley, Maxim admonishes the narrator to stop biting her nails, an action she repeats later when mindlessly exploring the house. The pivotal role of restless hands is, I argue, more firmly, if subtly, underscored when she nervously presses a pair of gloves between her hands as she first steps into Manderley's entrance hall, where the staff await to greet her. After being introduced to Mrs Danvers, a close-up frames her hands fussing with, and then dropping, both gloves. The camera tilts down rapidly to reveal the satin gloves on the floor. As in *La Belle et la Bête*, gloves play a significant role here. Emblematic of modern civilisation, '[w]ith a vitality that defies Time' (Beck 1883, xi), gloves historically convey subtle messages signalling, as discussed, femininity, elegance, and social status. 'The glove is a symbol', Georges Guénot-Lecointe contends in his 1841 *Physiologie du gant* (Physiologie of the Glove), adding humorously: 'the

glove alone indicates the rung we occupy on Jacob's ladder' (78, 84) and its invention 'has been as useful to the happiness of humankind as the discovery of steak' (112). By the 1840s, a fundamental shift took place and the glove 'transcended most barriers of gender, class, profession, and nationality' (Trumble 2010, 117), continuing nonetheless its work as a social marker (Guénot-Lecointe, 86; Beaujot 2012, 32). Ubiquitous in the Victorian era, gloves gradually fell into disuse after World War I. The delicate pair of gloves the gauche narrator holds so uncomfortably is therefore an anachronism, materialising the class (in both senses of the word) that she lacks. Their fall foreshadows hers.

Dropped gloves, in fact, are imbued with social-cultural meaning, and it is telling of her precarious situation in Manderley that the first encounter between the protagonist and the house's mighty guardian, Mrs Danvers, should involve gloves. A medium two-shot further opposes the characters—Mrs de Winter's dishevelled fair hair and light-coloured clothes contrast with a perfectly coiffed Mrs Danvers, dressed all in black. The fact that they both bend down to pick up the fallen gloves discredits the narrator by positioning the two characters at the same level, generating a visible tension that builds up over the course of the film. This unfortunate *faux pas* destabilises the social ranks within the aristocratic house, so that the narrator is from the start framed as, at once, mistress and servant—a fact later echoed in Maxim's comment, 'You behave more like an upstairs maid or something, not like the mistress of the house at all'. Rather than acting as 'messengers of goodwill', gloves seem here to cement hostility (Beck 1883, 227), so much so that the glove incident, I argue, triggers a competition for manual space that is ultimately won by the housekeeper who, in the end, succeeds in exiling the narrator. Henry J. Wehman's 1890 *The Mystery of Love, Courtship, and Marriage Explained* presents a list of 'glove flirtations' to help readers decode the unspoken language of this item of dress. In it, dropping both gloves features as meaning 'I love you' (38). Considering the widely and comprehensively studied depiction of oppressed female sexuality and queer overtones in the film and the novel (cf. Light 1984; Doane 1987; Modleski 1988; Berenstein 1995, 1998; Harbord 1996; White 1999, 2021; Tatar 2004; Allen 2004; Dresner 2007), the symbolic significance of the dropped gloves might add further nuance to such critical debates.

Over the course of the film, Mrs de Winter behaves as a frightened spectator of Rebecca's life, a poor surrogate for her husband's dead spouse. The novel's narrator acknowledges her misfit status, remarking: 'I had

come blundering like a poor fool on ground that was preserved' ([1938] 2015, 261). In the film, the way she keeps touching and staring at Rebecca's things highlights her outsiderdom, so that she always appears to be out of place, never knowing where to go or how to behave within the walls of the house. Surrounded by Rebecca's presence, she feels and acts like a trespasser who has no business being in Manderley. Her resentful realisation towards the end of the novel—'I should never be rid of Rebecca' (262)—comes through in the film's clear exclusion of the heroine from the habitable space of the stately home, her existence dependent upon Rebecca's. The narrator exists only in relation to her dead predecessor. It therefore comes as no surprise that it is the narrator who, in the narrative present, becomes a ghost in her dream: 'I […] passed like a spirit through the barrier before me'. Danvers sees her thus in the novel as well: 'It's you that's the shadow and the ghost' ([1938] 2015, 275). Rebecca's memory, in turn, remains very much alive, her story re-membered and re-imagined, endlessly revived and rewritten. Monstrous Rebecca is a hybrid construction, the poisoned fruit of the narrator's imagination and subjective perception, which rehashes a past she did not partake in and is therefore not available for her to re-collect, a past she can know only second hand through the memories of others. As Diana Wallace explains, the unnamed narrator, 'misled by her romantic imaginings', becomes unreliable and 'misread[s] […] the situation at Manderley' (2013, 150–151). Du Maurier's and Hitchcock's sensory narrativisation of Rebecca represents identity and memory as unstable and unreliable, shaped anew in its multiple receptions.

The 'morning room' sequence offers a paradigmatic example of Hitchcock's approach to du Maurier's emphasis on haptic transgression. Still trying to learn how to be the proper mistress of the house, the camera follows Mrs de Winter from behind in a medium shot as she enters the room where Rebecca used to write her correspondence. As she does, the camera stops its movement by the door, so that the character walks slowly to the middle of the room alone, moving away from the camera. The camera's hesitancy in continuing its forward movement has a similar overall effect to that achieved in Cocteau's film, when the camera allows Belle to advance, momentarily alone, into the unknown: entering the space of the other is a perilous task that may entail unforeseen consequences. The increased distance of the camera from the protagonist does not diminish the audience's sensorial engagement, as Hitchcock builds suspense through the slow-paced nondiegetic music, the lit fireplace, and the dog

that leaves the room the moment he senses the presence of the intruder. Panning right, the camera follows the animal leaving and then cuts to a shot of Mrs de Winter's face, visibly troubled by the creature's hostility. The room looks just as it did when Rebecca was alive—a mourning room, painstakingly upkept by Mrs Danvers. Rebecca's belongings, her dog, and Mrs Danvers are, in this respect, functionally similar to the castle and the disembodied hands in *La Belle et la Bête*, or the estate and Cathy's ghostly hand in *Wuthering Heights*: they embody and emplace the other's memory. As Mrs de Winter walks towards the desk near the window, a brief subjective shot reveals the layout of the objects on top of it, all marked with a capital 'R'. She approaches the objects, first with her eyes, then with her hands, and picks up an address book. She proceeds to open it, but the sight of Rebecca's signature on the first page, which Hitchcock zooms in on until it fills the screen, seems to be too much for her. The long zoom-in matches du Maurier's description of Rebecca's handwriting as 'alive' and 'full of force […]. Done yesterday' ([1938] 2015, 63).

The fact that this scene takes place in Rebecca's writing corner, adds another layer of hapticity to our critical reading. Letter writing, an activity which is intimately connected to the hand and dependent upon touch, is visually and verbally associated with Rebecca through the capital R on the objects and the dialogue: 'The late Mrs de Winter always did her correspondence and telephoning in the morning room', the devoted butler, Frith, explains. This replicates du Maurier's persistent return to Rebecca's handwriting, with its 'tall sloping R' ([1938] 2015, 97, 132, 188), which, from the beginning of the narrative, fuels the narrator's obsession with and dislike of her predecessor. Handwriting appears as a signifier of personal identity that exerts its power through a haunting pervasiveness and aliveness. Indeed, as Horner and Zlosnik advance, Rebecca's 'indelibility […] continually surfaces through her signature', whose resilience 'derives from its powerful visual impact and its refusal to be destroyed' (1998, 109–110). The end of the film encapsulates this resistance, with the camera tracking forward through the blaze to reveal the embroidered R on the nightgown case.

Seemingly overwhelmed by Rebecca's lingering presence in the morning room, the heroine sits down only to be immediately startled by the loud sound of a ringing phone. When a voice on the other end of the line asks for Mrs de Winter, she replies, in all her naiveté: 'Oh, I'm afraid you've made a mistake. Mrs de Winter's been dead for over a year'. Failing to recognise herself as 'Mrs de Winter' when answering the phone, is again

indicative of her displacement in her new role as Maxim's spouse, housewife, and mistress of Manderley. As soon as she puts the phone down and realises what she has said, it is too late—the ever-omnipresent Danvers is standing by the door and has heard the full exchange. We experience the protagonist's fear through her visceral bodily reaction—she almost jumps out of her chair—before the camera reveals the reason for her fright. Following Danvers in a medium shot, the camera tracks backwards as she approaches the desk. Mrs de Winter's hands hold on tightly to the arms of the chair and she does not let go until Danvers has left. Looking up at the housekeeper, noticeably distressed for the duration of their exchange, she behaves like a child who has been caught doing something she ought not have been doing. The oppressive tension is successfully conveyed by the two-tiered structure of the scene: the lower level of the armchair, in which the narrator takes refuge before Danvers's unforgiving eyes, and the higher plane, where the latter remains, tall and dignified, looking down at (and on) the scared trespasser. The embarrassing, and curiously telling, memory lapse on the telephone call unequivocally and irremediably disempowers her. The fundamental question that the meta-communication underlying the earlier dropping and picking up of the gloves raises—who is the true mistress of the house?—is unwittingly answered by the narrator's telephonic dissociation from her role as Maxim's wife.

Psychotic Re-membering and the Cupid Figurine

The fight for control over memory and self-identity manifests as a spatial fight for control over Manderley. The hold that Danvers and Rebecca's memory have on the second Mrs de Winter, and which is far greater than Maxim's, is translated into her persistent conquering of Rebecca's manual realm as represented by specific places: the beach cottage, the Happy Valley, the West Wing. Danvers, in turn, tries to repel the narrator's spatial adventures and acts as 'a surveillance device', to come back to Wigley's phrase discussed in the previous chapter (1992, 341). However, instead of representing the voyeuristic and controlling eye of the man/husband, I argue that the manual spaces of the house are female-coded. This shifts the power dynamics of the film away from the conventional Bluebeard-type narrative so frequently discussed (cf. Wisker 2003; Tatar 2004; Hubner 2018) and turns it more accurately into a discourse on the perpetuation of old-fashioned hierarchical systems, with '*all* the main characters […] display[ing] signs of vice and dishonesty, regardless of their gender' (Pons

2013, 71). To quote the crude, but effective, stereotypes summed up by S.T. Coleridge in his discussion of Lewis's *The Monk*, there are no pure models of either 'trembling innocence' or 'shameless harlotry' in *Rebecca* or in the films of the travelling directors more generally (1797, 197), but rather an elastic spectrum that encompasses different versions of femininity and womanhood, none of which thoroughly strips female characters of individual agency, emotional complexity, and narrative relevance.

In the rich surfaces of Hitchcock's film, three feminine and queer-coded worlds collide, with Rebecca as the epitome of beauty and sophistication and the narrator at the opposite end: dangly, unrefined, easily forgettable. Both, however, call into question assumed stereotypes, moving between rigid gendered categories and displaying those 'signs of vice and dishonesty' that Auba Llompart Pons identifies (2013, 71), as well as a 'doubtful […] docility', to use Alison Light's words (1991, 166). Danvers, in turn, navigates yet another morally ambiguous space, empowered and powerless, both heroic and pathetic in her unwavering devotion. Her femininity aesthetically muted in an androgynous, emaciated presence that haunts the estate, Danvers manages the house as one would a museum, a somewhat sacred, protected place where everything is kept in pristine condition and time comes to a halt, in what Janet Harbord calls 'a sort of taxidermy of memory' (1996, 101).

This is a story about 'the watchful' and told from varying 'positions of watchfulness', as Patricia White indicates; Danvers 'is a seer' and the narrator 'is ever on the alert' (2021, 53). Throughout, the camera moves freely through the spaces of the house, 'prowling around Manderley like a wild animal hunting for blood' (Duncan 2000, 14). The 'mortmain' control that Rowe (1999) analyses, and which I discussed in the previous chapter, is here imposed not via scattered limbs or 'icy cold' hands, but materialises in the de Winter estate, the people who dwell therein, and the objects that populate Manderley's rooms. The control these elements exert over the unnamed heroine is relentless and overpowering, haunting her even in her dreams, in which nature, as her voice-over tells us, 'little by little ha[s] encroached upon the drive with long, tenacious fingers'. In this way, the dangerous and contagious quality of memory in the film becomes increasingly obvious as the narrative develops. Du Maurier stresses the horror of touch 'turning to despair' when she writes 'I touched the quilt on the bed, traced with my fingers the monogram on the nightdress case […]. I touched it […], put it against my face […], it had not been touched or laundered since it was last worn'—an intimate, sensual encounter with

Rebecca's private objects, interrupted by the ever-hovering Danvers: You've been touching it, haven't you? […] Would you like to touch it again? […] Feel it, hold it', she taunts ([1938] 2015, 187–89).

In the film, Danvers preys on the narrator's tactile proclivities and brings the sleeve (an implied arm) of Rebecca's luxurious fur coat to her face, caressing it, and holding it afterwards to her new mistress's face: 'Feel this', she calmly urges. She then proceeds to describe Rebecca's tailor-made underwear and how she would undress and bathe after a party while telling her 'Danny' all about the evening's events. Noticing that a brush on the dressing table has been disturbed, she calls out the narrator's manual indecencies: 'Oh, you've moved her brush, haven't you?' These heavily charged exchanges between Danvers, the narrator, and Rebecca's objects provide, in my view, a fitting example of what White calls *Rebecca*'s 'polymorphous perversity' (2021, 11). Just before Danvers reaches for a nightgown case, stressing the fact that she embroidered it herself for Rebecca, the ritual of brushing her mistress's hair is painstakingly detailed in the same contrived and embittered tone, adding to the tactile triggers that rapidly inundate the sensory space of the bedroom. The tension heightens when Danvers takes Rebecca's 'delicate', see-through negligée from the case. The clash of the different textures further deepens the hapticity of the scene, with Danvers's provocations culminating in her remark: 'Look, you can see my hand through it'. Touch is here explicitly associated with erotic transgression. Danvers's malicious teasing exposes the narrator's secretive and sensuous re-collection quest and her longing to get to know, understand, and ultimately embody Rebecca.

The camera continually reminds the viewers that the objects on display in the house-museum ought not to be touched. When the narrator's curious hands breach that boundary and disturb the ordinary course of life in Manderley through touching and holding things (Rebecca's things), her touch becomes problematic and symptomatic of other dynamics at play in the narrative. Going back to the telephone call incident in the morning room, the narrator's hands continue to anchor the scene, but now prove damaging and destructive. Once she is alone again, her hands loosen the grip on the chair as she sinks into it, and she finally opens Rebecca's address book, her hands on her cheeks, her elbows on the desk. The camera zooms in on Rebecca's handwriting and the narrator quickly averts her eyes, which immediately concentrate on one of the notebooks on the desk. When grabbing it with both hands, she inadvertently knocks down a small white porcelain figurine that breaks and shatters as soon as it hits the floor.

Startled, and not quite knowing what to do, she gets up, kneels, picks the pieces off the floor, opens one of the desk drawers, hides the broken pieces at the back of it underneath some letters, and hurriedly closes it. The camera focuses on her hands as she hastily tries to hide the broken pieces. Rebecca's diligent and ritualistic letter writing contrasts with the narrator's heavy-handed approach to her predecessor's delicate belongings. Exhausted, she sits down and grabs the arms of the chair once more. This episode again evokes the ambivalent facets of gothic hands: the same questing hands that are trying to seize Rebecca's memory are also destroying its indexical traces. The overpowering ubiquity of Rebecca's tangible memories poses a threat to the psychological integrity of the heroine, and it is as though her clumsy hands are in a way trying to salvage her from being completely infected by a hostile other.

The broken china ornament, it is worth noting, is a Cupid, the god of love, desire, and affection of classical mythology, the Roman rendering of the Greek Eros. We soon learn that it was Rebecca's wedding present from Maxim. The representation of the transgressive re-collection journey and the dangers of the narrator's unfazed curiosity suggest an intertextual parallel between the narrative and Apuleius's tale of 'Cupid and Psyche' (2 CE), 'the earliest recorded fairytale in Western literature' (Hansen 2017, 47) and which inspired the tale 'Beauty and the Beast'. Coincidentally, and in line with my earlier comments on the multifaceted representations of femininity in the film, we could compare the mythical Psyche to both Rebecca and the narrator. Psyche's 'unequaled beauty' and 'loveliness' (47, 49) accord with descriptions of Rebecca. On the other hand, Psyche's journey aesthetically mirrors that of the second Mrs de Winter, as she is taken to a magnificent palace (much like Manderley), where her eyes pay minute attention to everything around her and where her unshakeable *curiositas* divorces her from reality (Morwood 2010, 109). While Psyche is unaware of her husband's identity, feeling him fully only 'by her hands and ears, not by her eyes', and seeks to discover the truth about him (109), *Rebecca*, in keeping with its queer allusions, shifts the pursuit of the husband's hidden secrets to his dead wife's. Here, the second Mrs de Winter is not aided by disembodied voices, like Psyche or Belle, but by tactile and visual hapticity alone. Maxim, in turn, could be viewed as Cupid, delivering a message of love and pain. The fact that it is a Cupid ornament that the hapless heroine destroys beyond repair might in this sense be construed as another visceral, if unintentional, step to sever the ties that, she believes, still bind Maxim to Rebecca. In this regard, the

destruction of the Cupid visually foreshadows the revelations to come about Rebecca and Maxim's broken marriage. Finally, it also generates an image of the narrator as a homewrecker; someone who, by means of her transgressive exploratory journeys, increasingly upsets, blurs, and eventually dissolves the dividing lines of power within Manderley. Like Rebecca, by the end of the narrative, the narrator navigates the prurient and the monstrous with relative ease.

It is telling of the striking hapticity weaved into the narrative that, in du Maurier's text, Rebecca's corpse appears with 'both arms gone' ([1938] 2015, 191). This detail is buried halfway through the novel, mentioned in passing only once, and omitted from the film. Horner and Zlosnik perceptively note that this description might refer to the body Maxim wrongfully identified as his wife's (1998, 111). Still, I suggest that it retains importance as an avatar of Rebecca. Thus interpreted, the body's post-mortem amputation serves a tripartite purpose. Aesthetically, it positions Rebecca as a criminal, visually associating her with the historical punishment for thievery, mentioned in Chap. 4. What it is that she may have figuratively stolen remains unclear and open to symptomatic readings. Narratively, her death sets in motion the events that would rob Maxim of Manderley and Danvers of her life. Before her death, her ambiguous relationship with Danvers and her promiscuity deprived the scorned, cuckolded husband of a sense of honour, dignity, and manliness, disrupting the orderly course of (patriarchal) life. The violent amputation of her corpse therefore carries a highly affective political charge. Rebecca, an archetype of the modern and independent New Woman who rebelled against supra-imposed norms and customs, resurfaces without the prime organ of affect. The removal of the arms and hands pictorially indicates the severance of affective relationships, pointing to a critique of society's discrimination against and ambivalence towards 'sexually expressive', proactive, free-willed, and non-heteronormative individuals, which is thematically part of the film and leads to a reading of Rebecca's dismemberment as a socio-political punishment (Horner and Zlosnik 2000, 220). Lastly, it also strengthens the idea, developed in Chaps. 4 and 5, that the gothic grasp is unaffected by the loss of the hands and, ultimately, by death. Rebecca's clutch permeates the film and the novel from the start, not least through the emphasis directly placed upon handwriting, signatures, and monograms. Through these markers of touch and identity, Rebecca's body is obsessively reassembled, piece by piece, by the narrator.

The tactile space of the film is therefore, as we have seen, filled with Rebecca's memory and it is the second Mrs de Winter's persistent obsession with knowing and touching Rebecca's things that precipitates narrative events. Hitchcock's *Rebecca* thus reveals how space, to use Elizabeth Grosz's words, 'is transformed according to the subject's affective and instrumental relations with it' and the extent to which it 'depend[s] on the kinds of objects positioned "within" it' (1995, 92). In this case, the touching of certain objects opens a kind of Pandora's box that unleashes the events upon which the story builds. There is a certain fearful reverence in the way the narrator explores Rebecca's things, which sharply contrasts with detective McPherson's somewhat nonchalant trespassing of Laura's flat and its items in Preminger's film, discussed in Chap. 3. This reverence is depicted in cinematic terms: while Cocteau's Belle effectively creates the space in front of her as she explores, Hitchcock's camera seems to dwarf the second Mrs de Winter, whose efforts to fit in are thwarted over and over again, and who can only fumble at things that clearly still belong to someone else. In the film, as in du Maurier's novel, the spatial quest for knowledge of the eerie other rapidly devolves into a struggle for survival, raising key questions about the risks of re-membering, the ability, or willingness, to forget, and the over-reliance on objects for re-collection.

Peter Ibbetson: A Ring and a Pair of Gloves

Such over-reliance on objects is not always negatively coded. My exploration so far in this book has read manual space in mostly negative terms, as posing a threat of dangerous contamination, operating ambivalently and promoting a descent into the sort of 'psychotic logic' Ciompi describes, whereby the aliveness of an other competes with the identity of the re-collector, which it might eventually overtake. These are manual spaces of self-effacement, jealousy, and obsession (*Rebecca*; *Corridor of Mirrors*; *Laura*); lies and murder (*The Unknown*); loss of identity (*Orlacs Hände*); chagrin and haunting (*Wuthering Heights*); imagination and death (*Portrait of Jennie*; *The Ghost and Mrs Muir*); and wondrous fright (*La Belle et la Bête*). Nevertheless, not all manual spaces are feared in films that adhere to a gothic aesthetic and portray the affective shift from the everyday to the psychotic. This is the case with Henry Hathaway's *Peter Ibbetson* (1935), based on the eponymous 1891 George du Maurier novel, in which hands are deployed to symbolise an unbreakable bond. Peter and Mary, or Gogo and Mimsey, as they were fondly called as children, were

neighbours and childhood sweethearts. After Peter's mother dies, the children are painfully forced to part. The moment Gogo's uncle tells him that he and Mimsey are about to be geographically separated (he will leave Paris for London), a close-up reveals the children locking hands, their fingers closed round each other's tightly, as Gogo vehemently refuses to leave. This interlacing of hands symbolises their emotional inseparability, regardless of any physical or geographical distance. The manual motif is consistently and overtly deployed throughout the narrative, via the introduction of a series of cinematic techniques and a particular mise-en-scène designed to stage proximity across physical and spatial distance.

Many years after Peter leaves Paris (and Mary/Mimsey), we find him working as an architect in London. One day, he is sent to rebuild some old stables on a property that belongs to Mary and her husband, the Duke of Towers. When they meet again, they do not recognise each other, not even when they realise they have shared a dream. As the weeks go by, Mary's husband becomes suspicious of their relationship and confronts them about it. It is only then that they rediscover one another and the love they once shared. Shortly afterwards, in a fit of jealousy, the Duke shoots at Peter who, in self-defence, smashes a chair on the Duke's head, killing him instantly. After the accidental murder, Mary and Peter clasp hands, mirroring the earlier childhood scene in Paris. Here, too, the locking of hands signals that they are to part physically again: Peter is arrested and he and Mary are once more separated.

In a surrealist twist, the night of the arrest, Peter and Mary realise that what they had suspected for a while is indeed true: they are not simply having similar dreams, but actually sharing them. Psychological travelling, in this case, allows the lovers to escape the mundane existence of their bodies in the real world, tainted by the horror that they can never be physically reunited. That same night, in the dream, Mary hands Peter a ring and promises him that they can be together in their shared dreams whenever, wherever, forever. 'You needn't be afraid, Peter', she later tells him of this uncanny ability. 'The strangest things are true, and the truest things are strange'. The next day, she has the ring delivered to the prison, which proves to Peter, once and for all, that they really are dreaming together. Peter describes this ring to the prison guards and to his cellmates: 'It looks like a ring, but it isn't', he says. 'It's the walls of a world and inside it is the magic of all desire. Inside it is where she lives and everything inside leads to her—every street, every path, and the eighth sea. It's a world. It's our world'. Soon, the protagonists choose these surreal

encounters over narrative reality. They decide to let their minds effect their platonic union while their bodies wither away in the real world. Badly beaten by prison guards, Peter suffers a serious spinal injury which prevents him from moving his lower body. He retains function of his hands. The film, contrary to what might be expected, does not revolve around Peter's insufferable misery, as he is left to die in his cell, while Mary, in a social and psychological cell of her own, dreams the years away. Exemplary of Hathaway's take on poetic realism, the plot instead focuses on the bittersweet happiness the couple did manage to find. The restriction of movement in the real world is surmounted in the dream fantasies: physical separation and disability do not limit close amorous interaction. Crucially, the ring, the memory-object, positions their spectral bodies within a particular space—a liminal space—where all that belongs to the field of the sensory, that is, each experiential event, is no longer subject to the contingencies of time, place, or reason. The here and the far away, the now and the long ago, remembrance and expectation, mesh and blur. The characters travel psychologically until they find each other in a fantasy realm, guided solely by their choice to believe.

Cinematography and lighting play a key role in the couple's oneiric interactions, creating an all-encompassing visual and manual hapticity. American cinematographer Charles Lang, who also worked in *The Uninvited* and *The Ghost and Mrs Muir*, photographs one of their rendezvous as an ethereal sixteen-minute sequence, resplendent with light and subtle shades. Largely responsible for lending a surreal quality to the images is also the work of art director Hans Dreier, a German émigré recruited by Paramount in the 1920s, and who worked in *The Uninvited* and Mamoulian's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1931). With his sharp perception of cinematic space, he choreographs this sequence in vivid contrast to the rest of the film: up until then, whenever the platonic lovers share the frame, iron bars (or similar visual compositions) are placed between them, effectively separating them. But there, in the space of the dream, they are finally (cinematically) allowed to run freely into each other's arms.

In this film, as Maureen Turim explains, '[m]emory is annexed by the supernatural' ([1989] 2014, 109). A series of flashbacks connect narrative events by diffusing the dividing lines between memory, the past, and desire (or imagination), 'supplementing dream sequences and telepathic occurrences' (109). Peter's flashback to his trial, which occurs when he is already imprisoned, works to set up the sensory-laden fantastic encounters that follow. Turim notes how the meta-communication the couple performs in

the trial flashback, conveyed through eye-line matches and cross-cuts between Mary and Peter, lays the foundations for their later telepathic reunions (108). During their last oneiric rendezvous at the end of the film, Mary, now old and weak in the narrative present but ever young and beautiful in the dream, begs him: 'Peter, hold my hands. It's cold. Hold my hands, Peter! Tighter, tighter…'. The camera closes in on Peter's face in profile, excluding Mary completely from the frame. A sudden shift in his expression tells us that Mary has just died. Peter looks down and the camera pulls back to reveal his hands holding one another. Moments later, we find Peter wandering alone in the dream until a familiar voice unexpectedly cuts through the silence: 'Peter!' Mary has come back as an *acousmêtre* to tell Peter she is waiting for him. When the three beams of light accompanying Mary's voice fade and disappear, Peter notices a pair of long white gloves lying on the ground in front of him. The glove is, to borrow from Beck, 'the loadstone of love: […] a charm against evil, the memory of her who granted it' (1883, 256). Yet, the gift of gloves is also historically associated with death: for centuries, gloves were left in wills and were typical presents at funerals, where they were often placed on graves and in garlands (240–246). Gloves—shadow hands, a token of love, protection, and absence—and a ring—an object connoted with the manual, devotion, and commitment—function in this film as vehicles of communication and affect, exercising power across the physical distance that separates the protagonists. Denied the pleasure of touching one another, Peter and Mary are able to communicate via surrealist exchanges that foreground tactility through hands, fingers, and gloves. Analogues of the human hand, when emptied of it, gloves denote an absent presence: *in absentia*, Mary's hands haunt the visual space of the scene. Picking up Mary's sartorial remains, Peter calls out to his beloved, saying that she has forgotten her gloves. As he does, the image fades to the darkened interior of the prison, where an elderly Peter raises his empty hand, gesturing upwards, as though he were holding Mary's gloves. 'You mustn't lose them', he says. 'I'm coming to give them to you'. His injured, dying body slowly falls back into the darkness and only his hand remains visible, reaching up for Mary, illuminated by the beams of light coming from the small barred window above him. The stark contrast lighting frames the hand as already disembodied, uncanny in its pictorial solitude.

A ring and a pair of gloves: what could be more effective to heighten the tangibility of memory than to implicate the hand, the privileged site of sensory contact? These wearable forms of memory, so close to the skin,

draw attention to the dissolution of boundaries between ability and disability, the material and the spiritual (psychological) world, proximity and distance, childhood and maturity, and in the denouement, life and death. In the *Book of Disquiet*, Portuguese poet and writer Fernando Pessoa muses that '[l]ife is an interval, a link, a relation, but a relation between what has passed and what will pass, a dead interval between Death and Death' (2001, 412). Peter and Mary's Romantic reveries and their welcoming of death point to the privileged role of dystopian oneirism in the Gothic and translate Pessoa's words to the screen, as life is throughout depicted as a hindrance. It is in the intervals—their shared dreams, their shared memories, their shared consciousness—that the couple truly lives. Mary's voice assures her beloved from the beyond: 'Here, there… there are no words for such loveliness—a loveliness greater than any we've known. I can hear the flowers growing and the bells pealing for life and for death. You'll have just begun to live, Peter'. Life is imprisonment (literal, in Peter's case; figurative, in Mary's) and spiritual death, whereas physical disappearance anticipates a new beginning. Death is not an ending, but rather a point of departure. Later films, such as *Wuthering Heights* and *The Ghost and Mrs Muir*, portray death in a similar way, with the protagonist couple walking away from the camera together at the end of the film, their post-life bodies slowly fading away in a long shot. 'Death', as Serge Chauvin writes, 'is the passage to the myth, the final reunion, as if the world were but a […] *rehearsal* of immortality' (2009, 55). Existing is a paradox, and life needs to be surmounted for the characters to be able to truly live.

The extraordinarily tactile realm that Peter and Mary share drives them to a blissful death, leading them to be psychologically and physically consumed by the dream, the non-real. The magical and mystical properties of oneirism and the positive outlook attached to manual spaces in *Peter Ibbetson* stand out from the way such spaces are usually depicted also in terms of the trajectories of the obsessive movements that propel the narrative. A re-collection process normally collides with an oppositional force, being stunted or made difficult due to movements that work either to halt the quest or to push it into going a different direction. An example of the former is *Rebecca*, where the expeditions of the narrator are at every step delayed by Danvers, whose choreographed stillness is one of her most haunting attributes. This was done 'very deliberately', Hitchcock explains to François Truffaut, adding that 'Mrs. Danvers was almost never seen walking and was rarely shown in motion. […] [The heroine] never knew

when Mrs. Danvers might turn up, and this, in itself, was terrifying' ([1966] 1967, 93). She represents an obstacle, and the camera frames her as being always suddenly in the way, blocking doors and corridors. On the other hand, *Portrait of Jennie* illustrates a relentless search that takes Eben from place to place as a succession of characters share their thoughts and memories of the young girl, forging ever new paths of investigation. In contrast, Peter and Mary's re-collection movements converge. In this twisted romantic, poetic-sur/realist fantasy, to go back to Ciompi, 'everyday logic' and 'psychotic logic' mix, so that one becomes the other and vice-versa. Their obsession with each other, with retracing each other's steps and haunting each other's lives, obliterates everything and everyone else.

Despite their differences, *Rebecca* and *Peter Ibbetson* converge in their depiction of the profound displacement that the touching of objects provokes in the Gothic. In Hitchcock's film, objects create fissures that grow larger as the narrative progresses: gloves, an anachronistic socio-cultural signifier of class and poise, place the narrator in a subaltern position to the housekeeper from the moment they meet; Rebecca's personal items, which the wandering heroine cannot help but touch, speak of forbidden desires and the past; and the little cupid figurine, which her clumsy hands shatter to pieces, pictorially embodies the destruction of love while accentuating the narrator's weak sense of selfhood. In Hathaway's film, objects play a similarly crucial role, but create proximity rather than distance. Mary's ring displaces the lovers to their own dystopian Eden and her lost glove serves as a token of love and desire that binds past, present, and future, uniting the characters in death. Amid the tensions concerning their interactions with objects, the attempts of the protagonists to appropriate their surroundings and reshape or reimagine them prove tragic in both films. The second Mrs de Winter never does become the real mistress of Manderley and the burning down of the mansion represents the ultimate cost of her gaucherie and maladjustment. In turn, Peter and Mary's replacement of the real word with a make-believe realm that is nonetheless still tainted by the pain of physical separation, signalled by turbulent weather phenomena that disrupt the dream, posits the end of earthly life as the gateway to eternal happiness.

The contrast between the distinct iterations of exilic bodies in the two productions adds to our understanding of gothic protagonists as drawing forth a strained, and ultimately failed, relationship with memory and re-collection. Memory is haunted by the weight of the past one attaches to it,

either a second-hand past which the self co-opts or one's own past, tinged or tainted by desire and the imagination. As such, the cinematic Gothic allows for a questioning of the overall desirability of memory and offers a scathing commentary on the essential futility of the human need to permanently retrieve, record, and revisit. Re-collection leads only to death. In this sense, the absence of memory, which I will explore in the next chapter, might provide a welcome, if radical, solution to the woes of remembering.

Note

1. Ciompi builds upon psychoanalytic thought, but his theoretical model is multidisciplinary, drawing as well from general systems theory, genetic epistemology, biology, psychology, and anthropology. I am interested here in his understanding of the plasticity of the human brain, which finds Cartesian, linear cause-effect explanations for human behaviour insufficient.

References

Allen, Richard. 2004. Daphne du Maurier and Alfred Hitchcock. In *A Companion to Literature and Film*, eds Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo, 298–325. Malden: Blackwell.

Beaujot, Ariel. 2012. *Victorian Fashion Accessories*. London: Berg.

Beck, S. William. 1883. *Gloves, Their Annals and Associations: A Chapter of Trade and Social History*. London: Hamilton, Adams & co.

Berenstein, R.J. 1995. 'I'm not the sort of person men marry': Monsters, Queers, and Hitchcock's *Rebecca*. In *Out in Culture: Gay, Lesbian, and Queer Essays on Culture*, eds Corey K. Creekmur and Alexander Doty, 239–261. Durham: Duke University Press.

———. 1998. Adaptation, Censorship, and Audiences of Questionable Type: Lesbian Sightings in 'Rebecca' (1940) and 'The Uninvited' (1944). *Cinema Journal* 37 (3): 16–37.

Carruthers, Mary. [1990] 2008. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Casey, Edward S. [1987] 2000. *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Chauvin, Serge. 2009. L'Éternel Retour de la fiction. In *Le Classicisme hollywoodien*, ed. Jean-Loup Bourget and Jacqueline Nacache, 39–56. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.

Ciompi, Luc. 1982. *Affektlogik. Über die Struktur der Psyche und ihre Entwicklung. Ein Beitrag zur Schizophrenieforschung*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.

———. 1997. The Concept of Affect Logic: An Integrative Psycho-Socio-Biological Approach to Understanding and Treatment of Schizophrenia. *Psychiatry* 60 (Summer): 158–170.
———. The Concept of Affect-logic. 1 February 2023. http://www.ciompi.com/en/affect-logic.html. Accessed June 2023.
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. 1797. The Monk: A Romance. *The Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature* 2 (19, February): 194–200.
Doane, Mary Ann. 1987. *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Dresner, Lisa M. 2007. *The Female Investigator in Literature, Film, and Popular Culture*. Jefferson: McFarland.
du Maurier, Daphne. [1938] 2015. *Rebecca*. London: Virago.
Duncan, Paul. 2000. *Film Noir: Films of Trust and Betrayal*. Harpenden: Pocket Essentials.
Grosz, Elizabeth. 1995. *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies*. New York: Routledge.
Guénot-Lecointe, Georges. 1841. *Physiologie du gant*. Paris: Desloges.
Hansen, William, Ed. and Trans. 2017. *The Book of Greek and Roman Folktales, Legends, and Myths*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Hanson, Helen. 2007. *Hollywood Heroines: Women in Film Noir and the Female Gothic Film*. London: I.B. Tauris.
Harbord, Janet. 1996. Between Identification and Desire: Rereading *Rebecca*. *Feminist Review* 53: 95–107.
Horner, Avril, and Sue Zlosnik. 1998. *Daphne du Maurier: Writing, Identity and the Gothic Imagination*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
———. 2000. Daphne du Maurier and Gothic Signatures: Rebecca As Vamp(ire). In *Body Matters: Feminism Textuality Corporeality*, ed. Avril Horner and Angela Keane, 209–222. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Hubner, Laura. 2018. *Fairytale and Gothic Horror*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Light, Alison. 1984. 'Returning to Manderley': Romance Fiction, Female Sexuality and Class. *Feminist Review* 16: 7–25.
———. 1991. Daphne du Maurier's Romance with the Past. In *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars*. London: Routledge.
———. 2022. Hitchcock's *Rebecca*: A Woman's Film [1996]. In *Alison Light – Inside History: From Popular Fiction to Life-Writing*, 124–130. Edinburgh University Press.
Messbarger, Rebecca. 2010. *The Lady Anatomist: The Life and Work of Anna Morandi Manzolini*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
Modleski, Tania. 1988. *The Women who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory*. New York: Methuen.
Morwood, James. 2010. Cupid Grows Up. *Greece & Rome* 57 (1): 107–116.
Pons, Auba Llompart. 2013. Patriarchal Hauntings: Re-reading Villainy and Gender in Daphne du Maurier's Rebecca. *Atlantis* 35 (1, June): 69–83.

Rodaway, Paul. 1994. *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place*. London: Routledge.
Rowe, Katherine. 1999. *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Soares, Bernardo. 2003. *The Book of Disquiet*. Trans. Richard Zenith. London: Penguin Books.
Tatar, Maria. 2004. *Secrets beyond the Door: The Story of Bluebeard and His Wives*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Truffaut, François. [1966] 1967. *Hitchcock*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
Trumble, Angus. 2010. *The Finger: A Handbook*. Victoria: Melbourne University Press.
Turim, Maureen. [1989] 2014. *Flashbacks in Film: Memory & History*. Abingdon: Routledge.
Wallace, Diana. 2013. *Female Gothic Histories: Gender, History and the Gothic*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
Wehman, Henry J. 1890. *The Mystery of Love, Courtship, and Marriage Explained*. New York: Wehman Bros.
White, Patricia. 1999. *Uninvited: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Lesbian Representability*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
———. 2021. *Rebecca*. London: BFI.
Wigley, Mark. 1992. Untitled: The Housing of Gender. In *Sexuality and Space*, ed. Beatriz Colomina, 327–389. Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press.
Wisker, Gina. 2003. Dangerous Borders: Daphne du Maurier's Rebecca: Shaking the Foundations of the Romance of Privilege, Partying and Place. *Journal of Gender Studies* 12 (2): 83–97.

CHAPTER 7

Amnesia and Oblivion

At the opposite end of compulsive, pathological re-membering, conducted differently and with different outcomes by *Rebecca*'s narrator and *Peter Ibbetson*'s leading couple, as explored in the preceding chapter, there lies the willingness and the desire to forget. A pressing existential anxiety over forgetting and being forgotten, along with the fear of misremembering and of a memory that falters, recur in the films of the travelling directors. The risks that re-membering carries are sometimes represented by counterposing the obsession with recollection against the inability to retrieve stored information wilfully. An example is the exchange between *Portrait of Jennie*'s Eben and old Pete, analysed in Chap. 3, which contrasts Pete, who explains that he can only remember people and events by going back 'to the beginning' and listing them chronologically—yet still fails to remember—and Eben, whose only preoccupation is to accumulate as much information about Jennie as possible by acquiring other people's memories of her. Eben's re-collection journey is ultimately successful, to the extent that he does uncover who Jennie was and what happened to her. The main concerns in this chapter are, conversely, unsuccessful re-membering journeys. I will analyse the sustained failure to re-collect, which eventually leads to wilful oblivion, alongside involuntary or supra-imposed forgetting. The tensions between the two underscore the liminal existence of the characters and suggest that death is the only way to cope with the challenges and pains of memory in a gothic context.

J. Jacob Ramalho, *Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film*,
Palgrave Gothic, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-73628-5_7

Memory, and the lack thereof, are portrayed in notably ambivalent terms in Marcel Carné's *Juliette, or Key of Dreams* (1951), in which the inhabitants of a dystopian dream-world called the Land of Oblivion (*le pays de l'oubli*) must learn to cope with collective amnesia. In the film, a young man, Michel, steals from his employer to be able to take Juliette, the woman with whom he has fallen in love, on a romantic weekend. However, things do not go according to plan: he is caught and subsequently arrested. As with Peter Ibbetson, incarceration prompts the poetic within the film's realism, granting passage to the reverie. While in prison, Michel dreams of a strange village, whose no-less-strange inhabitants have all lost their memory. Each day, they awake with no recollection of who they are or of their life up to that moment. Underneath the fairy-tale tinsel, the quiet neighbourly life in the village is highly dystopian and we immediately start noticing the many cracks damaging the surface: after Michel pointlessly asks three different people the name of the village, the first image of the mysterious place is that of a clock tower whose clock has no pointers. He then asks a passer-by if he has seen Juliette—his dream, we soon realise, pivots around her and his actions are guided by his love for the young woman. When he eventually finds her, the peculiar dream quickly turns into a nightmare, for Juliette does not remember him and, as in real life, he has to compete with another man for her love—a Bluebeard character type who ends up winning Juliette's affection. Throughout, only Michel remains immune to the contagious outbreak of memory loss, yet it is his ability to remember that prevents him from fully partaking in Juliette's life and enjoying her company in the Land of Oblivion. This is a realm where no experience of time or place is possible, and where journeys of re-collection repeatedly fail due to the mysterious mnemonic void. Even psychological travelling is limited because it relies on the thinness of imagination rather than on the thickness of remembering. Michel's forlornness and painful search for Juliette bring forth an incisive criticism of the human condition as a state of unsettling alienation in which imagination replaces memory.

Drawing on neurologist Oliver Sacks's research on amnesia and music, and on psychologist and cognitive neuroscientist Endel Tulving's work on human memory, this chapter analyses *Juliette*'s representation of two types of declarative memory (semantic and episodic) to explore the instability of identity and the dangers of exaggerated confabulation in the Gothic. It will also examine the significance of procedural memory, namely when remembering occurs via the hand's touch and the playing of a specific, and

specifically French, musical instrument—the accordion: a physical and aural memory-object that highlights the connections between memory, music, and nation.

Oblivion and Confabulation

Drawing on Frances A. Yates's conceptualisation of memory as supported by a spatial mapping, Jalal Toufic concludes that in the labyrinth, of which Oblivion could be taken as an example, 'one has an erroneous and defective memory, or else no memory at all' (2003, 77). When space and time challenge common logic, then memory cannot be properly formed. In agreement with Toufic's interpretation, I argue that this 'defective' or inexistent memory is observable in the coping strategies of the inhabitants. Aware that they do not remember their own lives, the villagers fall into two categories, with some calmly accepting their memory loss and going about their business while others obsessively try to re-collect manually what has been taken away. Soon after Michel arrives, the camera focuses on an old man, sitting on the steps of the city council, busily trying to organise the dozens and dozens of calendar pages that he has scattered around him. An accordion player sitting nearby calmly asks him why he is so keen on finding out the date and why he cannot simply enjoy life. The man replies that waking up not knowing which day it is troubles him; that he does not know exactly why, but it troubles him. And so, he lowers his head again and carries on with the impossible task of reorganising the torn pages. In this absurdist sequence, time is palpable and localisable in space: the audience and the characters can see it there, on the steps, in those sequential black numbers on white sheets of paper. A sense of time passing, however, is conspicuously absent. The puzzled man who desperately tries to find a temporal way to structure his existence and Michel's outsiderdom in Oblivion show that both extremes—amnesia and obsessive re-collection (as an inability to let go)—entrap the characters.

The villagers do not know who they are because they have lost their declarative (or explicit) memory; that is, they are unable to inspect memories of past events consciously or express them verbally.[1] A damaged declarative memory means that the characters cannot consciously remember autobiographical details, episodes, people, or places: their episodic memory is impaired and so they have no sense of identity. Affect is consequently displaced, which contributes to and complicates the shift from an 'everyday logic' to a 'psychotic logic', explored in Chap. 6. This is

illustrated in a scene halfway through the film, wherein Michel and Juliette come across an old merchant travelling around the village with a packed cart asking: 'Who wants souvenirs? Who wants memory?' His words fuse objects and recalling, fashioning memory as wholly tangible, graspable—as something that can be held, traded, and bought. These memory-objects are postcards, photographs, and a series of other knick-knacks and keepsakes. 'Travel photo albums!', Juliette exclaims. Michel says they have no use for those things because they have not been anywhere yet. Still, Juliette finds a photo album and a shawl particularly appealing and, through visual and tactile engagement with the objects (flipping through the pages of the album and caressing the shawl), she imagines and lovingly verbalises her never-lived life with Michel. In this scene, the symbiotic interrelationship between memory and touch reworks the recurring theme of mistaken, secret, double, or lost identities, familiar from such texts as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) or Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). In the Land of Oblivion, this theme acquires unique contours, in that the absence of identity is unintentional, generalised, and irreversible.

As she peruses the photo album, Juliette naively makes up stories about her and Michel's non-existent life together, using one photograph after another as inspiration—visual cues for imagining. A 'photograph is always a destination. […] To look at a photograph […] is to always have arrived', observes Eldon Dashell, a cartographer, in Helen Humphreys' neo-Victorian novel *Afterimage* ([2000] 2001, 112). I argue contrariwise that, in gothic films, photographs trigger a journey, a path of re-membering: they are a point of departure, not a destination. In this way, they implicate the past, the present, and the future. In addition, whereas in *Portrait of Jennie* photographs bring different characters together, in *Juliette* they make frightfully evident the immense gap between the protagonists. In both cases, photographs tell 'a history of ghosts and shadows' and become, in Cadava's words, 'a grave for the living dead' (1997, 10). Oblivion's Juliette is just as ghostly as Jennie: all dream and desire. Michel, like Eben, is in turn obsessed with images, real and imaginary—it is he who becomes entombed while alive. Speaking softly, in a medium two-shot, Juliette recounts everything she 'remembers': the places they have been to, the holidays they took, the hotels where they stayed, the parks where they walked, the museums they visited. Michel, who at first indulges in Juliette's fantasies, becomes increasingly disturbed by the amount of information she adds to her reverie and by the sheer joy she seems to be experiencing

from it. Impatient, he momentarily turns his back to the camera only to quickly turn around again, as Juliette continues describing their imaginary travels. He has realised that this is no game and that Juliette wholeheartedly believes her own delusional words. In this context, reality becomes an abstract (even foreign) concept, and memory a sensorial construct that disregards actual lived experiences. In Chap. 3, I discussed the intermingling of memory, perception, and imagination. In amnesia, imagination functions without memory: grounded only in perception, it generates pure confabulation.

Seconds after she puts the album back in the cart, her hands reach for a shawl: 'The shawl I wore in Seville! It pleased you so much', she tells Michel. 'In the evening, when it was cool, I would put it over both our heads. You said my face looked different when I wore this shawl. Here it is now, the same face as before', she says while placing the shawl over her head. 'Do you remember it?' Unable to bear the situation any longer, Michel grabs the shawl and tosses it to the ground, telling her to stop imagining their never-lived life. He wants them to create their own memories themselves. One might ask, however, whether Juliette is not doing exactly that. According to Michel, they should create their own memories by embodying them, that is, by experiencing them first-hand in the real, sensory world. That which Juliette is doing, in turn, is gathering memories that are not hers based solely on the indexicality of their pictorial remains. Her travels take place only in that ephemeral moment in time when she voices them and in a space created in her imagination after the places she has just seen in the photographs. By voicing her dreams, she takes her listeners (Michel, the vendor, and the audience) on an exhilarating, yet frightening, psychological journey. The vendor feeds her make-believe proclivities introducing ever more dramatic and intimate objects that pique her curiosity: a hairpin tainted with blood, a single high-heel shoe, a tissue wet with goodbye tears. 'Touch it', 'smell it', he tells a mesmerised Juliette. There is a tragic, passionate story accompanying each object he holds in his hands, one at a time—objects of a past that never was but could have been.

There is one crucial implication here: admitting that anyone can take possession of what are, in fact, someone else's memories—memories that one can see and touch—means that memory can be pursued not only beyond the limits of the individual mind, as discussed in Chap. 3, but that an other's memories can be co-opted by the self. An Oblivion detective, who briefly handcuffs Michel, attests to this when he comments: 'It's

terrible to live without memories, so we cling onto the memories of others'. Memories are stolen, fabricated, and shared among the villagers, who thus live and dwell in the limen: in a space suspended between the reality of dreams, waking life, the eternal present, and the inevitability of death. In the process, affective experience too 'becomes a condition available for strategic manipulation, misappropriation, or theft' (Rowe 1999, 120). The understanding of memory as transmissible and susceptible to reappropriation by a foreign body via objects therefore makes it possible to speak of a manual, visual, and verbal contagion of memory, whereby one's (false) memories can be passed on to unsuspecting others. This contagion is first propagated through the exploration of a haptic space, when Juliette sees and touches the old man's wares. In being handled by different people, removed from their unknown owner, and decontextualised to the point of acting as templates for crafting false memories, the objects in fact help degrade memory, moulding and twisting it by subjugating it to the corrosive influence of imagination. In this way, Carné's use of photographs—a memorial and liminal medium par excellence—subverts the role that Helen Groth attributes to photographic images, and which corresponds to the experiences of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and other Victorians for whom photographs '[thicken] the connective tissue of memory' and may serve as an 'armour' against 'modernity's culture of forgetting' (2003, 10). Carné replaces memory with imagination and foregrounds a condition of repeated forgetting as a refuge against the bleakness and disillusionment of an exilic life. The film's poetic realist aesthetic allows for a symptomatic reading of the existential angst that pervades *Juliette* as mirroring the disenchantment and hardships of the French working class in the postwar period.

Co-opting Memories

Assimilating second-hand 'memories' into one's consciousness does not repair one's sense of identity; although Juliette (re)creates memories for herself, she still has no idea of who she is or where she comes from. Considering the influential research on human memory by leading experimental psychologist and cognitive neuroscientist Endel Tulving, we could argue that Juliette has no episodic memory, that is, the memory for what, where, and when (Tulving 1972, 389), for the 'temporal-spatial relations' among personally experienced episodes and events (Tulving 1983, 21). This is, in other words, the memory for one's personal history. Juliette's

uncanny account of her supposed past is reminiscent of the medical case of Clive Wearing, which British neurologist Oliver Sacks describes in *Musicophilia* (2007). Wearing suffered from a catastrophic retrograde amnesia, 'a deletion of virtually his entire past' (188). Of Wearing's rapid recounting of past events, Sacks asserts that '[t]hese all sounded like genuine memories. But they could, equally, have reflected his knowing *about* these events, rather than actual memories of them—expressions of "semantic" memory rather than "event" or "episodic" memory' (195). Both semantic and episodic memory are types of explicit or declarative memory. Semantic memory concerns our general knowledge about the world (Tulving 1983, 44; 1985, 2) and 'is the memory necessary for the use of language. It is a mental thesaurus', Tulving suggests (1972, 386). Semantic memory is 'detached from autobiographical reference' whereas, according to Tulving, episodic memory exhibits an 'autobiographical reference' (389). 'Thus', he argues, 'an integral part of the representation of a remembered experience in episodic memory is its reference to the rememberer's knowledge of his personal identity' (389). The distinction between the two systems—episodic and semantic memory—is therefore central to understanding memory, identity, and amnesia. The two systems, in fact, partially overlap (Tulving 1972, 401); they are 'closely interdependent and interact with one another' (Tulving 1983, 65), 'each influencing the processing of information in the other' (26). Yet, they remain ultimately separate. This means that one of the systems may be impaired or dormant while the other remains functional. As his research developed, Tulving revised the relationship between the two systems from one in which they parallel one another to a hierarchical view that places episodic memory as a specialised subcategory of semantic memory (1985, 2–3). In this new scheme, a set of *sine-qua-non* relations are outlined, namely that 'semantic memory systems can exist independently of episodic systems', but episodic memory cannot exist 'without the corresponding semantic memory' (3). Sacks, thinking back to another amnesic patient of his, Mr Thompson, reports that the man

> dealt with his abysses of amnesia by fluent confabulations. He was wholly immersed in his quick-fire inventions and had no insight into what was happening; so far as he was concerned, there was nothing the matter. […] This sort of confabulation was not one of conscious fabrication. It was, rather, a strategy, a desperate attempt—unconscious and almost automatic—to

> provide a sort of continuity, a narrative continuity, when memory, and thus experience, was being snatched away every instant. (2007, 190)

Juliette similarly denotes the presence of semantic knowledge in the absence of episodic memory. For instance, she knows what a shawl is and is able to identify places, such as Seville. And like Sacks's patient, she too fills the gaps left by amnesia with continuing, or 'incontinent' confabulations (2007, 194). Dream-Juliette cannot tell memory and imagination apart. Michel, on the other hand, can distinguish clearly between the two when he first enters the village. Yet, the longer he stays in Oblivion, the more he begins to question everyone around him and the validity of everything he sees, touches, and hears. The two acts—remembering and imagining—have an 'inbuilt co-operativeness', with one often soliciting the other (Casey 1977, 195). Subtracting a key memory system from this complex partnership means that imagining will to an extent assimilate remembering and take its place. Such imbalance entails ontological implications for the characters. Remembering, as Casey advances, 'is essential to our very sense of personal identity—of persistence over time as continuously the same person or self' (194). For Juliette and the villagers, imagining without an autobiographical point of reference (episodic memory) thus becomes a dangerous exercise that may lead to the complete dissolution of identity and, ultimately, of the self. Michel's sanity, in turn, hangs precariously on the balance as he increasingly finds himself unable to disentangle the two acts, a failure from which his life outside the dream will not be able to recover.

Thresholds and the 'Phenomenology of Pain'

Between imagining and remembering, between personal and acquired identities, and between the prison and the village, Michel and Juliette occupy spaces of in-betweenness. Oblivion itself appears as a temporal, spatial, and mnemonic limbo—its inhabitants are ghostly shells in an atemporal nowhere. Michel slowly acquires a quality of transience too, playing into the delusion as he shifts between two worlds and two Juliettes. The notion of what Toufic calls 'real' thresholds, that is, thresholds that lead to 'the labyrinthine realm of undeath' (2003, 18), illuminates the events that conclude the film. Toufic identifies two ways of detecting real thresholds: the body of the character 'performs a bungled action', such as tripping, to introduce a pause in the action which gives him or her the

opportunity to make a decision, or else other characters implicitly point out the threshold, for example in refusing to follow the protagonist, meaning that the character transitions into a new space alone: the lone trespasser makes a journey into death (18). For this reason, the threshold is the in-between site where subjectivity is at its peak: it is the moment of utter solitude when the heroes are confronted with a critical choice that is theirs alone to make. The implication is that threshold spaces are first accessed mentally, for at the threshold itself, Toufic argues, it is already too late to choose whether one wants to cross it. Read in this way, indecisiveness characterises the moment just before the liminal whereas the liminal itself is characterised by choice. In *Juliette*, the moment of lingering in the limen, in other words, the hesitation as to whether to cross the boundary between waking life (memory) and the dream (imagination), is critical to both the fate of the characters and narrative resolution. As if to stress the importance of the threshold, its presence is doubly signalled: temporally (the moment of pondering one's choices) and spatially (crossing a physical boundary).

Juliette's final threshold—the fatal transgression that allows for no turning back, for no return—appears at the end of the film. The Oblivion narrative ends with Michel interrupting Juliette's marriage to Bluebeard, asking her to remember him and promising her that he will come back to see her every night. The loud sound of a prison bell marks the transition between the dream and the frame narrative. The camera cuts to the prison cell where Michel abruptly awakes to find that he is free to go and that all charges against him have been withdrawn. Upon being released, he goes to meet his beloved, this time in the diegetic real world. The brief words they exchange, however, make it clear that Juliette is going to marry his employer—the one who features as Bluebeard in the dream. Heartbroken, Michel runs away from her and walks steadfastly through the empty streets and down a long flight of steps. Juliette suddenly appears at the top of the steps and cries out to him. The camera frames her in a medium shot, breathing heavily. This seems to be the kind of moment to which Toufic refers: the moment when a character stops following the protagonist, thereby signalling the threshold. Upon hearing his name, the image cuts to a medium shot of Michel from a low angle, just below eye level. He pauses for a second without looking back and then keeps walking. This brief instant of inertia and the subsequent onwards and downwards movement delineate the choice to cross the threshold. Next, however, something unusual happens: Juliette chooses to continue her pursuit. In an

extreme long shot, the camera reveals the two characters hurrying down the steps, their descending movement rhythmically teeming with foreshadowing. Low-key lighting, by *La Belle et la Bête*'s Henri Alekan, creates diffused shadows that are cast on the ground and on the walls of the buildings on the right of the screen. Underpinning the fatalistic aspects of the mise-en-scène and dramatising the chase is Hungarian émigré Joseph Kosma's ominous music, which at this climactic moment replaces the sweeping strings of classical cinema with a poignant trumpet solo emerging from the ensemble. Michel's dark clothes contrast with Juliette's light-coloured dress, emphasising two irreconcilable opposites. Michel quickly turns his head to glance at Juliette, still rushing to catch up with him. He picks up the pace. Reaching the bottom of the steps, Michel turns a corner and carries on walking; Juliette is now running after him. Suddenly, the nondiegetic music stops and Juliette again calls out his name. Almost immediately, the high-pitched horn of a train cuts through the night and the silence. The camera does not leave Michel's face to look for Juliette. What has happened? Has she been run over? Is Juliette dead? Is the off-screen sound of the horn real? The audience is left guessing. *Juliette*, in its excessive liminality, introduces here another threshold moment: whatever has happened, Juliette is no longer chasing after Michel and he carries on alone, retreating into an alleyway.

Visibly distraught, Michel has finally stopped moving. The dismal beat of a bass drum and chiaroscuro lighting heighten the suspenseful mood. Looking around him, he notices an old wooden door with the dire warning: 'No trespassing—Danger'. He leans against a rusty ladder, head bent between his arms, when Juliette's acousmatic whispered voice softly disturbs the otherwise silent street, immediately reminiscent of Mary's posthumous voice in *Peter Ibbetson*. Whereas the latter, however, appears to come from heaven, leading Peter to reach his hand upwards, Juliette's seems to reach out to Michel from beyond the locked door in the street. Hesitantly, his face in a medium close-up, he moves towards it. Carné's camera pans left as Michel places his left hand on the door and then carefully opens it with his right. The image cuts to a medium close-up of Michel's face getting gradually brighter, reflecting the incandescent light coming out of the forbidden door. A smile gently forms on his lips as soaring orchestral music fills the sonic space. We know then, as does he, that the open door before him leads to another realm, to that mysterious village of people without memory, without past, without time, without place. From there, there is no destination, only perennial ghostly

wandering: a daily rebirth into a life filled with all possibilities and no regrets, but where happiness is not guaranteed either.

Resolutely, Michel walks towards the lost village once more—and for the last time. The visual transgression, that is, the moment of actually crossing to the other side of the door and entering Oblivion marks the end of the narrative. Keeping with my earlier remarks, that door is a false threshold, for Michel had already chosen his fate when he decided to keep walking away from Juliette. The end of Michel's earthly existence is equated here with a fatal return to the dream, which carries with it the promise of forgetting. The last stage of Michel's journey therefore consists in a passage from reality into eternal dream and foregrounds the conscious denial of waking life and personal memory as the only route to some form of (imagined?) happiness. In regarding death, or oblivion, as the privileged pathway to the skewed dream where love might await, Michel joins a long list of gothic heroes, from Peter Ibbetson to Mrs Muir, Eben, and Heathcliff, all of whom—haunted by memory—yearn for endless carefree dreaming by the side of their ghostly beloved.

Remembering, imagining, and happiness prove irreconcilable here. It is Michel's inability to forget the dream and to forget Juliette that ultimately leads to his, and arguably her, untimely death. Carné's association of disenchantment with a criminal offence (theft) perpetrated by a working-class man whose *mal de vivre* gains a sublime expression in the darkly romantic land of forgetting, engenders a distinctly poetic realist aesthetic. Dudley Andrew's remark that poetic realism 'exploits the sentiments of passivity' aptly defines Michel, who only seems to become proactive at the very end of the film, when he chooses to commit suicide (1995, 49). The 'destiny of "everyman"' fascinates poetic realists, for whom 'the destiny [the characters] felt prey to was a social, even a historical one rather than the mythical "death and transfiguration"' of Cocteau's films (49). There is no redemption and no overcoming the fatalistic course of waking life. '[I]n its delicacy of sentiment, […] its aesthetics of suffering rather than confrontation, of poetic logic rather than poetic spontaneity […], poetic realism is a phenomenology of pain', Andrew explains (49).

The gothic in Carné's poetic realist tale derives precisely from this 'phenomenology of pain', which arises from a carefully constructed dystopian dialogue of different artistic movements and myriad intertexts to which the camera, art direction, cinematography, and the soundtrack add striking dimension. The camera attaches itself to Michel throughout, so that it mostly portrays his subjective perception of reality and sur-reality,

indicating both a 'drive toward realism and an impulse to transcend or essentialize reality' (Andrew 1980, 109). The surrealist overtones of the (literally) timeless Brigadoon-like realm, with its Dalinean motifs of odd clocks, and the mystical encounters in Oblivion recall Peter and Mary's shared dreams, while the chasm between remembering and forgetting, according to which one of the characters remembers too much and another remembers nothing brings to mind the protagonists of Stefan Zweig's and Ophuls's *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, which I will analyse in the next chapter. All characters appear sympathetic in the story, including Michel's boss, who he imagines as Bluebeard but who, in fact, seems to love Juliette and, at her request, drops the charges against Michel, allowing him to go free. The absence of villains or other polarising archetypes and the focus on everyday people, their emotions, and their relationships convey a feeling of authenticity to the narrative.

The heavy contrasts between the naturalistic world of the city and the poetic illusion, or between a gloomy reality and desire, manifest in the use of bright lighting in Oblivion and low-key and chiaroscuro for the real-world narrative. The camera's focus on hands as direct and dangerous vehicles of re-membering contributes to the gothicisation of the narrative. Re-collection is manually mediated but, for Oblivion's residents, it is ultimately unsuccessful and either replaced by imagination, which discards memory completely due to a physiological inability to access stored memories, as in the photo album and shawl scene, or conducive to a permanent state of chaos, a somatic and psychological response to the knowledge that they do not remember, as with the man seeking to generate a sense of time by hopelessly fussing with the calendar pages. There is, however, a further category of tactile remembering that accords one character a unique liminal place among the film's amnesiacs.

Procedural Memory and the Accordion as Memory-Object

'Baudelaire and Proust showed us how memories are part of the body', Fredric Jameson notes, 'much closer to odour or the palate than to the combination of Kant's categories', or, he concludes, 'perhaps it would be better to say that memories are first and foremost memories of the senses, and that it is the senses that remember, not the "person" or personal identity' (2007, 2). Following on from this idea, we can argue that the senses

might be able to remember even when the person cannot consciously do so—in other words, via the senses, memories might be accessible even to people who have lost their identity. In fact, although (or perhaps because) declarative or propositional memory (the memory of which one is consciously aware) is impaired and mostly inaccessible in *Juliette*, there is an instance of remembering in the film when the retrieval of one's own memory depends solely on the senses, and therefore on a different type of memory. While wandering about in Oblivion, Michel chances upon an enigmatic accordion player. He tells Michel that, for him, unlike for everyone else in the village, all has not been forgotten or lost; memories come back to him naturally when he plays. 'I have memories in my accordion', he says, explaining that when he presses it memories flow out. Perception through touch provokes spontaneous recollection and the tactile space of the accordion becomes both a space of memory and a medium for remembering.[2] This is a performative remembering—what Casey calls 'body memory', that is, a remembering in, by, and through the body ([1987] 2000, 147).

As Craig H. Bailey and Eric R. Kandel outline, procedural (or implicit) memory is a type of long-term memory (like declarative memory) that relies upon 'motor skills […] and is expressed through performance, without conscious recall of past experience' (2004, 647). Tulving likewise suggests that 'procedural systems [can exist] independently of semantic systems', while the reverse is impossible (1985, 3). In his 1987 study on memory and amnesia, Alan J. Parkin confirms that, in patients suffering from amnesic syndrome, semantic and procedural memory remain 'generally intact' ([1987] 1997, 87–88). Procedural memory therefore allows for the possibility that, even when declarative memory systems fail, certain memories can be prompted by the senses and subsequently retrieved. Retrieval is especially effective in association with music. Sensory memories recollect movements of the body that have been previously acquired through repetition and practice, such as the playing of a musical instrument. The accordionist's predicament takes us back to Clive Wearing, whose musical powers remained unimpaired despite his devastating amnesia. His procedural memory 'holds only as long as the performance lasts. Without performance, the thread is broken' (Sacks 2007, 210). The same applies to Carné's character. For the duration of his manual contact with the object, the accordion, the character establishes a bridge between the self in the present and the self in the past, making a partial re-collection of his memories possible. In this regard, the accordion appears as a powerful

memory-object, indicating that systematic tactile exercises and the aural stimulus they generate may already be, in certain cases, an act of recollection, of remembering and, thus, of reclaiming at least a vestige of a sense of identity.

Approaching sensation in connection to memory, then, makes it possible to claim that memory can exist without identity, or that memory might prevail even in the eventuality of a general loss of identity, as with the accordionist. Music plays a chief role in mobilising affect and procedural memory, making pieces of the past surface in the present. Sacks speculates that it might not be 'just the nervous system, but music itself that has something very peculiar about it—its beat, its melodic contours, so different from those of speech, and its peculiarly direct connection to the emotions' (40), adding that, among the many types of memory 'emotional memory is one of the deepest and least understood' (202). In way of conclusion, Sacks suggests that 'when we "remember" a melody, […] [t]here is not a process of recalling, imagining, assembling, recategorizing, re-creating, as when one attempts to reconstruct or remember an event or a scene from the past' (212). It is possible, he remarks, that some amnesiacs preserve their musical capabilities 'because remembering music is not, in the usual sense, remembering at all. Remembering music, listening to it, or playing it, is entirely in the present' (212). In this way, Jameson's earlier statement about the unmediated experience of certain sensations—the idea of the senses as purveyors of memory, rather than personal identity—aligns with Sacks's scientific musings.

The choice to associate memory with the accordion carries a particular weight that accentuates the film's poetic realist aesthetic. The accordion is a symbol of French popular music and French popular culture more generally. It was also central to the practice of neo-realist music groups that appeared in the 1950s and relied on traditional musical instruments, including harmonicas, xylophones, barrel organs, musical saws, or Jaw harps. These were light, small, and therefore portable, allowing musicians to move about while playing. This musical culture contrasted with that of the bourgeoisie and the upper classes, whose preferred musical styles centred on heavier instruments, such as the piano and the cello, which are commonly associated with literary salons and enclosed spaces. The sense of community and comradery the accordion elicits opens up a space of nostalgia for times gone by and encourages people to partake in the sharing of memory. In this way, 'memory takes root in the concrete', the accordion, which emerges as a *lieu de mémoire*, a site of memory, as defined

by Pierre Nora (1989, 9). Identified with leftist politics in its anti-bourgeois tenor, the accordion is a self-referential 'site of excess', to use Nora's phrase (23–24); it embodies a residual 'memorial consciousness' and brings forth a working-class musical culture that revives a happier, communal past (12).

Carné, whose political consciousness veered to the left, accords to objects an unequivocal pressure 'to release transcendent meaning' (Turk 1989, 39, 41), so that things, as well as people, inhabit spaces 'more mythic than real' (204). The unique position of the accordionist as only half-amnesic attests to this. In addition, 'the song form', Peter Hawkins reminds us, 'is more closely bound up with the national identity in France than it is in many other cultures, embod[ying] […] some of the fundamental elements of what it means to be French' (2000, 3). The presence of specific musical idioms on a film's soundtrack therefore encourages particular interpretations, in that it plays with conventions that attach a certain cultural code to the music. Benjamin Nagari lists 'accordions for Paris' as an example of such musico-cultural shorthand (2016, 82). *Chanson* and poetic realist films, namely those which Carné directed in the 1930s and 1940s, had helped cement a cultural and historical image of France, 'a nostalgic—sometimes debased—notion of Frenchness, that embraces […] the accordion' (Vincendeau 1987, 107). A site of memory and a 'hackneyed metonym of French popular tradition' (Looseley 2013, 56) that establishes a connection between collective memory, personal memory, and the disenchanted present, the accordion's significance extends to its own history: developed in Austria, Germany, and England, it arrives in nineteenth-century France through European (Italian) immigration (56). It can therefore be read as 'celebrat[ing] the diasporic formation of the French nation' (Lebrun 2009, 58). Through visual and aural aesthetics, *Juliette*'s accordion embodies French collective memorial heritage. The film moreover seems to actualise a desire to recreate a more united (French) community while also emphasising the difficulties of this process, with the opposing forces of remembering and forgetting competing with one another. The accordionist, after all, warns Michel that he will be utterly unhappy if he does not 'curtail his quest' for Juliette, who symbolises love, hope, and desire (Turk 1989, 369). Letting go of the past, then, is a requirement for happiness.

The use of the accordion as a symbol for the happy, communal past in a postwar French film acquires, in this sense, significant socio-cultural contours, ripe for symptomatic readings. Edmund Baron Turk reads *Juliette*

as commenting on social realities, going against the French critics who hastened to demolish the film as a disaster; it is, he argues, 'Carné's fullest expression of a proclivity—no less the French nation's than Carné's […]—for selective evasion, delusion, and forgetting', consummated in the 'absolute withdrawal to the imaginary' (374–376). Indeed, Michel's exchanges with the amnesic accordion player display what I call a '*nostalgie engagée*', a socio-politically engaged nostalgia, that points to the intimate relationship between music and remembering in its use of a strongly nationally connoted musical instrument to provide the linking thread between the private self and the nation, memory and imagination, affect and the emotional void left in the wake of a loss of identity. Overall, *Juliette* offers failure as a solution to postwar, postmodern disenchantment and disenfranchisement: Oblivion's citizens, exiled from time, mappable space, and memory itself, visually represent human vulnerability in the face of outside threats through their coerced, or at least unwilful, forgetting. As much a prison as the one where we find Michel in the narrative frame, Oblivion provides no real solace or escape. And when refuge in fantasy fails as a coping mechanism, this quietly disquieting film suggests death (or the end of remembering) as the only path conducive to some form of bliss. At the end of his re-collection journey, Michel, like so many other gothic heroes, faces the dire reality that true happiness coincides with the erasure of the self. In this way, *Juliette* deploys a gothic aesthetic to portray a self-reflexive, somewhat satirical, and utterly despondent outlook on ordinary life in contemporary societies. The close connection between memory, touch, and sound is etymologically mirrored in the verbs 'to remember', 'to recollect', and 'to recall'. Like 'remember', 'to recollect' implicates touch and a kinetic body, whereas 'to recall' implicates sound and the ear. The latter therefore alerts us to an experience that is not directly associated with the movement of the body, but rather entails a more passive dimension. In effect, alongside the diegetic playing of musical instruments, which touch makes possible, the critically neglected aural experience of listening is likewise significant to an analysis of the gothic aesthetic in terms of memory and displacement. The films of the travelling directors do not foreground a musical instrument as connotatively national as the French accordion, calling instead upon a different instrument to bring back the past and rescue stored memories. The next chapter is devoted to it.

Notes

1. On declarative memory, see N. J. Cohen and L. R. Squire, 'Preserved Learning and Retention of Pattern Analyzing Skill in Amnesia: Dissociation of Knowing How and Knowing That', *Science* 210 (1980): 207–10, and Larry R. Squire, 'Declarative and Nondeclarative Memory: Multiple Brain Systems Supporting Learning and Memory', *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 4 (1992): 232–43.
2. Braque, coincidentally, develops his notion of a 'tactile' or 'manual space', discussed in Chap. 5, in reference to his keenness for painting musical instruments. These fuelled his 'metamorphic imagination' because they '[came] alive to the touch' (Danchev 2005, 88).

References

Andrew, Dudley. 1980. Sound in France: The Origins of a Native School. *Yale French Studies* 60: 94–114.

———. 1995. *Mists of Regret: Culture and Sensibility in Classic French Film*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bailey, Craig H., and Eric R. Kandel. 2004. Synaptic Growth and the Persistence of Long-Term Memory: A Molecular Perspective. In *The Cognitive Neurosciences*, ed. Michael S. Gazzaniga, 647–664. Cambridge: MIT.

Casey, Edward S. 1977. Imagining and Remembering. *The Review of Metaphysics* 31 (2): 187–209.

———. [1987] 2000. *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Danchev, Alex. 2005. *Georges Braque: A Life*. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Groth, Helen. 2003. *Victorian Photography and Literary Nostalgia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hawkins, Peter. 2000. *Chanson: The French Singer-Songwriter from Aristide Bruant to the Present Day*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Humphreys, Helen. [2000] 2001. *Afterimage*. London: Bloomsbury.

Lebrun, Barbara. 2009. *Protest Music in France: Production, Identity and Audiences*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Looseley, David. 2013. Authenticity and Appropriation: A Discursive History of French Popular Music. In *Imagining the Popular in Contemporary French Culture*, ed. Diana Holmes and David Looseley, 47–84. Manchester University Press.

Nagari, Benjamin. 2016. *Music as Image: Analytical Psychology and Music in Film*. London: Routledge.

Nora, Pierre. 1989. Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire. Trans. Marc Roudebush. *Representations* 26 (Spring): 7–24.

Parkin, Alan J. [1987] 1997. *Memory and Amnesia: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Rowe, Katherine. 1999. *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Sacks, Oliver. 2007. *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
Toufic, Jalal. 2003. *Vampires: An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*. Sausalito: The Post-Apollo Press.
Tulving, Endel. 1972. Episodic and Semantic Memory. In *Organisation of Memory*, ed. Endel Tulving and W. Donaldson, 381–403. New York: Academic Press.
———. 1983. *Elements of Episodic Memory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
———. 1985. Memory and Consciousness. *Canadian Psychology* 26 (1, January): 1–12.
Turk, Edward Baron. 1989. *Child of Paradise: Marcel Carné and the Golden Age of French Cinema*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Vincendeau, Ginette. 1987. The Mise-en-Scène of Suffering: French *Chanteuses Realistes*. *New Formations* 3 (Winter): 107–128.

CHAPTER 8

The Gothic Piano: Elegy to an Absence

More so than any other musical instrument, the piano has proven uniquely adept at conveying the complex mnemonic and exilic dynamics of a Romantic-Gothic world and has also helped to craft a thoroughly cinematic gothic aesthetic.[1] A recurring diegetic device, the piano features as integral to the narrative action and the camera lingers on it as a medium for audiovisual recall that draws the characters in. The power of music to access the workings of memory, investigated in the previous chapter, is here emphasised in relation to the singularly disturbing impact of piano playing. Generated through dexterous touch, piano music is an affective system of intersubjective communication and is imbued with cultural significance. Associated, since its inception, with a specifically Germanic European culture, the piano occupies an elite position in the films of the travelling directors and of those who directly worked with and learned from them. Culturally and historically, the piano stands as a symbol of propriety, discipline, and bourgeois society. In the Gothic, however, the piano's traditional connotations of homeliness, order, and the strengthening of familial and communal bonds are subverted and destroyed. Pianism creates a disjuncture between world and self; it severs ties and damages relationships. From their physical and auditory encounters with the piano, the protagonists emerge as multiplied, troubled, and broken beings—a distressing image of postmodern subjectivity that exposes the deterioration of hearth and home, interpersonal communication, and reason through a gothic lens.

J. Jacob Ramalho, *Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film*,
Palgrave Gothic, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-73628-5_8

Music and pianism have longstanding cultural associations with darkness and the supernatural. Nietzsche points to the eeriness of music when he calls it 'an art of night and twilight' and defines the ear as 'the organ of fear' (1997, 253), an especially felicitous description to frame the evocative use of piano music in gothic films and its effects on the viewers-listeners. Pianism likewise evokes an aura of sublime virtuosity, so that adjectives such as 'divine' and 'demonic' are commonly appended to descriptions of piano playing. The manner in which the piano involves the dexterity of the hands, paired with the layered sounds of the keys—specifically the way it can, unlike other instruments, meld each sound into the next—have made it a favourite cinematic motif to delineate a perception of sound that is at core spatial and haptic. Musicologist Lawrence Kramer hints at the gothic overtones of pianism and the 'digital' or tactile relationships that bind pianist and piano, writing that the soloist's charismatic 'histrionics of performance' associate music with 'the visual, the uncanny, and the bodily' (2002, 81). There is indeed a base, visceral, and unsettling connection between the self and the piano, in which the former engages his or her whole body in the expressive performance of music. In this sense, the piano provides an opportunity to tease out the associative and affective processes at work in the close encounters between the hand, the eye, and the ear in the Gothic.

This chapter explores the figure of the gothicised piano as a transnational memory-object which, '[p]erhaps more than most objects in film, […] has the capacity to *do something*, to exceed its role as a piece of furniture or a prop to embellish character' (Mazey and Street 2021, 160). The focus is therefore on diegetic classical piano music and on the instrument itself, meaning I will not examine nondiegetic piano music, except where the boundaries between the diegetic and the nondiegetic blur or dissolve. I consider the significance and function of the piano (its '*doing something*'), which may differ as it is played by a man or a woman, and I analyse the connotations it carries as well, not only for those who play it but for those who listen. Rodaway's phrase, 'auditory geographies', is helpful to understand the representation of music and pianos within a gothic aesthetic, as it captures the passive and active experience of sounds in the environment, an experience that is 'multisensual and ecological', in that 'we can "hear" with more than our ears and the context, or environment itself, plays a key role in what or how we hear' (1994, 84). The perception of sound is therefore not bound to the ear or to a specific place: sound is insidious, it spreads and infects. Accordingly, in the Gothic, piano music is

closely connected with place, yet it extends beyond physical borders; its effects, in turn, concern the full sensory body of the listener.

My readings of the Gothic's auditory geographies in relation to the piano are guided by the concepts of 'sound-body', '*un*sound body', and 'untuned body'. As developed by Ivan Raykoff, in his fascinating volume *Dreams of Love* (2013), pianists are 'sound-bodies', for the performer's body communicates the music, 'enacting a vital reciprocity between the somatic and the sonorous' (175). Music is embodied and expressed through corporeal music-making movements. Importantly, the intimate interaction between physicality and musicality taps into issues of gender, namely the stereotypical and patriarchal connotations of virtue and virtuosity as, respectively, feminine and masculine attributes (176–178). Raykoff employs the '"unsound" analogy' (194) to refer to sound-bodies that steer away from the (gendered) norm, such as overtly and overly queer male pianists and those evidencing physical disabilities (215). *Un*sound bodies are also those which become too excessive, and whose pulsating energies are dangerously 'uncontained' (216). To address psychological states and emotions that might manifest as pathological afflictions of the mind, Raykoff proposes the term 'untuned women' (193). I will instead use the neutral 'untuned bodies' to acknowledge the onscreen male pianists whose psychological distress upsets the normal and normative rendering of pianism.

The piano, along with its ancestors, such as the harpsichord, possesses a haunting allure that engages the viewer-listener's tactile, visual, and aural registers; it acts as a centripetal force that concentrates affect. Mid-century Gothic in particular stands out for its prolific deployment of this singular musical instrument, melding the profoundly aural Romantic tradition with the characteristically visual gothic tropes and aesthetics, most prominently so in a series of 1940s melodramas, which includes the films that will be the principal focus of this chapter: *Undercurrent* (1946), *Dragonwyck* (1946), *While I Live* (1947), and *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948). I will begin by contextualising the topic with a reading of *Orlacs Hände*, which completes the analysis developed in Chap. 4, and demonstrates that the use of the piano as a distressing mnemonic medium is not restricted to mid-century Anglophone melodramas. My selection of films, along with the additional titles that will be mentioned, encompasses amateur pianists, professional concert pianists, and characters who play the piano, thus allowing for a well-rounded understanding of how pianism drives the narratives, heightens dramatic tension, and shrouds the films in an intensely gothic aesthetic that is specifically cinematic.

Orlacs Hände: Virtuosity and Masculinity

Orlacs Hände paints a pointed picture of the piano and piano playing as related to memory, personal identity, gender relations, and the creation of a filmic manual space, all the while disclosing the devastating impact of warfare on the body and the mind. These are displayed through visual and narrative devices that construct a pseudo-medical gothic discourse whereby transplantation contaminates the recipient's hands and brain with the supposed villainy and moral turpitude of the donor. Mental distress brought about by intense trauma manifests as unwavering suspicion and repulsion of the other within.[2] The horrors of the Great War and the traumatic experience of its amputees, discussed in Chap. 4, emerge in synchrony with the act of *not* playing the piano, with close-ups of the unwanted hands accompanying the main character's despaired bouts of violence. Contrary to most piano-anchored gothic productions, which deploy pianism as intensely visual and audible, in *Orlacs Hände* it is the inability to play—to engage the sound-body directly in the performance of bewildering virtuosity—that haunts the film. The piano appears as a material extension of Orlac's personality and, moreover, his identity. The virtuoso's personality, Jim Samson tells us, is 'transmitted through the hand to the instrument in a kind of expressive dialogue between man and machine', so that his touch symbolically expresses his humanity ([2003] 2004, 82). The irreversible damage to Orlac's hands and fingers—the physiological interface that allowed him to communicate with and animate the instrument—means that his sense of identity is fundamentally disrupted. Physically severed from his hands, Orlac's agency has been compromised at different levels, a fact emphasised through the abrupt interruption of his body's connection to the piano.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, the male piano virtuoso's body has been a recognisable symbol (or cliché) of virility—'masculine, potent, vigorous, forceful, physically dynamic'—so that he 'seems unnaturally and hyperbolically able-bodied' (Raykoff 2013, 200). This co-relation between piano playing and virility is historically linked to Liszt, whose *bravura* style manifested as a magnetic performance of masculinity. As Samson notes, Liszt was not just Merlin but Don Juan, 'exerting his male power from the distance of the concert platform' ([2003] 2004, 82); the performance, he continues 'was a battlefield, with conquests to be made' and these included

'women's hearts' (82). The piano, in turn, 'was an independent force, something to be mastered ([a] gendered term) [and] "played upon" by the hand' (82). From the beginning of Wiene's film, piano playing is framed as part of the musician's sexual identity, Orlac's 'bond with his piano extend[ing] to his wife's body', as Raykoff suggests (2013, 72). In this sense, masculinity is implied and implicated in the pianist's hands and fingers (50), tools of labour and love, meaning that being deprived of them would signify emasculation and impotence. Raykoff goes on to argue that 'an impairment of the virtuoso's touch implies a crisis of masculinity' (72), and amputation could thus be interpreted as 'figurative emasculation' (75). As is well known, within a Freudian framework, amputated hands are related to the castration complex and castration anxiety (Freud [1919] 1955, 244). Yet, psychoanalysis' generalist (universalist) and ahistorical stance on bodily severance has often overshadowed other hermeneutics proposing to investigate the cultural, political, and medical significance of amputation and limbs detached from a body. Adopting instead a politicised, affective, and historical reading, the loss of limbs can be fruitfully examined through its surface meanings regarding gender relations.

Orlac's damaged or deficient normative masculinity is especially questioned and threatened when Yvonne proves resourceful and independent. This blending of the sexes reflects an 'underlying anxiety concerning the influence of femininity on masculine *musical* values' and the change in power relations that such a situation involves (Raykoff 2013, 205, my emphasis). Read in this light, Yvonne escapes the stereotype of the picture-perfect devoted wife-muse, whose sole narrative purpose is to nurse her debilitated husband back to health or to some kind of normalcy—her energy constitutes a danger to his weakened performance of both music and masculinity, representing the stamina he now lacks. Renard's novel and Wiene's film, I argue, seem to be more interested in challenging the 'persistent cultural mythology about music and masculinity' (Raykoff 2013, 220), namely the common assumptions about the virtuoso's ideal, abled body, than facilitating a symptomatic reading that views his predicament as a commentary on the fear of the loss of the phallus. The film belies the typical suppositions about professional accomplishment, personal fulfilment, and dis/ability, showing that, in the end, the conflicts that tore apart Orlac's life derive from a traumatic experience that his mind and body needed time and support to process and, eventually, overcome.

While I Live: Untuned Women and the Evil Piano

The gendered cultural clichés attached to piano virtuosity and the pianist's sound-body have made it a particularly charged motif of gothic cinema. An important object in melodrama, where it signals a distinctly gendered (female) space within the household, the piano functions 'as a visual-sonoric simulacrum of family, wife, and mother' (Leppert 1993, 119). The onscreen dynamic between female characters, the piano, and 'the petit-bourgeois interior' builds on the cultural history of the instrument (Benjamin 1986, 28). From the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, the piano acts 'as a symbol and guarantor of gentility and respectability for the woman who plays it' (Mazey and Street 2021, 160), and thus comes to represent class differentiation. Furthermore, Laura Vorachek explains, its association with middle-class women's upbringing, which promoted piano playing as a helpful skill in finding a husband, constructs the musical instrument as a fetish onto which women displace their sexual desires (2000, 27). The piano adorning the parlour of a bourgeois family home therefore embodied class-based female sexuality. Away from the stage and the roaring applause of the concert hall, where the imposing grand piano, 'with its sleek curves and polished black veneer' (Raykoff 2013, 111), carries rigidly masculine associations, the piano as a piece of domestic furniture acquires overtly feminine connotations (Gillet 2000, 3–5). Accordingly, the female pianist's sound or *un*sound body may be read as a signifier of personal and social identity.

Representations of piano playing through a gothic lens complicate those conventional and essentialist cultural attitudes towards the performer's body, which see virtue, gentility, grace, propriety, and domesticity as attributes of female characters at the piano, whereas vigour, virtuosity, strength, and prowess are associated with masculinity (Raykoff 2013, 176–177). The piano, Raykoff argues, 'functions as a technology of gender' (178), binding women's playing to their personality and identity in a socially sanctioned upholding of patriarchal structures. The gothic piano women subvert the Victorian ideal of piano playing as a hallmark of duty, decorum, domesticity, and domestication. Rather than meek obedience to an authority figure (matriarch, father, lover, husband), their identity subsumed in their music making, these women's playing is always—purposefully or not—disruptive, transgressive, and excessive. Mary Burgan situates the seeds of disaffection and conflict with the domestic order in the women's liberation movements of the late nineteenth century (1986, 52).

Women's struggles, as represented through pianism and a gothic aesthetic, take the shape of familial strife, obsessive self-punishment, class mobility, and sexual transgression.

John Harlow's bizarre possession story, *While I Live*, depicts the struggles and frustrations of unreasonable familial expectations and the imbalance between obsession and self-punishment. It displaces the enforcement of the patriarchal order onto a woman, a matriarchal figure who, rather than a helpful educator and model of morality, aids in the suppression of creativity, turning the piano into an instrument of abuse and, ultimately, death. The film tells the story of the Trevelyan sisters, the oldest of whom, Julia, exerts a domineering control over the other, Olwen, a young piano prodigy. Julia, seemingly envious of her younger sibling's musical talent, projects her own personal and professional failures onto Olwen's piano playing and systematically pushes her to practice long hours and finish the tone poem, a kind of Rachmaninoffesque concerto, that Olwen is composing. Nevertheless, much to Julia's dismay, her sister cannot seem to get the ending right. Over and over again, her hands are unable to carry on past a certain chord. Olwen is visibly strained, but Julia's pedagogy shows no abatement of austerity or intensity. One night, a sleepwalking Olwen jumps off a cliff to her death. The piano hereby discloses its role as 'a stringent taskmaster/mistress, requiring a level of discipline and often demanding personal sacrifice', which, Mazey and Street argue, demarcates pianists as singular characters and grants the piano a privileged status in the social order (2021, 167).

To better investigate the singularities of female pianism, Raykoff distinguishes between 'piano women' and 'forte women' (2013, 177). This gender metaphor, although simplistic, as the author concedes, is useful to probe the different cinematic depictions of female sound-bodies. It draws on the range of sound gradations from *piano* (soft) to *forte* (loud), according to which the first qualifier denotes the quintessential qualities of femininity, while the latter signals a troublesome, unruly disposition that may upset the peaceful and orderly rhythms of everyday life in opposing regulatory power structures (177). Julia's *forte* expression subsumes *piano* woman Olwen, ultimately silencing her and the instrument—a harrowing example of the dangers of bringing into direct confrontation such intemperate sound-bodies. Raykoff extends his analysis to affect and the psychological tensions borne out of patriarchal constraints stifling women's self-expression, often represented through 'untuned women' suffering from mental disorders (193). There is, in fact, a supposedly medical link

between pianos and neuroses that exceeds the cinema, especially where women are concerned. In 1899, the *British Medical Journal* exposes the piano as one of 'the drawbacks of an advanced civilisation', a 'nuisance', and a 'form of cruelty' (988). Listening to its 'maelströms of crashing sounds' produces 'multitudinous shocks' that 'jar the delicate apparatus of the nervous system to a degree, that, in irritable persons, might have serious consequences if they were compelled to undergo the torture frequently' (988). The piano, the journal vaticinates,

> has been the *causa teterrima* of quarrels that have sundered ancient friendships; it has wrecked many enterprises of great pith and moment; it has disturbed the finer adjustments of the cerebral machinery in many literary and scientific workers, has driven studious men from their books to the bottle, and has stimulated peaceable citizens to the commission of violent assaults. These are among the evil effects of the piano […]. (988)

The article also references a study by a Dr Waetzhold who blames the 'nervous troubles' of young girls on the '"deadly" custom of compelling [them] to hammer on the keyboard' (988). Olwen's predicament certainly seems to substantiate this. Through the young woman's psychological collapse, *While I Live* depicts pianism as a violent imposition rather than as an outlet of solace, echoing the concerns expressed in the *BMJ*. In 1843, Heinrich Heine's vituperation of the pianoforte, which he called an "instrument of torture" (1922, 445), already cautioned readers against the instrument's 'evil effects'. Walter Benjamin, in turn, describes the instrument in similar terms, if less viciously, as 'a piece of furniture that functions […] as the true dynamic center of all the dominant miseries and catastrophes of the household', recognising the darker qualities of the instrument and the nefarious effects it may have on interpersonal relations within the family home (1986, 28). These adverse effects become fatal in the film: unable to cope with her older sister's demands and expectations, Olwen's *un*sound-body breaks down, her hands lose the ability to produce new sounds, and she finds herself unable to complete the writing of the score, eventually falling off a cliff to her death.

In the twenty-five years since Olwen's death, the unfinished tone poem gained notoriety and her anniversary is marked by a special BBC broadcast. Pianist Margaret Rubins has taken up the task of finishing and performing the piece, which Julia anxiously awaits to hear. In the room with her is her cousin, Peter, and shortly after the broadcast begins, they are

joined by Julia's trusty manservant, Nehemiah. In a low-angle medium full shot, Julia approaches her sister's portrait, gesturing to the music before sitting down and grabbing the arms of the chair. She has kept the music-room unchanged and treats the piano as a memorial around which she and the others gather. The living room is filled with Olwen's haunting piece which lends the sonic space a manual texture. As they sit listening, we see, through the garden door, a spectral female figure emerge quietly from the mist and advance towards the house. A frantic knocking on the door suddenly unsettles everyone in the room. Julia answers the inopportune knocking and lets the uninvited guest in. Without a word, the young (and, we soon learn, amnesic) woman enters the living room in a trance and rushes straight to the piano. She hurriedly sits down and, realising the piano is locked, desperately tries to force it open. Julia gets the key and the woman's fingers somehow find their way across the keys and play Olwen's piece, which is also the film's leitmotif—a virtuoso concerto that envelops the narrative, traversing the boundary between the diegetic and nondiegetic realms. Like *Juliette, or Key of Dreams*, *While I Live* provides an example of the endurance of procedural memory over declarative memory. Again, we encounter amnesia and the playing of music associated with the process of re-collection. In this case, however, the music will serve to remember an other rather than trigger the retrieval of one's own stored memories.

This sequence reveals the power of the carefully constructed hapticity of manual spaces. On the one hand, the auditory (listening to the music on the radio) appears to have summoned this woman and, on the other, it is through the playing of music (touch and hearing) that she is able to express herself—or, perhaps more accurately, a self within. Olwen's presence is actualised in a space thoroughly saturated in manual, visual, and aural hapticity. The layered soundtrack confronts the past and the present, the self and the other, the living and the dead, with piano music being used to blur boundaries. The tragic heroine's unfinished concerto, 'The Dream of Olwen', is revived through the radio broadcast as a palimpsest, appropriated by a composer who provided an ending to Olwen's composition, bringing closure to a piece that should remain unfinished, like the life of its young author. The reprise of the music live, in Julia's living room, drowns out the impostor version on the radio. The recital is, however, brought to an abrupt end when the woman collapses on the piano, her hands unable to pick up where Olwen's had left off.

If we consider the piano keyboard to be 'a model of expressive communication through the "digital" mediation of sound and language' (Raykoff 2013, 16), a communication device that gives characters a voice through the corporeality of the musical instrument (van Dam 2022, 92), Olwen's death results from a failure to communicate. The piano ceased to converse with her or else she was rendered unable to converse with it. Her silencing in this scene is doubly flagged—aurally, through Rubens's performance, and visually through the amnesiac's playing. Communication seems irreparably lost, broken when the music stops. This linkage between communicative shortcomings, sexuality, masochism, and female pianism is replayed in later gothic films, most notably in Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1993).

The way the woman plays leads Julia and Nehemiah to believe that she is the reincarnation of Olwen, even though she does not resemble her physically. In a form of gothic possession, the memory of the dead (Olwen) seems to take control over the body of this other, living woman, who is, it transpires, a journalist who has been obsessively investigating the young pianist's tragic life. In this sense, this is not so much a story of possession or reincarnation, but a sardonic commentary on the dangers of overworking and becoming too immersed in a story to the point of believing that the memories one re-collects have passed on to one's body. Amnesia is induced by intense research and writing. Mnemonic contagion is rather violent here, for the procedural memory of Olwen (or its idea) fully contaminates and replaces both the declarative and procedural memory of the reporter. Unable to remember her identity, the woman has become an other to herself and her body a mere recipient of someone else's actions. This is an extreme example of the other's memory annihilating the self's, albeit temporarily, that is, until the journalist, fully convinced she is Olwen, heads off to the fateful cliff in her sleep and is stopped just before she falls. Julia had in the meantime engaged in old habits and was forcing the woman to finish Olwen's opus. The shock at the cliff-edge restores the journalist's memory and Julia returns to her house of remembrance.

Touch and sound (the piano keys and the sounds they produce) become the vehicles for recapturing the memory of the dead, acting as the gateway to the past and the identity of the other. Terror stems here from the representation of the senses as a dangerous way for the dead to invade and possess the spaces and, more frighteningly, the bodies, memories, and personal identities of the living. In addition, this draws our attention to the fact that while memory can exist independently of identity, the reverse is

not possible: there is no identity without at least a vestige of autobiographical or procedural memory. Contrary to Jennie, who is oblivious of her ghostly condition, which condemns her to relive her own death year after year, the journalist, like the people in the Land of Oblivion, is aware of her inability to access her own memories, which creates tension, suspense, and anxiety. Julia's 'pianist envy', to appropriate Raykoff's pun of Freudian terminology, hinders Olwen's pianistic mastery and deprives her of agency, stunting the development of a sense of identity dissociable from the musical instrument.

Undercurrent: Intersubjectivity Through a Shared Diegetic Leitmotif

To Mazey and Street's discussion of the piano's potential for 'emotional expression' and for creating 'a sense of profound subjectivity' in film melodrama (163), I would add that, when presented within a gothic aesthetic, the piano demonstrates a capacity for intersubjectivity, creating a temporal and musical ligature that connects characters through time and space, as in *While I Live*. It also fosters self-reflexion, inviting characters to question their lives and their circumstances, as in *Orlacs Hände*. In *Undercurrent*, pianism is again associated with the retrieval of memory and intersubjectivity, specifically through the playing of a shared leitmotif that pushes the heroine, Ann Hamilton, into finding out all she can about her husband's brother, Michael, whose whereabouts are suspiciously unknown.

In Minnelli's film, the aural cues for re-membering supersede the more visual ones. Homeliness and happiness are associated with the third movement of Brahms's Symphony No. 3, Op. 90, which Ann plays on the piano with her father early in the film: 'It always takes me into another world', she says. Her father attributes her daydreaming to wealthy businessman (and her soon-to-be husband) Alan Garroway, whom she has just met while he was visiting her father. Alan is therefore directly connected with happiness via the piano and the Brahms symphony, a happiness reinforced in a card accompanying a box of white roses he sends Ann shortly after they meet: 'In happy memory', it reads. As the plot unfolds, however, memory intrudes upon marital happiness—and it does so via the same vehicles: the piano and the Brahms piece. One evening, Ann, now Alan's wife, plays the melody while waiting for him to come home. Utterly distressed, Alan rushes in, the camera panning right as he looks around the

room. In a series of two-shots, we watch Ann trying to calm him down as he demands to know who was playing. Realising it is a piece Ann's father taught her and that she was the one playing, he makes up a story about how '[his] mother died sitting at [that] piano, playing that piece', concluding that his family home 'isn't all happy memories for [him]'. As soon as he leaves the room, a brief exchange with the butler, George, reveals that Mrs Garroway never played the piano. That night, once everyone has retired, Ann turns off the lights, blows out the candles atop the piano, and plays. Shot composition places Ann and the piano, silhouetted in the foreground, against the living room entrance in the background. The medium shot allows us to observe the cluttered décor and the staircase leading up to the upper floor. Seconds later, George rushes down the stairs, believing the person playing to be Michael, who has disappeared under mysterious circumstances and is feared dead. The symphony serves as a gateway to shameful secrets, soon to be exposed.

An atypical case of a shared, diegetic leitmotif, the piece traverses the whole of the film's sonic space, alternating between nondiegetic, diegetic, and meta-diegetic. In so doing, it brings forward the threshold where film music lingers, always on the verge of trespassing, of flowing subtly from one world into another, interlocking the narrative sensorial experiences of the heroes with those of the audience. As Robynn J. Stilwell puts it, 'one moment we're in the diegetic realm and in the blink of an eye, like walking through Alice's mirror, we are in the nondiegetic looking-glass world' (2007, 186). These sonic repetitions bridge what Stilwell and James Buhler have called 'the fantastical gap' (Buhler et al. 2003, 73–91). In other words, musical motifs that cross the boundary from the intra- to the extra-diegetic allow the viewers and the characters to participate in conjoining and uncanny audiovisual experiences. The disruption her innocuous playing causes triggers Ann's re-collection pursuits. A singular manifestation of a *piano* and *forte* woman, Ann's relentless investigative proceedings liken her to the female gothic-noir heroine as amateur sleuth.[3] In her search, Ann unknowingly meets Michael when visiting his ranch, mistaking him for the groundskeeper. Minnelli tells us who he is in a purely visual way, by having a right tracking shot of his home pause once the piano is fully in the frame, before continuing to show us Ann, standing by a lit fireplace. Michael is identified with the piano both pictorially and aurally.

The culmination of Ann's re-collection process is expressed through a striking auditory 'memory montage' near the end of the film, which

combines nondiegetic music, speech, psychological dwelling, and geographical travelling. On the train home, lying down, half-obscured in atmospheric low-key lighting, Ann remembers excerpts of conversations, which are superimposed to the rhythms of the Brahms symphony in full orchestral score. The camera lingers on her face, moving slowly from a medium shot to a medium close-up. Minnelli visually and sonically immerses the piano player-detective and the audience in Ann's realisation of the secrets clouding her marriage. Lost in thought, her expression grows worrisome as lights are intermittently cast upon her face. She shuts her eyes and opens them violently to the acousmatic sound of a loud train horn, which calls to mind the fateful sound as used in Carné's *Juliette* five years later. The aural flashback with the echoey overlay of the voices of the past lends a feeling of hauntedness to the scene.

As in *While I Live*, memories, then, are not limited by the materiality of the piano as a memory-object, the physical space it occupies, or the touch of the pianist's fingers caressing the keys: they are dispersed through sound (through music), thus extending their reach across different characters and their impact on the viewers-listeners.

Dragonwyck: Ghostly Auditory Geographies

In his characteristically ornate prose style, Reverend H. R. Haweis expounds the unique, and uniquely disturbing, relationship between piano music, affect, and memory, arguing that '[t]he strangest phenomena of all connected with musical perturbation are to be found in alliance with memory' ([1871] 1900, 106). Comparing it with the different 'mediums which connect us vividly with the past'—smell, sight, and touch—Haweis declares:

> But for freshness and suddenness and power over memory all the senses must yield to the sense of hearing. Memory is the great perturber of musical meaning. When memory is concerned, music is no longer itself, it ceases to have any proper plane of feeling; it surrenders itself wholly, with all its rights, to memory, to be the patient, stern, and terrible exponent of that recording angel. […] Only a few trivial bars of an old pianoforte piece. ([1871] 1900, 107)

Those 'trivial bars of an old pianoforte piece' distinctly recall the Vinteuil sonata that 'swept over and enveloped' Swann 'like a perfume or

a caress', in Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913); the 'little phrase' that 'existed, latent, in his mind' and blinded him (1934, 268), altering 'the proportions of [his] soul' (182). 'And', Proust writes, 'since [Swann] sought in the little phrase for a meaning to which his intelligence could not descend, with what a strange *frenzy of intoxication* did he strip bare his innermost soul of the whole armour of reason and make it pass unattended through the *dark filter of sound*!' (182, my emphasis). Writing over forty years after Haweis, Proust likewise interlaces music, memory, the past, meaning, and reason, and assigns to music an uncanny, hypnotic magnetism that overpowers the listener.

Piano music, filtered through a gothic aesthetic, is steeped in memory; it charms and intoxicates. The sudden irruption of the past in the present that such music prompts often devolves into the creation of a claustrophobic atmosphere where aural haunting reigns supreme. That is the case in émigré Lewis Allen's ghost tale, *The Uninvited* (1944), whose 'deft dosage of […] well-calculated shivers' includes 'a moonlit romantic piano piece that develops into a sombre concerto' (Clarens 1967, 116). The eerie melody that supposedly echoes from an old harpsichord into the chambers of Dragonwyck, fuelling anti-hero Nicholas Van Ryn's desperation, provides another notable example of the piano's function as an awe-inspiring catalyst for memory. Isabella van Elferen confirms the connection between the Gothic's auditory geographies and the phantasmagorical, arguing that 'the first dimension of sonic Gothic is its functioning as a metaphorical device in the genre's construction of spectrality' (2014, 429). When considering diegetic music originating in memory-objects, the spectrality is constructed through visual and aural aesthetics.

On the evening of her arrival in her cousin's New York estate, farm-girl Miranda Wells, the naïve heroine, stands by the harpsichord in a medium full shot, listening to the Beethoven piece Nicholas plays while his wife, Johanna, knits. Her wandering eyes quickly fixate on the large portrait hanging above the instrument. Noticing her attentive gaze, Nicholas explains that the woman, Azilde, was his great-grandmother. 'I don't know why we keep her hanging there. And that ugly old harpsichord… It's just an eyesore. The servants have to be driven to dust it. You'd think it was gonna bite them', mocks Nicholas's wife, Johanna. Assigning memory to a non-sentient physical recipient, as discussed in Chap. 3, confers upon certain objects an almost anthropomorphic quality, so that they become humanised. This narrows the gap between the self and the other, insofar as the perceiving subject and the perceived object become

entangled in a multi-layered web of intersubjective memories and temporalities. Through Azilde's harpsichord, the past 're-bites [*il re-mord*]', to borrow from Michel de Certeau ([1986] 2000, 3). Haunting is performed through an object which, via music, harbours and summons bodily absences.

When she moved to Dragonwyck, we soon learn, Azilde brought her harpsichord with her. Azilde, who we know only second hand (like du Maurier's and Hitchcock's Rebecca), from the words of other characters and her portrait, embodies a *forte* sound-body, her playing at once entrancing and frightening in its virtuosity. The remarks of Nicholas, Johanna, and the servants stigmatise her devotion to the instrument as excessive, unbecoming, and unwomanly. '[F]lamboyantly extrovert', as Peter Cooper describes it, the harpsichord, with its 'brilliance and bright tonal quality', is 'capable of a blaze of thrilling sound' (1975, 22). Compared to the piano, the harpsichord 'is a far more exacting instrument […], requiring a finer, and more precise finger technique' that 'calls for more musicianship and deeper perception', so it seems a perfect fit for Azilde's *forte* virtuosity, the instrument's '[h]ard quills plucking at strings […] [and] produc[ing] a piercing effect' (22–23). 'She played it always', Nicholas says of Azilde, to which Johanna sarcastically adds: 'If you listen to the servants, they'll have you believe she still does'. The housekeeper later tells Miranda that Azilde's husband 'forbade her to sing and play', that she had killed herself at the harpsichord, cursed the Van Ryns, and vowed always to haunt Dragonwyck with her singing and playing. As with the pianos in *While I Live*, *Undercurrent*, and *The Uninvited*, the harpsichord is directly associated with death. An aural cue for imminent disasters, Azilde's distressing melody and accompanying acousmatic operatic vocals echo across the house at night, heard only by those who share the Van Ryn bloodline. The maddening sounds, which appear to emanate from Azilde's portrait (the singing) and the old harpsichord (the music), draw Nicholas and his daughter to the living room. The ghostly music that suddenly upsets the night's silence, leading the characters to the instrument only to discover that no living being is responsible for the music being played, recalls the earlier gothic melodrama *A Place of One's Own* (1945), directed by Mancunian Bernard Knowles, who collaborated with Hitchcock on a number of pictures, including the gothic *Jamaica Inn* (1939), and with Dickinson, as cinematographer in *Gaslight* (1940).

L. Andrew Cooper explains that 'ghost sounds have a revelatory purpose, a testimonial concern with truth that reinforces their ghostly

validity' (2010, 149). It is ingenious to have ghosts validate their presence as absences via sound, to the extent that we associate the dead with quietude. Sound, understood in this way, acts as a trace—a trace of life in death and of death in life. Moreover, sound is arguably the most appropriate medium to relay the otherworldly, given that it can be present while the body is absent: sound travels, even when the physical body cannot. Through touch, the ghostly brings vision to a crisis, as explored in my discussion of *La Belle et la Bête* and *Wuthering Heights* in Chap. 5. Sight, however, is a discrete sense, as opposed to hearing, which means that we have to look to see, but we cannot help to hear the world around us, for we cannot close our ears the same as we close our eyes. As Frances Dyson neatly summarises, 'sound surrounds' (2009, 4). In addition, 'because hearing is not a discrete sense, to hear is also to be touched, both physically and emotionally'; '[i]n listening', she continues, 'one is engaged in a synergy with the world and the senses, a hearing/touching that is the essence of what we mean when we talk about a "gut reaction"—a response that is simultaneously physiological and psychological, body and mind' (4). The notion that sound is aligned with the haptic is essential to an understanding of the gothic aesthetic.

In that determined place (the living room) to where the characters are led by the fleeting perception of a sound, they are confronted with the paradoxical materiality of the music by virtue of the memory-object. The perception of the instrument, the ghostly sounds that lurk, and the space of the room engender a spatio-temporal liminality, to the extent that the harpsichord is here now, but is also there then, haunting the space of the living. As it is presented, the harpsichord seems to belong more to the past than the present: it remains in that room, in that place, as a tribute of sorts to a dead woman who does not seem to inspire much sympathy in the living; it is an odd memorial to times and lives gone by. The musical instrument is thus kept as a relic that exists in the present *through* the past. The harpsichord's sonic replaying of the past shatters any sense of a concrete geography or chronology, for that room becomes the room of yore, brought back to life with the music and the voice of the past. In other words, the harpsichord, so intensely connoted with Azilde, reflects the hold of the past over the present and, like any haunted place, disorients the vestibular sense, complicating sensorial routes of re-membering. Moreover, it disturbs the ordinary stillness of the object world.

In typical gothic fashion, *Dragonwyck* represents memory, aesthetically and thematically, as existing always in excess, expanding beyond the

boundaries of the individual and into the world of things. Memory, in mid-century gothic melodramas more generally, unquestionably appears as 'the great perturber', to return to Haweis's words. The memory that seeps through the cracks in the texture of the present, transporting us to the past, has a way of reinserting us in our lived experiences, affecting how we see ourselves, our circumstances, and our future. This resurfacing of something that was so embedded into the fabric of the past back into consciousness (into the thickness of the present) is the premise of Ophuls's *Letter from an Unknown Woman*.

Letter from an Unknown Woman: Listening Troubles

In turn-of-the-century Vienna, teenage Lisa Berndl, the unknown woman of the title, falls for her new neighbour, Stefan Brand, a renowned concert pianist. After hearing him play, Lisa is smitten and, from thereon in, her life will revolve around this forever unrequited love. A singular, ghostly figure, Lisa is repeatedly forgotten while alive: despite meeting several times, Stefan never remembers her, not even after they spend a night together (Lisa will eventually give birth to Stefan's son, who dies of typhus shortly before she does). Although, in life, she eventually resigns to the fact that Stefan will always fail to recognise her, she takes great care to ensure that she is not forgotten in the end, leaving her memories in a tangible, epistolary form, to be re-collected posthumously. Throughout, the film counterposes memory as utterly excessive (Lisa's remembering all) and fatally flawed (Stefan's remembering nothing). The letter becomes the vortex of the film, the central memory-object in a subjective, 'memory-driven' narrative, where 'what the viewer sees and hears is Lisa's idealized version of her short and tragic affair' (Kovacs [1999] 2006, 78). 'Exile and epistolarity necessitate one another', Hamid Naficy writes, 'for distance and absence drive them both. However, by addressing someone in an epistle, an illusion of presence is created that hovers in the text's interstices' (2001, 5). Lisa is this hovering presence, a concurrently embodied and disembodied representation of authorial (Zweig's and Ophuls's) exile. Through the words in the love letter she writes to Stefan, she assists in his recovery of the past and he is allowed access to everything he had forgotten to remember each time they met. 'You *are* a sorceress, now I'm sure', he had told her one night, many years prior. 'How else could we dance this way unless we've danced together before? And yet if we had, I should have remembered'. Still, he does not.

Letter has the feel of a memoir film, its long epistolary flashback conflating memories that, visually, narratively, and musically, tell a story of displacement, loss, and erasure. Vienna appears as an 'imagined homeland', in Naficy's sense of the phrase (152), which strengthens the film's all-consuming atmosphere of forlornness. This is not the mythologised Vienna of waltzes and *lieder*, of strolls in the Prater and cheeky intrigue, familiar from the films of Lubitsch and Walter Reisch. It displays a disillusioned cynicism, a reality frayed and read through irony. Images of uprootedness pervade the narrative, namely through the loss of home early in the film. Like Gogo/Peter Ibbetson, whose uncle forces him to leave Paris for London, young Lisa firmly resists moving from Vienna to Linz. Predictably, she cannot help but run away from her family at the train station and hurry back to her old flat. 'Suddenly, I knew I couldn't live without you', we hear her say in off-screen narration. Once inside the building, she rushes up the stairs and knocks on Stefan's door. He does not answer. With no intention of giving up, Lisa goes around and tries the backdoor—still no answer.

> These rooms where I had lived had been filled with your music. Now they were empty. Would they ever come to life again? Would I? Only you could answer. So, I waited… waited. For what seemed endless hours, I sat outside your door, trying to keep myself awake, afraid I might fall asleep and miss you.

Lisa associates the emptiness of the rooms of her old home with the absence of music, rather than the absence of all her things, and equates the house's auditory stillness with the void in her own life. It is through journeying to sites of memory and music that she constructs her identity—in this case, an identity that is wholly reliant upon Stefan's. Space becomes here an analytical category to reflect upon identity. As Lisa wanders the empty rooms, the underscore replays a familiar melody: Liszt's étude no. 3 in D-flat major, known as 'Un Sospiro' (A Sigh)—the same diegetic music Lisa had first heard Stefan rehearse after he moved into the flat and which drew her to the transom window. The musical association of Stefan with Liszt engenders a kinship between the two pianists that goes beyond professional artistry and into the realm of interpersonal relationships: Liszt's infamous profligacy is mirrored in Stefan's careless womanising. When Stefan finally arrives, in the early hours of the morning, he is not alone. Lisa hides in the shadows, voyeuristically intruding upon Stefan's privacy, and sorrowfully watches the couple enter his flat. Unsuccessful in

her pursuit, she leaves for Linz. The memory of him, however, is so powerful that its pull does not subside. A few years later, she is back in Vienna—still very much in love with her former neighbour and with the music that had once filled her dreams.

Geographical distance does not wear out her illusion or shake her resolve to not let go of the past. In fact, displacement or detachment from her childhood home only makes her aware of who she wants to be because of where she longs to be. Like Cathy and Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* or Mary and Peter in *Peter Ibbetson*, the memory of a childhood love persists, unabated, through the rest of her life, impeding her development of a personal sense of identity independent of the other. Not long after they first part, Peter Ibbetson's uncle, who is about to take him away to London, comments to Mary's mother: 'The desperate love between children. Is there anything in the world forgotten so soon?', to which she replies: 'I would say, Colonel, it was forgotten the last thing of all!'. This is surely the case for these gothic heroes. Theirs is a living *for* and a living *with*—a living for the beloved other, to whom they are hopelessly devoted, and a living with ghosts that bring back memories of times past and love stories that can never be. The outcome is an incessant yearning that the ensuing years of their prosaic lives cannot quell.

Ophuls's expressive camerawork and exile Franz Planer's brooding lighting construct political spaces of otherness and alterity, where Lisa and Stefan seem to exist on different planes that share the same reality yet cannot co-exist. The social standing of the characters creates a sense of separateness between them from the beginning of the narrative, Stefan's fame and fortune framed in sharp counterpoint to Lisa and her petty-bourgeois existence. Notably, when Stefan moves into her apartment building, young Lisa's hair is dishevelled and she wears a simple dress while enthusiastically following the hectic arrival of Stefan's 'beautiful things'. Much like the chasm between the classes, Lisa's love is all absence and distance. Kovacs notes how Ophuls exposes certain 'social thresholds' and enhances Lisa's exclusion, which features thematically throughout the film, 'by depicting the girl (and later the woman) frequently hidden behind half-open doors as she waits to catch a glimpse' of the virtuoso ([1999] 2006, 74). Indeed, 'there is almost always some literal barrier interposed' between them (Wilson 1983, 1126). Significantly, Lisa does not attend Stefan's concerts, lying in wait outside these highbrow spaces; this distance, Joe McElhaney suggests, 'is something close to an auto-erotic experience for her' (2015, n.p.), part of the misguided masochistic desires that define her personality.

The fact that she is so often framed in the shadows further positions her as a ghost, a barely visible and lurking apparition. The flashback format of the narrative and Lisa's sustained existence as an *acousmêtre*, a voice-off coming to the audience out of time and space, solidifies her depiction as an exilic figure. Distance is further performed through accented speech, setting, and music at both the textual and supra-textual levels. Louis Jourdan's French inflection distinctly clashes with Joan Fontaine's mid-Atlantic accent, differences which are accentuated with the German and American accents of different secondary characters. Naficy remarks that 'accent is one of the most intimate and powerful markers of group identity and solidarity, as well as of individual difference and personality' (2001, 23). Fontaine's un-geographical accent therefore stresses Lisa's displacement, unbelonging, and liminality. Adding to the multi-accented speech of the characters, the accented Austrian setting and the Austrian and Hungarian (Liszt) diegetic and nondiegetic music contribute to the inscription of memory and loss on the screen.

Letter provides an unusually troubling account of the damaging aural effects of piano music on the listener and of the way the piano shapes memory and interpersonal relations through the creation of private and social spaces of musical interaction. As Mazey and Street observe, '[w]hen the bravado of public performance is involved, musical prowess attests to the emotional sensibility of the composer, although the depth of feeling involved may be accompanied by a measure of inner turmoil and even emotional instability' (2021, 163). A renowned concert pianist and *bon vivant*, Stefan certainly fits the description, going through life from woman to woman, the camera highlighting the musical instrument as his only companion. When teenage Lisa sneaks into Stefan's flat, the piano, as Lee Kovacs remarks, 'occupies a large sunfilled space—it is the core, the heartbeat of Lisa's obsession' ([1999] 2006, 84). Years later, when the public's applause subsides never to return and Lisa again visits the flat, Stefan's piano is locked, silent like his talent (he has stopped performing), like Lisa (whose voice is suppressed outside the words in the letter), and like John, Stefan's mute manservant (a silent witness to the unfolding of events). Now an example of the 'mute objects' Elsaesser discusses, mentioned in Chap. 3, the instrument's conspicuous silence, its diegetic muteness, signals a 'metaphoric transfer' between subject and object (1984, 282). This is, in fact, a film of silence as much as music, both serving as meaning-bearing devices that converge and clash, mutually influencing one another. During her visit, which marks their last conversation (one

which takes place around the silenced piano), Stefan seems more interested in fixing them a glass of champagne than in listening to Lisa. The association of the piano with drinking shadows forth the theme of addiction, which characterises the disenchanted lives of the two anti-heroes. No longer a place of socialisation and interpersonal exchange, the piano has become a dissenting element that facilitates estrangement, a relic among many others in Stefan's flat.

Over the course of the film, the importance of sound is complexified in its combination of different sensory modalities. Significantly, Stefan recollects the identity of Lisa visually, through the words in the letter she has left him, which are presented aurally to the audience in a voiceover narration, and through his remembering the brief instant when they had first met. Memory and identity are enacted through spoken and written language. In a film that is all music and sound, traversed by ideas and imagery of silence and silencing, the act of listening propels the action and the camera forward, with both protagonists playing the role of listeners—albeit in vastly different ways and at different points in the story. To borrow Neil Verma's words about Edward Dmytryk's noir *Murder, My Sweet* (1944), the 'film "is" the temporal span of the act of narrating, but it is also the duration of an act of listening on the part of the love interest' (2014, 86). In *Letter*, the act of 'troubled listening' that anchors the film is made substantially more complex (87).

The frame narrative, in which Stefan receives and reads Lisa's letter, positions his listening as troubled and finally active—the letter emerges as the antidote to his astonishing forgetfulness. As Berthold Hoeckner observes, the letter teaches him, at long last, to listen (2019, 146). As such, it troubles his disengaged listening by disrupting his normal listening mode and ultimately changing it from passive and absent-minded to active and focused. The flashback narrative, in turn, builds on Lisa's acute, active listening as the root cause of her perdition. 'Women are the great listeners', Haweis asserts; 'In listening to music, her face is often lighted up with tenderness, with mirth, or with the simple expansiveness of intense pleasure' ([1871] 1900, 109–110). On a slightly less positive note, the *New York Times* music critic Edward Rothstein describes piano music as 'both social lubricant and intoxicant' (1987, n.p.), joining Nietzsche, Kramer, Heine, Proust, Benjamin, Dr Waetzhold, and the *BMJ* in their alignment of the instrument with lugubrious effects. While listening to Stefan's playing, Lisa's face is certainly 'lighted up' with the 'expansiveness

of intense pleasure', but pleasure soon turns into a heart-breaking pain that 'intoxicates' every moment of her waking life.

Oliver Sacks takes this uncanny aspect of music into neurological territory. Referencing Mark Twain's short story 'A Literary Nightmare' (1876), in which an earworm consisting of 'jingling rhymes' infects the narrator's mind, Sacks argues that '[s]ometimes normal musical imagery crosses a line and becomes, so to speak, pathological' and '"dangerous" or "infectious"' (2007, 41–43). Piano playing, and listening to piano music, may indeed devolve into self-destructive madness, as explored in regard to *While I Live* and *Dragonwyck*. Daniel Mann's psychological melodrama *Five Finger Exercise* (1962) discloses this connection as well: 'There are times when I listen to you playing, when I go almost mad with sheer pleasure', Louise Harington confesses to Walter Langer, a young man hired as a piano and French tutor. Twenty-first-century global gothic melodramas have carried on the tradition, including Alejandro Amenábar's *The Others* (2001), in which the heroine, Grace Stewart, is distressed by such inexplicable events as the phantom, off-screen playing of a piano. However, where Olwen and Julia, Nicholas, Louise, and Grace show the overwhelming toll of madness through their overtly erratic behaviour, Lisa's is a quiet madness, a blinding and desperate obsession that drives her but keeps her mystified, in a sort of unyielding hypnotic inebriation.

Haweis detects in piano music certain powers 'little short of supernatural' ([1871] 1900, 111). *Letter*, a ghost story at heart, narrated by a dead woman who remains unseen by the man she idolises, takes the mystical connotations of piano music for granted. Lisa's trance-like demeanour and sonic infatuation disclose a pervasive supernatural quality in the film's figuration of pianism. We see this sublime, supernatural-like state of musical possession emerge early in the film. Even before she ever saw Stefan, Lisa had already fallen hopelessly in love with the musician (or her romanticised idea of him) through his music, entranced by the beautiful sounds coming from the piano in his flat. Kovacs likens Stefan to Orpheus, stating that '[h]is artistry', that is, his musicianship, makes him 'the ultimate enchanter, [his] mystical power over Lisa […] manifested and then maintained through the magic of his music' ([1999] 2006, 81). The description of Swann's experience as he listens to the 'little phrase', which Proust likens to 'inhaling an anaesthetic which allowed him to breathe more deeply' ([1913] 1934, 182), aptly characterises Lisa's somatic perception of Stefan's playing. Particularly striking is the sequence of young Lisa in a nightgown, getting up and sneaking down the shadowy corridor to open

the transom window above the pianist's doorway, so that she could listen more clearly to his bewildering late-night rehearsal. This way, she could feel closer to him—a closeness mediated by the sound of the keys, which gets increasingly louder as Lisa approaches Stefan's flat and floods the sonic space when she pulls down the transom window. 'What I really lived for were those evenings when you were alone and I pretended you were playing just for me', Lisa recounts in her deathbed letter. Piano music, heard in the restless shadows of the night, takes a guiding and fundamental role in the story by allowing Lisa to surmount the social, physical, and architectural boundaries that separate her from Stefan.

Lisa creates private listening sites where she can immerse herself in Stefan's seductive playing, from the courtyard of her flat to the transom window above Stefan's door, a threshold from where she could play what turned out to be a dangerous game of pretending. In his *Music and Morals* (1871), Reverend Haweis exults piano music as an outlet for female expression, a way 'to sweeten existence' and lift the spirits of a 'poor lonely little sorrower', helping her escape 'from the commonplaceness and dulness [*sic*] of life' (1900, 111–112). Lisa never plays the piano in the film, but Ophuls's camera lingers languishingly on the 'little sorrower's' moonlit escapade, adding colour to the perceived 'dullness' of her existence. Triggered by Stefan's piano playing, the camera captures Lisa's imagination in a carefully staged dialogue of 'listening looks'. Raykoff lists different types of cinematic listening looks: 'the voyeuristic look, the dreaming look, the seeking look that "moves" the listener emotionally and physically toward the music, and the gaze' (2013, 133). The transom window sequence encapsulates all the above: Ophuls frames her active listening as a romantic, yet transgressive, eavesdropping that drives her body toward the musical instrument. 'Through music, with music, or *like* music', Hoeckner explains, Lisa's vivid 'panoramic memory becomes a time-out moment, an altered state, a special condition with heightened emotion and enhanced perception' (2019, 124).[4] Lisa's voyeuristic, dreaming, and seeking listening looks, and are here conveyed through a sustained *durée* (the sequence is made up of two shots, including a long take that begins when she exits her bedroom), low-key lighting, and the use of sound (with verbal silence replacing the initial voice-over narration, thus privileging the diegetic acousmatic music). The camera keeps its distance, framing her mostly in a medium shot, panning left to follow her as she advances towards the music. At the end of the long take, the camera zooms in slightly to a medium close-up as her hand reaches up to the transom

window pull, emphasising her mesmerised expression, wandering eyes, mouth half-opened. These techniques reposition 'music within/into a meta-diegetic space' and disclose the 'potential of film music to foster empathy' (Baumgartner and Boczkowska 2020, 10), revealing her as 'a fanatically romantic girl', 'both flawed and admirable, both ordinary and extraordinary' (Naremore 2021, 46). Listening is, throughout, an intensely embodied, affective experience.

The 'altered state' of consciousness Hoeckner mentions and Naremore's reference to fanaticism conjure a troublesome picture, whereby the act of listening to enrapturing playing takes Lisa on a turbulent psychological flight through imagination. In her seminal study, *The Skin of the Film* (2000), Laura U. Marks does not analyse sound, but offers a brief description of 'haptic hearing' as the series of undifferentiated sounds that are presented to us before we choose which ones are more important to hear; in such moments, Marks writes, 'the aural boundaries between body and world may feel indistinct' (2000, 183). The shots of teenage Lisa, I argue, suggest more accurately a haptic form of listening, whereby the sounds are not undifferentiated, but rather carefully discerned and absorbed, blurring the boundaries between body and world, reason and fancy. The rippling yet velvety chords of the piano fuel her adolescent reveries, and the camera renders her escapist musical wanderings as peaceful moments of what I am calling 'haptic listening'—those instants where sound becomes almost visible and tangible, and where perception (hearing) develops into contemplation, which involves the intellect.

Pianism in *Letter* tells us more about the listener than the virtuoso. In her consideration of 'the female listener', Heather Laing describes the emotional attraction the diegetic performance may induce, 'freez[ing] the woman in fascinated stasis' ([2007] 2016, 72). This is visible multiple times throughout the film, not only in the private moments of haptic listening, but in Lisa and Stefan's encounters as well. In fact, Lisa's body often lacks mobility when framed alone, stood by a door or outside a concert hall. It is the music and, by extension, the pianist, that animate her and breathe life into her senses, her consciousness, and her body. I am here again reminded of Proust's Swann, who describes the piano part of the soul-stirring sonata as emerging 'in a flowing tide of sound, […] multiform, coherent, level, and breaking everywhere in melody like the deep blue tumult of the sea, silvered and charmed into a minor key by the moonlight' ([1913] 1934, 159). Lisa absorbs every 'flowing', 'multiform', 'silvered' note eagerly, bringing about a lifelong delirious delight

that will be her downfall. Haptic listening can become a dangerous activity. Esther Leslie suggests that Benjamin recognises such dangers in Proustian memory, for it may easily slip into 'disempowerment, […] sweet melancholy, […] fixation on the act of remembering and not the remembrance of acting' (1999, 117). This is certainly the case for Lisa who, in those twilight moments of musical ecstasy, mistakes the man for the musical instrument. The piano becomes a synecdochic representation of Stefan the man, who, when apart from the piano, never lives up to the expectations aroused in Lisa by his playing. There is, Laing states, a 'disjuncture' between reality and the dream 'of what the performance implies', a 'misrecognition' whereby Lisa relates to Stefan's piano 'as if it were the man himself' (74). When she finally meets the pianist for the first time (she opens the door for him to exit the building), she was already hopelessly enchanted, so much so that 'his image simply attaches itself to Liszt's etude. Music becomes Lisa's vehicle for visual memory' (Hoeckner 2019, 134). Falling in love with the music, meant falling in love with the man.

Stefan's troubled listening is further supported by a visual medium that constitutes another memory-object: a series of photographs that Lisa has attached to her letter and of which we become aware just over halfway through the film. These pictures of the dead aim to counter Stefan's stupor, his amnesia, their frozen time offering itself to the hand and the eyes. And still Stefan cannot see. Sitting at his desk, a medium shot frames him looking through a magnifying glass—'a prosthetic aid that emphasizes his perceptual shortcomings, his lack of imagination, his weak recollection' (Hoeckner 2019, 130). There is an open bottle on his left side and a lit lamp on his right: oblivion and knowledge are bound together by the magnifying glass that occupies the centre of the shot. This tool allows him to look more closely at an unfamiliar reality, a life never lived, a world that was his, as Lisa tells him in her letter, but from which he was always absent. One of the photographs shows Lisa and their son, whom she unsurprisingly named Stefan, in the basket of a hot-air balloon. The painted sky and clouds in the background indicate that this balloon never took off, establishing a visual connection with a pivotal scene of make-believe earlier in the film.

During their first rendezvous, on a wintry afternoon, the couple visit the Prater amusement park in Vienna. There, the protagonists embark on a train ride through snow-covered mountains and distant lakes, stopping casually in various European countries. As they talk and get to know one another, the train windows reveal a succession of beautiful Venetian

landscapes. Revealingly, their conversation centres on travelling too, as Lisa tells Stefan about her many travels with her father. 'When my father was alive, we travelled a lot. We went nearly everywhere', she comments. Abruptly, however, their journey comes to an end and the illusion is broken, as we realise they are in a fairground myriorama, travelling through words and the senses rather than geographically. The mise-en-scène has a defining role here, partaking of and extending the make-believe. Stefan gets off the stationary train and pays the old couple running the attraction to take them to Switzerland. Stepping back into the train compartment, the conversation continues, as does the journey, in a changing backdrop of snowy mountaintops in distant Alpine regions.

What is most curious is that the travels Lisa lovingly describes never really took place (literally) either: a friend of her father's worked in a travel bureau, and he would bring home brochures of exotic destinations to his young daughter. Putting on his 'travelling coat', he would play with the indexicality of the pictures, asking her where she would like to go next. And so they would travel together in a shared psychological journey through whimsical fancy, like Lisa and Stefan do through myriad hues, places, and words in the myriorama ride. Travelling is conceived of and experienced as a verbal game of pretend, with imagination being regarded as a means of escaping from places to spaces—from the physicality of the here to the open-ended possibilities of abstractness. Hoeckner argues that the Prater sequence sets up travel as both child-like playtime and media event (2019, 139), in that the myriorama attraction—'a precursor to travelogue films' (141)—echoes technologies of reproduction. The fairground mechanical music, I would add, stresses the childhood-evoking and technological aspects, too. In conjuring reminiscence through moving images and sound (the couple's conversation and the ambient soundscape of the Prater), the ride exposes the passengers' characteristic types of memory: Lisa's encyclopaedic knowledge of Stefan and the latter's poor, weak remembrance. As Hoeckner concludes, 'Lisa records and remembers. Stefan repeats, but forgets' (141).

Throughout the film, the viewer witnesses two paths of re-collection: that of Lisa remembering Stefan by travelling aurally through his music, as well as spatially and geographically to the places where he dwells, and that of Stefan 'grasping at remnants of recollection' (Kovacs [1999] 2006, 84), re-membering Lisa through psychological travelling. As Kovacs writes, '[t]he woman and the man visually float between past and present in scenes so beautifully drawn and executed that the woman's misplaced

passion becomes almost believable and the man's indifference almost forgivable' (76). The borders between memory and the past become harder to separate with precision, given the way in which both of these elements dialogue with confabulatory imaginings through flashbacks and a relentless exploration of the manual spaces of memory-objects (the piano and the letter), grounded in music and haptic listening. Lisa and Stefan's musically induced encounters and the tragic end that befalls each protagonist attest to the seeming irreconcilability of memory and imagination—at least in a way that is decidedly positive for those involved. The senses of hearing and sight are portrayed as irrevocably faulty and deceitful—Lisa sees without being seen and listens without being heard, whereas Stefan compulsively forgets until he is forced to remember. These multiple and opposite movements of retrospection and introspection ultimately succeed in correcting Stefan's uncanny (because excessive) forgetfulness. Through her letter, Lisa finally takes control of the narrative and shapes the future, sending Stefan to a duel that (the viewers are led to believe) will end in his death. The offended party who has challenged him was Lisa's husband, which seems to make Stefan's willing participation in the fatal duel an attempt at redemption. Jean-Loup Bourget points to a satirical element here, typical in the works of European directors. Ophuls, he argues, employs the idea of a duel as a narrative device to expose how 'a particular class of society goes about solving its private problems when they cannot be kept private any longer' (1973, 195). In this case, the moment is doubly bitterly satirical, for Stefan's core flaw—his forgetfulness—has once again, and for the last time, worked against him—while reading Lisa's letter, he loses track of time, meaning he can no longer escape the duel, as originally planned.

When the reading of the letter ends and with it the flashback, Lisa's 'hypertrophic memory' and her reflective journey through music (their music) seem to cure Stefan's amnesia, Hoeckner suggests (2019, 125). The mnemonic capabilities of music and the written word are nonetheless insufficient and his recollection of her remains misty and vague. Zweig's novella describes the moment thus: 'Shadows chased one another across his mind, but would not fuse into a picture. There were strings of memory in the realm of feeling, and still he could not remember' ([1922] 1944, 187). In the film, a montage of symbolic, condensed flashbacks to the pair's encounters over the years fills the screen, with those 'strings of memory' visually portrayed as a sort of mobile fog that surrounds Lisa's figure, denoting the mistiness of Stefan's recall. This eerie aura reveals Lisa

as an elusive memory, barely there, suitably encapsulating Stefan's 'mnemonic deficiency' (Hoeckner 2019, 139). Just as Lisa's long mnemonic exercise throughout the film is somewhat unreliable (the viewers witness the remembered events mostly from her half-omniscient, homodiegetic narration),[5] Stefan's recall may be likewise misleading, for the visual snapshots that compose his retrieval of memories are extracted, or quoted, from Lisa's narration. Tellingly, her name rests just outside cognition, appropriately eclipsed from Stefan's reminiscence. It is John, his faithful mute servant, and the only one who had always remembered Lisa, who speaks, in the end, through touch—by writing Lisa's name on a piece of paper. The unknown woman thus regains her identity, in death and in writing.

A close analysis of the film's denouement reveals an intimate, multisensory experience, whereby the moving images reconstruct Lisa through sight, smell, touch, and a polyvalent appropriation of the sonic space. John's writing of Lisa's name and Stefan's quick flashbacks hinge on the visual as evidence, a means of grasping the elusive past and reliving it. Stefan then reads Lisa's name aloud, voicing it for the first time. As he does, the film's score reprises 'Un Sospiro', so that memories of the protagonist's encounters trickle in through the nondiegetic music, affecting the viewers-listeners who recognise the leitmotif. Diegetically, the vision of a bouquet of white roses, which Stefan now seems to recall were brought by Lisa when she had last visited, evokes the idea of scent as the pianist picks one of the flowers and brings it close to his face, caressing it with his eyes. Lisa's soft-spoken voice reappears, haunting, liminal, performing an '*aural* retake' of the final words in the fateful letter (Hoeckner 2019, 142). As he leaves the flat, the memories of Lisa—finally imprinted on his memory—weigh on him and he summons her ghost. The uncanniness of the moment is represented visually, for the image is extracted from the first time they saw each other, only now young Lisa is dematerialised, her see-through body standing behind the door with shadows engulfing her as she melds into the setting. This optical device takes us back to *photogénie* and the innovative camerawork of the French Impressionists, who used superimpositions to convey a character's thoughts and memories. Hoeckner locates the eerie effect of this shot in the underscore, too: as Stefan 'sees' Lisa by the doorway, Strauss's *Kiss Waltz* (which had marked their second encounter, and reappeared in their last) lingers, 'played by the C and G flutes in their lowest register and dangling in midair from a spooky violin tremolo […]. [T]he image of meeting Lisa the girl materializes with the

music from meeting Lisa the woman' (150). The rich auditory geographies of the film give it a 'musical flow' (Wood [1976] 2006, 147), held together by a 'musical glue' (Hoeckner 2019, 135), that emphasises the role different sounds play in Stefan's (re)cognition of Lisa.

The aging Stefan of the frame narrative is a haunted man, even before he reads Lisa's letter. Represented as a shadow, a vestige of the virtuoso with whom Lisa had become infatuated, he drunkenly gets out of a taxi after being challenged to the duel. It is unclear how long the piano in his flat has been neglected, its dark presence a painful reminder of a career that has been floundering for years. At this point, Lisa and Stefan appear closer than they have ever been, two hopelessly *un*sound, untuned, *piano* bodies—phantoms with interrupted, unfinished lives, both guilty in their deliberate or unintentional silences and omissions. Inscribed in the film's title, the same as Zweig's novella, is Lisa's *hamartia*—her tragic fallibility—and continual erasure due to her addiction to Stefan, which culminates in both their deaths and the death of their son. As in Aristotle's theory, the film locates tragedy in 'one who is not preeminent in virtue', with *hamartia* describing as well 'the causal element productive of misfortune' (Halliwell 1987, 44, 128). Unknown and unloved by the pianist, Lisa's erasure is mostly internally imposed, the result of her resignation and silence about her fleeting encounters with the pianist, as well as the construction of her identity as inextricably and inexplicably subservient to Stefan's. Reading the unresolved moral and emotional tensions in *Letter*, Robin Wood curiously suggests the 'possibility of a film *against* Lisa' ([1976] 2006, 161), highlighting significant moments in which the viewers might blame Lisa for her and Stefan's tragedy. The dialogue validates such a reading: 'You have a will', Lisa's husband tells her after she chances upon Stefan at a concert, about a decade after their one-night stand. Having already decided to throw away her marriage, she replies: 'I've had no will but his, ever'.

The film, however, is also about Stefan's *hamartia*, raising ethical and moral concerns that ultimately dilute the guilt for his and Lisa's 'change of fortune', splitting it between them (Halliwell 1987, 129). His astonishing forgetfulness confronts the audience with the perils of forgetting when one should not, for survival may depend upon our awareness of the histories of the past: keeping the memory alive may help avoid the cyclical repetition of catastrophic events. Lisa, as the voice of the past, fulfils the historian's function of retelling events, contextualising and remembering them, whereas John's muteness and general passivity denote complicity

through the silent condoning of tragic actions. Formal repetition stresses the feeling of predestination, namely in the use of the trope of the departing train, a recurrent motif in exile films (Naficy 2001, 257). The visual parallel between the trains that fatefully separate Lisa and both Stefans (her beloved and their son) and the trains leaving for the concentration camps is striking, especially considering their abject status in the film as contaminated places of death: it was on the train that mother and son contracted the typhus infection that would kill them. The lingering shots, 'the clutter of the décor', and the swift camera movements likewise signify time and fate, 'suggest[ing] a view of life as constant flux' where the characters are '[p]erpetually in motion, […] perpetually imprisoned—even as a piece of music, once it has begun, must move to its predetermined close' (Wood [1976] 2006, 162–163). The tragic causation in *Letter* therefore involves both Lisa and Stefan, but might also be attributed to a third element, the piano, which in bringing the protagonists together, decidedly produces misfortune.

Pianism, this chapter has suggested, allows us to rethink the ways in which the connections between memory and touch in the Gothic produce an aesthetic of estrangement, built on the breakdown of intersubjective relationships. The type of travelling the musical instrument elicits, and which the films depict as at once spatial, temporal, and psychological, further points to the need to think about memory and imagination as inextricably intertwined activities. On this, as we have seen, re-membering often gives way to dangerous confabulation, signalling the incompatibility between the inner desires of the protagonists and the external reality. Rather than a recuperative interlude of musical delight, then, the encounter with the instrument is marked by pain, fear, or death. The gothic piano thus subverts the instrument's traditional role and promotes instead its paradoxically mystical and medical associations with mental disorders, physical ailments, and the uncanny. In the process, it frames the characters as exilic bodies, alienated from others, from home, and even from their own minds, and paints a haunting picture of our cultural relationship with the piano in decisively gothic terms.

The piano is imbued with social, cultural, and political significance. Besides bourgeois sophistication and prestige, Rothstein notes that the instrument concerns 'the connection between spiritual and material aspirations, […] the earthy and the ethereal' (1987, n.p.). The 'spiritual' and the 'ethereal' are traditionally gendered adjectives, associated with the feminine, while the 'material' and 'earthy' are imbricated with the

masculine. The gothic aesthetic, however, in early to mid-century melodramas points to the opposite: male pianists, such as Orlac and Stefan, are connoted with the ethereal—with the spiritual interchange between angelic and demonic music and moods. They aspire to eternity through professional success and public accolades. Female characters, on the other hand, are aligned with the 'material' and the 'earthy'. Olwen, in *While I Live*, is coerced into obedience through painful, disciplinarian authority; there is nothing spiritual or ethereal about her traumatic relationship with the piano or her powerful playing. In turn, Ann's relationship with the instrument in *Undercurrent* is one of affection (the Brahms piece is a token of her childhood) and curiosity (she decides to investigate her husband's visceral reaction to the symphony). As the narrative progresses, in detective-like fashion, she probes her husband's silences with methodical reasoning, utilising the piano to uncover the truth. Even where it gains supernatural contours, as in *While I Live* (possession) and *Dragonwyck* (musical haunting), female piano playing has a very real, measurable impact on the characters, disturbing ordinary sensory perception and constraining their movements in a motion of continual return to the site of the musical memory-object.

The auditory geographies in the films are mired in pathological afflictions: these are *un*sound, untuned bodies, whose lives are interrupted (in the case of Orlac, Olwen, and Lisa) or disrupted (as with Ann and Nicholas Van Ryn) by musical performance. Piano playing may aid in the formation of personal identity and, paradoxically, destroy it altogether (consider the virtuosos Orlac, Olwen, Stefan). Troubled, haptic listening is presented in different ways: in *While I Live*, for instance, Julia's listening is a communal experience, a memorial ritual that she imposes on others, whereas in Ophuls's film it conveys solipsistic abandonment. Musical performance and active listening are entwined with failure and death: Julia's bitterness about her failed career aspirations leads to her stifling *forte* woman Olwen's life, resulting in her death; Lisa's failure to communicate with Stefan and separate the man from the pianist leads to her failed marriage and, we could argue, her death and that of their son; Stefan's failure to accomplish greatness at the piano, translates into severe memory flaws, which include forgetting the time when reading Lisa's letter, meaning that he can no longer flee the duel, as originally intended—his forgetfulness effectively forces him to keep the appointment that will cost him his life.

The piano offers itself sensuously to its viewers and listeners, and features as a powerful and poignant medium for memory and re-membering.

The acts of piano playing and troubled listening prompt re-collection by establishing networks of connections with memory and the past. More precisely, through the romantic, rich tonal textures of piano music, the films negotiate the intricate relationships of individuals to the present through their past. Musical immersion, Isabella van Elferen tells us, can be so irresistible and overwhelming that it separates the self from everyday reality. 'All ears, only the boundlessness of the musical journey exists. In listening, […] the experience is an infinite chain of ephemeral moments that undo themselves the very moment they come into sound' (2012, 7). Yet, as I have demonstrated, their effects show a remarkable resilience, attesting to the transgressive potential of gothic music and gothic listening. Through framing, flashbacks, memory montages, camera movements and angles, and a careful use of diegetic and nondiegetic music, the camera stages the charged act of piano playing while also capturing the listening looks of the characters, lending to scenes of musical production, fruition, or enrapturement a uniquely powerful and disturbing visual and aural hapticity.

Notes

1. I use the term 'Romantic-Gothic' to stress how invested these films are in the relationship between two triptychs—words/time/the ear and images/space/the eye—which relate to the histories of Romanticism and the Gothic as primarily sonic and visual movements, respectively. Dale Townshend contends that Romantic aesthetics highlight the voice over the visuality that characterises Gothic romance, claiming that the Romantics differentiated themselves from 'the monstrosities of Gothic through a self-conscious rejection of its intensely visual aesthetic, establishing […] sound and the ear which hears it as the privileged organ of imaginative communication' (2005, n.p.). I argue that the cinematic gothic aesthetic blends the aural and the visual element with remarkable efficiency, drawing the reader in, especially in films where the narrative pivots around a musical instrument. See Townshend. 'Gothic Visions, Romantic Acoustics.' *Romantic Circles* (December 2005), http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/gothic/townshend/townshend.html. Accessed July 2023.
2. Piano playing and war trauma also come together in a World War II British gothic film, *The Night Has Eyes* (Leslie Arliss, 1942). The brooding hero is a Spanish Civil War veteran, so the connection to war is effected narratively rather than in purely visual terms. Interestingly, the cinematographer, Austrian émigré Günther Krampf, also photographed *Orlacs Hände*.

3. For an in-depth investigation of the female detective, see Helen Hanson. 2007. *Hollywood Heroines: Women in Film Noir and the Female Gothic Film*. London: I.B. Tauris, 18–32, and Lisa M. Dresner. 2007. *The Female Investigator in Literature, Film, and Popular Culture*. Jefferson: McFarland.
4. Hoeckner borrows the term 'panoramic memory' from neurology, where it describes the moment of total recall during near-death experiences (2019, 123).
5. Ophuls introduces moments of ironic detachment into the narrative—moments of which Lisa could not have been aware—and therefore does not entirely restrict the audience to her vantage point (see Wood [1976] 2006, 158–160).

References

Baumgartner, Michael, and Ewelina Boczkowska. 2020. Introduction. In *Music, Collective Memory, Trauma, and Nostalgia in European Cinema After the Second World War*, ed. Michael Baumgartner and Ewelina Boczkowska, 1–21. London: Routledge.

Benjamin, Walter. 1986. *Moscow Diary*. Trans. Richard Sieburth, ed. Gary Smith. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bourget, Jean-Loup. 1973. Social Implications in the Hollywood Genres. *Journal of Modern Literature* 3 (2, April): 191–200.

British Medical Journal. 1899. The Piano as a Cause of Neuroses. (22 April): 988.

Buhler, James, et al. 2003. Roundtable on Film Music. *Velvet Light Trap* 51 (Spring): 73–91.

Burgan, Mary. 1986. Heroines at the Piano: Women and Music in Nineteenth-Century Fiction. *Victorian Studies* 30 (1, Autumn): 51–76.

Clarens, Carlos. 1967. *An Illustrated History of the Horror Film*. New York: Capricorn Books.

Cooper, Peter. 1975. *Style in Piano Playing*. London: John Calder.

Cooper, L. Andrew. 2010. *Gothic Realities: The Impact of Horror Fiction on Modern Culture*. London: McFarland.

de Certeau, Michel. [1986] 2000. *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Dyson, Frances. 2009. *Sounding New Media: Immersion and Embodiment in the Arts and Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Elsaesser, Thomas. 1984. The German Émigrés in Paris during the 1930s: Pathos and Leave-Taking. *Sight and Sound* 53 (4, Autumn): 278–83.

Freud, Sigmund. 1955. The Uncanny [1919]. In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. 17. Trans. and Ed. James Strachey, 217–56. London: Hogarth Press.

Gillet, Paula. 2000. *Musical Women in England, 1870–1914: 'Encroaching on All Man's Privileges'*. London: Macmillan.
Halliwell, Stephen. 1987. *The Poetics of Aristotle: Translation and Commentary*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
Haweis, H. R. [1871] 1900. *Music and Morals*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co.
Heine, Heinrich, O.G. Sonneck, and Frederick H. Martens. 1922. Heinrich Heine's Musical Feuilletons [Concluded]. *The Musical Quarterly* 8 (3): 435–468.
Hoeckner, Berthold. 2019. *Film, Music, Memory*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
Kovacs, Lee. [1999] 2006. *The Haunted Screen: Ghosts in Literature and Film*. Jefferson: McFarland.
Kramer, Lawrence. 2002. *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Laing, Heather. [2007] 2016. *The Gendered Score: Music in 1940s Melodrama and the Woman's Film*. Abingdon: Routledge.
Leppert, Richard. 1993. *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Leslie, Esther. 1999. Souvenirs and Forgetting: Walter Benjamin's Memory-work. In *Material Memories*, ed. Marius Kwint, Christopher Breward, and Jeremy Aynsley, 107–122. London: Bloomsbury.
Marks, Laura U. 2000. *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. London: Duke University Press.
Mazey, Paul, and Sarah Street. 2021. Pianos, Affect, and Memory. In *Musicals at the Margins*, ed. Julie Lobalzo Wright and Martha Shearer, 159–171. London: Bloomsbury.
McElhaney, Joe. 2015. Bits of Business: The American Films of Max Ophüls. *Lola* 6 (December): n.p.
Naficy, Hamid. 2001. *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Naremore, James. 2021. *Letter from an Unknown Woman*. London: Bloomsbury.
Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1997. *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*. Trans. R.J. Hollingdale, ed. Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Proust, Marcel. [1913] 1934. *Remembrance of Things Past*, Vol. I. Trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff. New York: Random House.
Raykoff, Ivan. 2013. *Dreams of Love: Playing the Romantic Pianist*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Rodaway, Paul. 1994. *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place*. London: Routledge.
Rothstein, Edward. 1987. For the Piano, Chords of Change. *New York Times* (27 September): n.p.

Sacks, Oliver. 2007. *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Samson, Jim. [2003] 2004. *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stilwell, Robynn J. 2007. The Fantastical Gap Between Diegetic and Nondiegetic. In *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema*, ed. Daniel Goldmark et al., 184–202. Berkeley: University of California Press.

van Dam, Daný. 2022. An Instrumental Thing: Pianos Extending and Becoming Postcolonial Bodies in Jane Campion's *The Piano* and Daniel Mason's *The Piano Tuner*. In *Neo-Victorian Things: Re-Imagining Nineteenth-Century Material Cultures in Literature and Film*, ed. Sarah E. Maier et al., 91–110. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

van Elferen, Isabella. 2012. *Gothic Music: The Sounds of the Uncanny*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

———. 2014. Sonic Gothic. In *The Gothic World*, ed. Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend, 429–440. Abingdon: Routledge.

Verma, Neil. 2014. Radio, Film Noir, and the Aesthetics of Auditory Spectacle. In *Kiss the Blood Off My Hands: On Classic Film Noir*, ed. Robert Miklitsch, 80–98. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Vorachek, Laura. 2000. "The Instrument of the Century": The Piano as an Icon of Female Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century. *George Eliot–George Henry Lewes Studies* 38–39 (September): 26–43.

Wilson, George. 1983. Max Ophuls. *Letter from an Unknown Woman*. *MLN* 98 (5): 1121–1142.

Wood, Robin. [1976] 2006. *Personal Views: Explorations in Film*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Zweig, Stefan. [1922] 1944. *The Royal Game, Amok, Letter from an Unknown Woman*. New York: Viking Press.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusion: Routes of Re-membering

The cinematic gothic aesthetic, as I have described it in these pages, is an aesthetics of memory, accented in its transcultural authorial roots and displaced characters. The accented style of the films responds to the directors' socio-cultural condition of displacement, inscribing into the mise-en-scène, atmosphere, and plotlines experiences of dislocation, trespassing, claustrophobia, unbelonging, loss, change, and motifs of itinerancy. In their paralleling of life and art, the films become visual archives of mourning: cinematic representations of personal memory sifted through the realisation that the past is forever lost, memory is always reconstructed and contaminated by the imagination, identity is porous, and happiness is usually either unattainable or resides in death. Driven by an overpowering and often maddening impetus to re-collect, the characters attempt to ground their lives in something tangible, something that can be held, preserved, and revisited to counteract the prevailing instability of their existence. Amid the ruptures and fissures of memory, objects represent fixity and continuity; yet, the characters' affective, haptic encounters with memory-objects merely feed their obsession with re-membering and thus ultimately constitute a further motif of exile. Haunted, incomplete, often divorced or estranged from a sense of identity, the gothic subject that emerges from these films stands as an avatar of a fractured, postmodern selfhood, with its multiple, disjointed voices and fragmented personae.

J. Jacob Ramalho, *Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film*,
Palgrave Gothic, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-73628-5_9

The travelling directors, working in a variety of countries and with the invaluable help of local and dislocated creative personnel, brought to the screen a thoroughly exilic worldview that is not intrinsically Germanic nor 'born out of war and economic chaos' (Horak 1996, 386). It originated in the collaborative, cross-border efforts of émigrés, exiles, and professional travellers, which helped to circulate innovative techniques and aesthetic traits between national industries, leading to influential experimentations with cinematography, narrative, characterisation, plot development, and nascent film genres. This resulted in the creation of a distinct, and distinctly hybrid, aesthetic—one which conjures a dark, suspense-laden atmosphere in which the camera and the characters' bodies trace routes of re-membering that generate haptic and auditory geographies through their exploration of intensely mnemonic and manual spaces.

The Gothic provides its audience with multiple forms of dwelling, its narratives built on the many and multifaceted travels of its real-world and fictional protagonists. The films portray myriad forms of compulsive journeying, articulating a poignant self-reflexiveness on the authors' own condition of displacement. Tobias Hochscherf comments on this mirroring, arguing that it gives a certain authenticity to the films. 'As wanderers or travellers', he writes, 'émigrés visually perceive their new, unfamiliar environment as outsiders', a situation emulated by their 'dramatis personae', which act as observers minutely exploring their surroundings (2011, 98–99). Their exploratory journeys are, to borrow from Naficy, 'physical and territorial but […] also deeply psychological and philosophical' 'home-seeking journeys, journeys of homelessness, and homecoming journeys' (2001, 5–6). The sense of uprootedness, yearning, and dread that characterises the aesthetic can be framed as an 'estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world', the condition which Homi Bhabha terms 'unhomeliness' and which he defines in thoroughly gothic terms via Henry James and Toni Morrison: the uncanny, unhomely moment, Bhabha writes, 'creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow', generating a state of disorienting and terrifying incredulity that blurs the boundaries of home (private) and world (public) (1994, 13–14). The state of unhomeliness is disclosed through the décor, the storyline, and technical ingenuity (the mobile cameras of Ophuls, Dieterle, and Hitchcock, for instance). This is visible, for instance, in the uncomfortable encounters of the protagonists with the gothic house, frequently viewed as hostile and threatening. The primacy the camera affords memory-objects in the museum-houses of *Rebecca*, *Laura*, *Dragonwyck*, *Corridor of Mirrors*, and

Sunset Boulevard illustrates this, as do the explicit references to uprootedness that recur in the script: 'We can never go back to Manderley again', *Rebecca*'s unnamed narrator tells the viewer against a partial shot of the majestic abode, overtly positioning the film as an exile narrative, and displacement as a central theme, from the beginning of the story. Lizaveta, in turn, the young innocent heroine in Dickinson's *The Queen of Spades*, opposes 'home' and 'house' at the beginning of the film: 'I was so happy once… home', she confides to the housemaid, adding 'Sometimes I feel I'll never leave this house'. As a spatial and inner travel, the relocation of the characters to an unhomely place implicates the renunciation of a certain kind of life. Exile, as Naficy states, is intimately tied to the inability to return home, and it is 'the frustrating elusiveness of return [which] makes it magically potent' (2001, 2). The imagined home/land is, much like the characters I have discussed in this book, haunting and haunted. It is the past, actualised through memory, and transformed by the confabulatory powers of the imagination. The home has been othered and the 'magical potency' of an awaited return is tainted. Consequently, the possibility of coming home becomes dystopian and unattainable: the gothic aesthetic formulates 'home' not as an affective space of desired return, but as that which can never be relived or regained. In the end, as Naficy concludes, '[r]eturn is thus ruled out, leaving quest and exile as the twin conditions of contemporary existence' (2001, 309). In their dark, disenchanted, obsessive engagement with both, the films render the depiction of the modern condition as fundamentally Gothic.

In this diasporic and exilic cinema, the characters inhabit alien environments where they struggle to cope. These are not necessarily overtly hostile, as is *Rebecca*'s Manderley. *Portrait of Jennie*'s New York City or *Letter from an Unknown Woman*'s Vienna, for instance, appear uncannily romanticised and sublime, inviting yet distant: examples of Naficy's 'imagined homelands', anachronistic and mythologised, so that the harmonious integration of the characters into their surroundings inevitably fails. The camera and the cinematography render these spaces strangely surreal, abstracted in such a way that they highlight the otherness and the 'unhomeliness' of the self. The characters are rendered as exilic bodies occupying an exilic space. These transitional, interstitial spaces that I, with Gábor Gergely, have termed 'exilic', do not refer exclusively to the political condition of exile, as we have seen, but rather to the production of a type of space that occurs in the negotiation of normative and subversive (read, non-normative) discourses (2012, 87–125). On this point, the films

foreground patterned actions of non-conformity that create a compelling image of gothic characters as fighting for safety, security, stability, and social inclusion, their repeated failures embodying the failings of dominant power structures to include those who dwell on the margins.

Incessant travelling (through spatial, temporal, and psychological displacement), the loss of home and, therefore, of a sense of identity based on place, result in a game of masquerading whereby memories and identities are constructed, borrowed, or stolen. Re-collection journeys are obsessive 'journeys of identity, in the course of which old identities are sometimes shed and new ones refashioned', so that identity is 'a process of becoming', 'a performance' (Naficy 2001, 5–6), 'encourag[ing] the viewer to ponder the possibility of putting space, time and place "under erasure": to see it both yield, erase and keep a memory within a history, while making room for a narrative of double occupancy' (Elsaesser 2005, 112). Elsaesser's 'double occupancy', that is, the overlap or 'co-extensiveness' of different identities and roles (110), is noticeable in the exilic mirroring of characters and directors as well as in the plot, with characters continually undergoing a process of othering—always here, elsewhere, and elsewhen. Reading the exilic body as being 'under erasure' and doubly occupied means understanding it as half ghostly, continually on the verge of disappearing. Gergely views the exilic body in this way, claiming that dialogue, mise-en-scène, and plot construct such bodies as biologically or socially 'already dead' yet 'very much alive' (2012, 87). Gergely focuses on Hollywood films, but my exploration has demonstrated how the liminal depiction of the exilic body is not restricted to any one national industry. As it engages in spatial re-collection to gather scattered memory fragments, the torn and unstable exilic body splinters itself across different identities, facilitating a political (surface) reading related to the displacement of the travelling directors. This, in turn, finds an eerie parallel in the physical separation of body parts that mark so many of the films I have discussed. Subjectivity is fragmented, multiplied, and open-ended. In this sense, to elucidate the dynamic remembrance brings to narrative economy and to our general understanding of the films, I proposed a focus on the hand across different, uncanny iterations—from disembodied to amputated, ghostly, transgressive, and virtuosic.

Through the focus on the hand, a powerful synecdoche for the sensory human body, the Gothic 'provides an image language for bodies and their terrors', to use David Punter's phrase (1998, 14). Hands 'offer additional information that is not captured in speech' (Kelly et al. 2017, 3), and the

gothic cinema pictorialises the myriad ways in which they become more than useful visual and meta-communicative complements to speech. Prior to Jean-Louis Leutrat's reading of the powerful visuality of hands and their ability to 'speak' (1995, 85), analysed in Chap. 4, art historian Henri Focillon had already described hands synaesthetically, as 'eyeless and voiceless faces that nonetheless see and speak' (1992, 157). Even '[i]n repose', he continues, 'the hand is not a soulless tool lying on the table or hanging beside the body. Habit, instinct and the will to action all are stored in it' (158). As discussed, gothic hands in both silent and sound films can indeed see and speak; their language and agency, or 'will to action', intrude upon the narrative, alluring and overwhelming, at once aiding and hindering journeys of re-membering. In their focus on hands and touch, the films denote a singularly gothic and postmodern preoccupation with boundaries and their collapse, but also with the desire to transcend or modify such boundaries.

The camera's industrious and steady concentration on the mise-en-scène of the hand's 'compelling topography' is strengthened by a stylistic and narrative engagement with specific objects (Rugoff 2004, 153). In *Peter Ibbetson*, we have a ring: a ring that proves that telepathic dreams are real and can come to replace the pettiness of waking life. In *Orlacs Hände*, the wedding band that no longer fits materialises a traumatic loss, accentuating the foreignness of Orlac's new hands. In *Corridor of Mirrors*, it is Mifanwy's scornful attitude towards a facsimile of Venetia's ring that precipitates Paul's demise. Gloves, in turn, allow for teletransportation in *La Belle et la Bête*, symbolising a bittersweet return home, a place now marked by pain and loss, whereas in *Peter Ibbetson* the single white glove appears as a token of love and death. In *Rebecca*, the dropped glove presages the numerous afflictions the narrator will endure in the fight for identity, social status, and memory. Finally, an accordion, a piano, or a harpsichord may act as a doorway to a memory even when the characters are struggling with forgetting and amnesia. Rendering acts of re-membering in terms of amnesia stresses the films' exilic aesthetics, depicting it as a condition afflicting those who cannot reconcile loss with the present. Through their interaction with the musical memory-object, the films showcase with vivid emotion how gothic hands 'constitute a whirling theater of nuance' (Rugoff 2004, 153). Furthermore, tactile and aural memory-objects highlight the connections between memory, music, nation, and exile. Tamsin Graves compares Naficy's description of exile as 'a structurally open-ended process' (2001, 108) to 'the process of learning and rehearsing music'

(2021, 95). Moments of musical performance in the films facilitate the awakening and retrieval of memories, sending the protagonists on journeys of re-collection that subvert the instruments' traditional connotations of homeliness. They become iconographic symbols of exile that expose the deterioration of hearth and home, the breakdown of interpersonal communication, and the disjunctures between world and self, reality and confabulation.

The idiosyncrasies of touch and the significance of hand iconography foreground the gnoseological relationship between object and subject and position the gothic aesthetic as singularly haptic. In tactile spaces, myriad hands perform different functions and channel alterity, as depicted in the severed limbs of *La Belle et la Bête*, Cathy's ghostly hand in *Wuthering Heights*, the beastly congregation of hands at a séance in *Dr Mabuse*, or the possessed, piano-playing hands in *While I Live*. Hands as sovereign entities, autonomous or quasi-autonomous from the body, bearers of meaning, function as a medium through which the re-collector can acquire and possess, controlling others and the material world. They are communicative and communication devices that can nonetheless obstruct and even impede communication; they symbolise creativity (through manual skills, such as accordion or piano playing), but also destruction, as seen in the shattering of *Rebecca*'s Cupid figurine, and the nightmarish hands Orlac struggles to control. Hands are likewise coded as symbols of embodied experience, individuality, and identity, through handwriting and signatures, as in *Rebecca*, and through their association with professional life and affective relationships, as in *Orlacs Hände*, *The Unknown*, and *Letter from an Unknown Woman*. In contrast, when separated from the body, the hand 'seems insufficient as an emblem of selfhood', 'fail[ing] to function […] as a metonymic representation of the whole person', thereby subverting the common understanding of the hand as connoting identity and individuality (Rugoff 2004, 156). This is the case with Thing, from *The Addams Family*, and the inscrutable hands in *La Belle et la Bête*, which challenge the wholeness of the subject by emphasising the constructed nature of the body, consequently pointing to its easy disassembly and destruction. The ambivalence of gothic hands, their conflating meanings and 'shape-shifting facult[ies]' (161), often results in unexpected reversals of agency, which ratify the fundamental volatility of ever-changing social relations and power hierarchies. Their uncanny ability, as Jennifer Blessing argues, 'to be two things at once or at various times, active and passive, subject and object', 'each one the double of the other' (2004, 56–57),

contributes to an overarching sense of unease: 'the hand seems destined to endlessly haunt and inspire [our] collective imagination' (Rugoff 2004, 168).

Furthering these dichotomies and the interpretative nebulosity surrounding hands, Michael Neill analyses their uncanniness using a simile that likens the detached hand to sound: 'the amputated member seems charged with an overplus of obscure significance that threatens to rupture the semiotic boundaries of the gesture, rendering it as impossibly full (or empty) of meaning as a scream' (2000, 168). Dead hands, disembodied hands, missing hands, transplanted hands, constitute a prime example of how the subject can become abhuman, that is, not-quite-human, 'characterized by its morphic variability, continually in danger of becoming not-itself, becoming other' (Hurley 1996, 3–4). Borrowing the term from William Hope Hodgson, Kelly Hurley explains that '[t]he prefix "ab-" signals a movement away from a site or condition, and thus a loss. But a movement away from is also a movement towards—towards a site or condition as yet unspecified—and thus entails both a threat and a promise' (3–4). This dual status directly affects memory, for touch, which comes with the promise of a retrieval of memory, also has the potential to forge false memories when coupled with imagination.

Through impressionist dream states, expressionist-inspired delusions, poetic realist dystopias, and noir bleakness, exilic characters struggle to navigate the interweaving of memory and imagination and the two often become undistinguishable. Take as an example that phantom-like, unknown woman from Ophuls's film, hopelessly devoted to a concert pianist, and whose life revolves exclusively around his unrequited love; or Paul, who obsessively stores fifteenth-century memorabilia in his corridor of mirrors, lost in a desperate search for an imaginary (but ever-so-real) Venetia. Consider Lucy, from *The Ghost and Mrs Muir*, who spent her days in a secluded house by the sea, worshiping a dead sea captain and imagining her life away; Heathcliff, facing a snowstorm to chase after the supposed ghost of his darling Cathy in *Wuthering Heights*; or Scottie's pursuit of doppelgängers in *Vertigo*, conducive only to deceit, confusion, and death. Note as well *Sunset Boulevard*'s Norma and Renoir's little match girl, whose all-consuming imagination deprives them both of life.

Images heavy with memory saturate the films, often translating as a negotiation between the inaccessible past, an amnesic present, and imagination, which paradoxically serves as a form of imprisoning escapism. Visual, tactile, and aural memory, involuntarily triggered or voluntarily

re-collected, is depicted across the spectrum: the powerlessness to forget (*Orlacs Hände*); the desire to forget (Maxim, in *Rebecca*); the refusal to let go (Paul, in *Corridor of Mirrors*); the inability to recall (old Pete in *Portrait of Jennie* and the reporter in *While I Live*); the brutal opposition between the two extremes—remembering all and remembering nothing (*Letter*); a fight for or against memory, illustrated at once in *Juliette* by Michel's insistent pursuit of his beloved and his final decision to give up memory (and life) entirely. After the scene with the vendor selling memories, Juliette and Michel abruptly part when her Bluebeard suitor suddenly takes her away in a carriage. Michel cries out to her: 'I love you! Remember me!' His forlorn wish is replayed over and over in the memory-steeped world of the Gothic. The overflowing of memory promotes encounters with familiar objects that have in some way become strange or mystical. Through 'object-defined' shots (Morgan 2021, 92), the camera displays an almost museological or archaeological reverence towards memory-objects. Composition, lighting, music, and editing, accentuate their significance, so that their banality, their everydayness, shifts into uniqueness. In the gothic aesthetic, the mise-en-scène becomes a means of narration.

The camera is continually attracted to memory-images, that is, to elements of disquiet or strangeness in prosaic scenes and to the prosaic in surreal or fantastic moments: a menacing shadow, an unusually bright light, an uncanny arrangement of shapes, a surprising sound. Such images invoke a sense of transience, often focusing on actions, things, and people arrested in time, in the liminal moment of their manifestation or imminent departure: a ghostly hand, felt but not seen (*Wuthering Heights*), a glimpse of a make-believe landscape from a pretend train ride (*Letter*), a haunting piano piece (*Undercurrent*), a short-lived dance (*Corridor of Mirrors*), a tight handclasp (*Peter Ibbetson*), nightly phantasmagorical chants (*Dragonwyck*). These fleeting moments encapsulate that which Louis Delluc believed the cinema's mission to be: to surprise and supply the spectator 'with impressions of evanescent eternal beauty' ([1917] 1988, 137). These scenes are then promptly counterpointed with the need to entrap ephemerality, capture time, and seize memory. Attesting to this is the diegetic emphasis on media that have the capacity to record the elusive (photographs, portraits, and wax) and on specific film techniques, including lingering close-ups, slow motion, textured shots mimicking the feel and the look of a canvas, and superimposition.

By means of an extraordinary chameleonic resilience the cinematic Gothic transcends delimited categories, and as a trans-formation—an

aesthetic—it breaks period boundaries, lingering on through the centuries. Although this book is necessarily limited in terms of the number of directors, films, and the time period it covers, the currency of the travelling directors' legacy extends far beyond the 1950s or the countries I have explored here; it remains germane to contemporary iterations of the aesthetic. I hope that my study will encourage novel approaches to the rich and meaningful surfaces of the Gothic and facilitate future work on their entanglements with the thickness of a present that is always already past. I also hope others will engage with the film professionals and films (namely through the aesthetics of colour) that I could not cover in these pages and enjoy tracing ever new routes of gothic re-membering.

Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film offers an understanding of the Gothic as thoroughly embedded in the histories and cultures of contemporary societies. Drawing on a range of disciplines, including film, memory, and disability studies, musicology, cognitive science, and phenomenology, it extends studies on exile and émigré cinema and advances a new understanding of the socio-political impact of film aesthetics. In doing so, it presents the cinematic Gothic as an exilic aesthetics of memory that trades in images which point to 'the instability and persistence of memory that can be recorded, recorded over, […] erased, and played back repeatedly' (Naficy 2001, 37). Gothic memory does not provide the comforts of nostalgia. The directors underline instead the failures of memory, offering a disenchanted commentary on the complexities of the acts of perception and recollection that structure our daily lives. Analysed through this lens, the Gothic represents the impact of memory and imagination on experience. Moreover, it can be read as offering a shadow history of our often uneasy relationship with memory, the past, and imagination. There is an urgency to the gothic aesthetic: the all-consuming obsessions of its characters, the excess of memory, the flows of intercrossing movements that pervade the narratives, and the ruptures the films inscribe in character dynamics constantly actualise that which refuses to stay stagnant. Extreme states of remembering and forgetting are structural to gothic cinema, and the global aesthetic born out of the encounters and travels discussed in this book remains to this day rich in its inventive use of complex mnemonic and multisensory spaces where the senses meet, and where to see is often to touch, and where to touch implicates sight, hearing, nociception, and kinaesthesia.

References

Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Blessing, Jennifer. 2004. Photophilia. In *Speaking with Hands: Photographs from The Buhl Collection*, ed. J. Blessing et al., 13–58. New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

Delluc, Louis. 1988. Beauty in the Cinema [1917]. In *French Film Theory and Criticism: 1907–1939*, ed. Richard Abel, vol. 1, 137–139. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Elsaesser, Thomas. 2005. *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Focillon, Henri. 1992. *The Life of Forms in Art*. Trans. George Kubler. New York: Zone Books.

Gergely, Gábor. 2012. *Foreign Devils: Exile and Host Nation in Hollywood's Golden Age*. New York: Peter Lang.

Graves, Tamsin. 2021. Heteroglossia in the Musical Number: Song, Music Performance, and Marginalized Identity in Tony Gatlif's *Swing* (2002). In *Musicals at the Margins*, ed. Julie Lobalzo Wright and Martha Shearer, 86–98. London: Bloomsbury.

Hochscherf, Tobias. 2011. *The Continental Connection: German-speaking Émigrés and British Cinema, 1927–45*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Horak, Jan-Christopher. 1996. German Exile Cinema, 1933–1950. *Film History* 8: 373–389.

Hurley, Kelly. 1996. *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the* fin de siècle. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kelly, Spencer D., et al. 2017. Understanding Gesture: Description, Mechanism and Function. In *Why Gesture? How the Hands Function in Speaking, Thinking and Communicating*, ed. R. Breckinridge Church et al., 3–10. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Leutrat, Jean-Louis. 1995. *Vie des fantômes: le fantastique au cinema*. Paris: Editions de l'Etoile/Cahiers du Cinéma.

Morgan, Daniel. 2021. *The Lure of the Image: Epistemic Fantasies of the Moving Camera*. California: University of California Press.

Naficy, Hamid. 2001. *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Neill, Michael. 2000. *Putting History to the Question: Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Punter, David. 1998. *Gothic Pathologies: The Text, the Body and the Law*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Rugoff, Ralph. 2004. The Telltale Hand. In *Speaking with Hands: Photographs from The Buhl Collection*, ed. Jennifer Blessing et al., 153–168. New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

Index[1]

[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.

J. Jacob Ramalho, *Memory and the Gothic Aesthetic in Film*,
Palgrave Gothic, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-73628-5