Film, Music, and Migrant Identities: Representing Musical Otherness in Visconti's Neorealist Drama *Rocco and His Brothers*

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Abstract

Migration informs the ideological and political dynamics of the geographical space crucial to the processes of cross-cultural "othering." In the neorealist drama *Rocco and His Brothers (Rocco e i suoi fratelli,* 1960*)*, the composite film score manages to capture the accumulated emotions and knowledge of the environment and diasporic identities at different narrative levels, while coexisting between historical and fictional narratives that follow the migratory journey of the Parondi family. This paper discusses the concept of musical Otherness, with a particular focus on musical knowledge, the aural manifestation of rurality, the circulation of hidden mechanisms of power, and the contribution of music to the storytelling. Special attention is given to the representation of femininity and marginalized female identities, as well as to determining their place in the predominantly male cinematic environment.

Keywords: Luchino Visconti; *Rocco and His Brothers*; Musical Otherness; Migratory identities; Feminine sound.

Rocco and His Brothers is the dramatic story of the Parondis,[1] a peasant family that emigrates from Lucania (now Basilicata) to Lombardy in search of a better life. Given the cultural and demographic diversity of the multicultural, multi-ethnic, and even multilingual Italian nation, Visconti succeeded in showing the division rather than the diversity between two Italian regions and their inhabitants by addressing class conflict (South ≠ North, rural ≠ urban, and cultural ≠ peasant). The film conveys socio-political, ideological, and cultural knowledge about the mass internal migration,[2] which was one of the most topical issues in Italy during the 1950s and mid-1960s.[3] Through the use of a creative film language and affectively stimulating musical material, the Italian director created a certain mixture of socio-political, cultural and gender-specific conflicts that display prototypical traits of nostalgia for an idealized rural homeland. It is the musical component, which includes Italian songs and Nino Rota's original score[4]

1. Members of the Parondi family are the matriarch Rosaria (Katina Paxinou) and her sons Rocco (Alain Delon), Simone (Renato Salvatori), Vincenzo (Spiros Focás), Ciro (Max Cartier), and Luca (Rocco Vidolazzi).

2. No less than four million southern Italians migrated to the northern industrial cities such as Milan and Genoa due to extreme poverty and unemployment.

3. As Graziella Parati points out, Italy's external and internal migrations in the 1960s were subjugated to institutionalized priorities that assigned a marginal role to representations of internal Otherness (Parati 2005, 35), which consequently led to discursively and ideologically weakened migrant bodies.

4. Nino Rota, also known as Giovanni Rota Rinaldi, composed the score for many Italian and foreign films, including four films by Visconti: *Senso* (1954), *White Nights* (*Le notti bianche,* 1957), *Rocco and His Brothers* and *The Leopard* (*Il Gattopardo*, 1963). He also composed the music for the anthology film *Boccaccio'70: "The Job"* (*Boccaccio'70*: "Il lavoro",

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that allows us to delve deeper into the narrative and empathize with the oppressed southern family. Drawing on a heterogeneous musicological discourse, combined with critical theory, philosophy, psychoanalysis and semiotics, this paper connects the soundtrack with various forms of marginalization. Accordingly, the focus is on the ostracized, "othered" bodies of migrants and intertwined chains of personal, cultural, class, sexual and gendered Otherness. Since these intersecting forms of Otherness are largely contained in the composed score, the focus here is on the music itself rather than the cinematic soundscape or background songs.

The award-winning film *Rocco and His Brothers* should be considered crucial to Visconti's cinematic oeuvre and Italian neorealism in general, as it "pressed itself into the popular consciousness" (Foot 1999, 210). This neorealist drama, or cinematographic opera, as defined by José María Latorre (Latorre 1989, 148), is atypically set in the director's hometown[5] and depicts various dimensions of migrant alienation. The film's rich and varied musical content, which is deeply embedded in Visconti's narrative of self-alienation, powerlessness and loneliness, also sets it apart from many other neorealist films. Indeed, the musical component becomes an exemplary vehicle for meaning, successfully enhancing the lyrical quality of the film. The original score underlines its sensual[6] and emotional qualities, as well as its mimetic capacity to illustrate realistic narratives from post-war Italy. As these narratives primarily are on the subliminal knowledge and experience of the "Other," music, through specific semantic patterns and codes, empathetically strives to acknowledge and absorb their unique Otherness by making audible the seemingly ineffable.

As Kaja Silverman concludes, "cinematic meaning always carries the trace of the Other" (Silverman 1988, 12), which makes it an appropriate medium for the representation of Otherness. To understand musical Otherness, one should bear in mind that concepts such as Otherness and the "Other" are fundamentally subordinated to the canonical institutions of power or ruling and bourgeois elites. The institutional apparatus, with its instruments of domination, has the necessary legitimized power to deceptively define the "Others" as impure or subversive and even as morbid, abnormal, abject, and monstrous.[7] Throughout history, the Western European monopoly considered "Others" as a threat to its mainstream political discourse and institutional practices. These dominant actors sought to control, alienate, and even eradicate the marginalized "Other," which in the case of the Parondis solidified their unenviable economic and social situation as southern Italian migrants.

By separating "us" from "them," the institutions of power emphasize the ability to mark Otherness, as well as their overall legacy on personal, social, and cultural levels. If the abnormal is "the 'other' that defines the 'normal,'" (Taylor 2014, 3), then the original idea of abnormality is deployed to subjugate the so-called pathological "Other." This discursive agenda of power also affects the tone of the film *Rocco and His Brothers*, despite John M. Foot's reflections on

1962), directed by Vittorio De Sica, Federico Fellini, Mario Monicelli and Luchino Visconti.

5. *Rocco and His Brothers* is Visconti's only film set in his native Milan (*cf*. Foot 1999, 210).

6. In her monograph *Sound Design is the New Score: Theory, Aesthetics, and Erotics of the Integrated Soundtrack*, Danijela Kulezic-Wilson departs from the trivial version of sensuousness that confuses sensuality with sensory overload (Kulezic-Wilson 2020, 94). Sensuality is thus understood in this article as part of the realm of the human senses, which does not necessarily imply sexual pleasure or prosaic eroticism.

7. However, Foucault reminds us that "[t]he state is not a universal nor in itself an autonomous source of power," which could point to the possibility that power, apart from institutions, lies in all of us (Foucault 2008 [2004], 78).

the fact that the Parondis are not insulted face to face (Foot 1999, 226); that most comments are made in subordinate clauses or in a manner more associated with contempt for poverty than for Southerners in particular (*ibid.*). Given the broader applicability of film music, whose transformative power in this film makes it a conceptual sonic signifier of an alienated rusticity or a seductive urbanity, it becomes possible to articulate the ascribed socio-political and ideological meaning. Therefore, the mechanisms of musical power become ideologically and politically corrupted, especially in media such as film, when they require the production of representative auditory knowledge to deepen, complement, or even challenge the transparency of the visual features of the narrative. Told from a decontextualized Foucauldian perspective, knowledge reveals the recognition of (migrant) power at a deeper level of (film) discourse that need not be explicit or essentially referential.[8] By recognizing these hidden mechanisms of (hegemonic) power, it becomes possible to rethink the socially constructed binary oppositions such as unworthy/exemplary, orderly/chaotic, and pathological/wholesome. Especially in Italian neorealist cinema, repressive power manifests itself in the antagonistic form of terror, whereas it is precisely the mapping of musical signification that might expose this dehumanizing quality. But what if the dissemination of a broader concept of knowledge can obscure the operation of certain mechanisms that produce it? In this case, does musical knowledge remain hidden from the film audience?

Power is not just an imposed or totalitarian homogeneous tool, but rather a highly contested and multifaceted phenomenon. For this reason, Foucault sees power as a diversely distributed rather than a fully centralized affair. Furthermore, power relations do not only have an inherently negative function such as totalitarian oppression, but the effects of power, according to Foucault, can be highly productive by producing "reality", "domains of objects" and "rituals of truth" (Foucault 1977, 194). Regarding the film *Rocco and His Brothers*, one of the strategies of power could be to silence, amplify, or simply negate the existence of applied musical knowledge in conveying truthfulness about migrant "Others" and their signifiers. To determine what types of musical knowledge are deployed in the neorealist narrative, it is first necessary to systematize musical Otherness through the unifying discourse of formal and semantic techniques of audio-visual analysis.

Sonic patterns of alterity: systematization of musical Otherness in the film *Rocco and His Brothers*

Luchino Visconti often resorted to a mixture of classical, jazz, pop, and avant-garde tunes to shape the naturalistic soundscape of his films.[9] Given the possible musical anachronism, the question arises as to what music really means in Visconti's films (*cf*. Gastel Chiarelli 1997) and how it reflects the concept of Otherness. Before discussing the role of musical Otherness, it is important to distinguish the original and pre-existing tunes and determine their purpose in the cinematic space.

The pre-existing music in the film *Rocco and His Brothers* is largely part of the narrative diegesis and does not significantly interfere with the progression of the *dramatis personae* or the thematization of their characterization as "Others." Roberto Calabretto, however,

8. However, the way music conveys migrant knowledge or knowledge about the migrant "Other" is undoubtedly representative in the film *Rocco and His Brothers*.

9. This was a common procedure in Italian neorealist cinema, often distinguished by a heterogeneous eclectic soundtrack.

claims that the diegetic songs create the climate of an era and the contextualization of the environment inhabited by the characters (Calabretto 2014, 300). This descriptive model of conceptual musical knowledge generally retains its original meaning in film media. Various pre-existing vocal-instrumental melodies can be associated with the mental and emotional states of the characters and hint at the further course of the narrative.[10] But such a "hint" of Otherness, embodied through the "affiliating identification,"[11] is not strikingly perceptible in Visconti's neorealist drama. This is partly due to the muffled acoustic dynamics of the songs, or perhaps the occasional absence of a representative textual component, which can lead to a loss of musical intelligibility and a redistribution of its sensuality to a secondary narrative plane.[12]

The film audience may notice fragments of the following songs: *È vero* (Nicola Salerno & Umberto Bindi, 1960), *Tintarella di luna* (Franco Migliacci & Bruno De Filippi, 1959), *Il mare* (Antonio Pugliese & Antonio Vian, 1960), *La più bella del mondo* (Marino Marini, 1956), and *Calypso in the Rain* (Lelio Lutazzi) from the film *Class of Iron* (*Classe di ferro*, Turi Vasile, 1957). The way these songs are integrated into the narrative confirms Visconti's clear intention to preserve in part their original meaning. Nevertheless, the songs are conceptually altered and adapted to the scene's dramatic and emotional atmosphere. This is the case even when the sensibility of the song is paired with the ominous tone of the scene, as these affectively stimulating sounds seem to "provoke" the transgressive "Other." The reinforcement of the pathological traits of the characters as a constitutive feature of their Otherness is particularly transferred through the pre-existing song *Calypso in the Rain* [1:38:45-1:39:46]. In addition to the seemingly naïve lyrics and seductive sonorities imbued with a syncopated, dance-like rhythm, the song epitomizes across films the actor Renato Salvatori, who appeared in both *Class of Iron* and *Rocco and His Brothers*.[13] In Visconti's film, the song plays in the diegetic background while Simone Parondi sits in the bar with his colleagues, who reveal to him that his former lover, the estranged sex worker Nadia (Annie Girardot), is having an affair with his brother Rocco.[14] According to Mauro Giori, this creates a strong contrast between the triviality of the music and the dramatic encounter that soon follows (Giori 2011, 223-24), even though such a reference may not be obvious at first glance. Nevertheless, the affective and sensual appeal of the song is contaminated by the associative link with Simone's vengeful *persona* and his uncontrollable phallocentric obsession.

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10. Considering that the topic of this paper refers to the problem of musical Otherness, not all musical references will be considered in detail.

11. Anahid Kassabian argues that film music, depending on whether it emerges from a composed or compiled score, conditions two main processes of identification: *assimilating identification* and *affiliating identification* (Kassabian 2001). Pre-existing music, to which Kassabian attaches great importance, is associated with affiliating identification because, unlike original score, it is not historically conditioned (on the use of pre-existing music in film, see also Godsall 2019). However, original film music can also promote features of affiliating identification through the factual (formal, purely musical) and conceptual (abstract, non-discursive or discursive) transmission of intertextual musical knowledge. This is the case when the composed score contains recognisable features of earlier works by the composer or the representative musical imprint of other authors (see Buljančević 2022b).

12. However, if the theme does not appear as strikingly sensual, it tends to aurally mimic the moving image rather than opposing the visual narrative flow.

13. A similar inter-filmic use of pre-existing songs is particularly evident in the films of Pier Paolo Pasolini. Namely, the actor Franco Citti appeared in several films by this Italian director, and in two of them (*Accattone* [1961] and *The Decameron* [*Il Decameron*, 1971]), in which he played the marginal character, the Neapolitan song *Fenesta ca lucive* is integrated into the narrative (*cf*. Buljančević 2022a, 139).

14. It is important to note, however, that Nadia broke up with Simone months before she embarked on the affair with Rocco.

The composite soundtrack contains a musical fragment from Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 4 in F Minor*, Op. 36 [2:08:33-2:09:50] that transcends and even subverts the work's primarily intellectual meaning.[15] As the diegetic background of the verbal conflict between Simone and his brother Ciro, it tonally underscores the apathy of Nadia and Simone, whose behavioral transgressions, as a constitutive feature of pathological Otherness, have negative effects on all the Parondis. By amplifying Simone's psycho-emotional dissonance and Nadia's sarcasm, flatness, and other undesirable social and moral qualities, the symphonic fragment points to the affective potential of classical music, achieved primarily through the orchestral sound rather than the acoustic effects of the cinematic environment. Tchaikovsky himself acknowledged the Symphony's tragic pathos (*cf*. Solanas Díaz 2017, 270-71), which potentially encourages the film audience to immerse themselves in a psycho-emotional disequilibrium by imagining the constitutive lack of humanness.

On the other hand, the composed score is crucial for conveying abstract or intangible ideas implanted in personal, cultural, sexual, and gender Otherness. In search of new sound palettes, Nino Rota resorted to hybridized scores[16] as the basis for a blend of traditional and modernist[17] sounds to re-imagine the audio-visual field as a cinematic object of the sublime.[18] The soundtrack is constructed in a composite manner, indicating the composer's musical interventions at the microstructural level that transcends the emotional and sensory level of auditory perception. One could even argue that the purely musical properties of the soundtrack are located at a higher level of perceptual sensitivity and cognition than non-musical sounds and their psychoacoustic properties. While the evaluation of "noise as noise" and "music as music" depends on cultural and individual context (Chion 2016, 57), contemporary cinematic practices continue to blur the boundaries between dialogue, music, and ambient sounds (see, for example, Kulezic-Wilson 2020). However, applying these observations to Italian neorealist cinema, particularly the film *Rocco and His Brothers*, would be problematic. This is partly because artful musical fabric generally remains structurally congruent with the aesthetics or poetics of the moving image,[19] which achieves its wholeness and intensity through the combination of multiple cameras[20] and misty, particularly nuanced as well as raw film sound.

Musical episodes from the film also have a significant impact on the holistic emotional experience of filmgoers and their listening habits. In this context, it is possible to connect certain musical references with basic or, as Peter Kivy puts it, "garden-variety emotions" such as love, nostalgia, sadness, anger, and jealousy (Kivy 1989, 211). The strategic combination of musical instruments (strings, keyboard instruments, woodwinds, percussion, brass and the

15. Interestingly, Visconti had initially planned this theme as the film's main theme (Latorre 1989, 151).

16. This composed score is defined as a hybrid because it contains elements of academic and popular musical conventions, as well as material from other films.

17. Clearly, Rota's compositional language is not confined in the high-culture modernism.

18. The primary reference is made to the Kantian concept of the sublime, i.e., the noble, splendid or terrifying sublime (Kant 1960 [1764]). Nevertheless, the expression of the sublime in *Rocco and His Brothers* can be identified through a variety of other aesthetic, philosophical, and cultural phenomena that transcend the realm of the senses.

19. This is partly achieved through the empathetic relationship between the music and the moving image. Even when certain traits of apathy are implied (as in the musical theme *Come tu vuoi*, discussed in detail in the last section of the article), the composed score always seems to work together with the visual background to create a continuous dramatic flow.

20. Since *Rocco and His Brothers*, Visconti had been shooting his films with two to three cameras operating concurrently (McElhaney 2021, 147).

human voice) creates distinctive sound patterns that link the expressive musical qualities with the characters, their affective states, and their transformations. And above all, the score not only evokes migrant identities, but successfully reconstructs them through the exaltation of musical expression that goes beyond its mimetic role.

The music in the film *Rocco and His Brothers* serves primarily to portray the character traits of Rocco, Simone, and Nadia, while other characters cannot be fully associated with any particular musical entity. Indeed, a wide range of social, personal and cultural differences and systems of oppression of Rosario, Ciro, Luca, and Vincenzo –that is, their chains of Otherness–, are only partially embodied through the dynamically and acoustically constricted Italian songs or implied by the waltz theme *Terra lontana*.[21] For example, at the beginning of Chapter 4, entitled "Ciro", the song *Tintarella di luna* [2:03:51-2:04:51] is sung in the street, simulating the naïve joy of city children and referring textually to Ciro's Milanese girlfriend. Solanas Díaz points out that as a symbolic musical representation of the girlfriend, this song resembles the opposite of the *femme fatale* Nadia (Solanas Díaz 2017, 265-66). However, although the lyrics highlight Ciro's sincere romantic affection for his partner, the song does not designate his self-image. Similarly, the musical theme *La loro storia* [2:53:57-2:56:00][22] does not symbolize Ciro's *persona* or other individual identity, although it discreetly addresses his sense of being "othered" by his family.[23] Rather, this waltz appears several times in the film as a theme of peasantry, marking all the Parondis musically. As an aural reminder of their roots, it functions as a conceptual musical vehicle representing Italian peasants, mainly their foreignness and alienation from the dominant urban culture.

When certain cultural features are excluded from the visual plane of the film, their characteristics can be sought in the aural component. In this case, the soundtrack constructs and animates the indispensable and all-pervasive ideological, cultural, socio-political, and dramatic framework of the film narrative through the following musical aspects:

- pre-existing music as a source of identification with time and place
  1. instrumental music (Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 4 in F Minor*, *Op. 36*)
  2. vocal-instrumental music (songs *È vero, Tintarella di luna, Il mare, La più bella del mondo* and *Calypso in the Rain*)

- musical themes and leitmotifs
  1. fateful leitmotif from the tragic opening theme
  2. musical themes: peasantry (*Terra lontana* and *La loro storia*), Nadia and city of Milan (*Milano e Nadia*)

21. All musical themes in italics are taken from the LP, as they aptly reflect the dramaturgy of the scene and the psychological contours of the characters.

22. Although *Terra lontana* and *La loro storia* are musically identical, one could argue that since they appear at different points in the narrative, they do not imply identical identifications and conceptualizations of migrant Otherness and rurality. Indeed, the waltz *La loro storia* musically recapitulates the Parondis' migratory journey and suggests that their longing for Lucania will most likely remain unsatisfied.

23. Even though Visconti intended to make a special film about Ciro, such as a sequel to *Rocco and His Brothers*, he ultimately decided not to do it. This brings the character of Ciro closer to the mentality of Milan, and by that, far away from his rural roots (see Tonetti 1983, 86). The fact that he feels ostracized by his own family is explicitly shown at the end of the film. This is the result of him reporting Simone to the police for Nadia's murder instead of trying to hide it (as Rocco and his mother did).

3. leitmotivic themes: fraternal and romantic love (*L'amore di Rocco* and *L'amore dei due fratelli*) and Simone's transgressions/madness (*La gelosia di Simone, Ritorno di Simone* and *Il delito di Simone*)[24]

➢ musical gestures and topics
1. sigh gesture[25] (*Paese mio*)
2. waltz topic (*Terra lontana, Valzer ai laghi* and *La loro storia*)

➢ musical localization of a geographical region
1. monodic recitation (*Maria Donata*)
2. instrumental tunes (*Paese mio, Milano e Nadia, Terra lontana, Valzer ai laghi* and *La loro storia*)

➢ "othering" femininity and female identities (*Milano e Nadia*, *Come tu vuoi* and *Addio di Nadia*)

➢ musical embodiment of radical Otherness
1. pre-existing songs (*Calypso in the Rain*)
2. original score (*La gelosia di Simone, Ritorno di Simone*, and *Il delito di Simone*)

In terms of national sentiment, as a metaphorical vehicle of the sublime, traces of patriotic and cultural ideologies link the music to collective and individual identities such as the Italian peasantry or any (nomadic) worker deprived of his homeland. This partly explains the diffuse nature of musical Otherness: its conceptual blends,[26] semiotic leaps, multidimensional opacity and ambiguity that perpetually intersects with the affective, sensory, and dramaturgical tools of film narrative. The multi-layered conceptual nature of the soundtrack is highly notable in the instrumental waltzes (*Terra lontana* and *La loro storia*) or the Neapolitan song (*Paese mio*). When the male characters are silent, the purely musical, non-diegetic apotheosis exposes troubling aspects of their dislocated alterity. The next section examines how music reinforces, mimics, or produces its own geographical, personal, and cultural Otherness.

Pluralistic patterns of musical meaning: The impossible geospatial embodiment of Lucania in the Neapolitan song *Paese mio*

The visual opening of the film is fulfilled by a dramatic instrumental entry, defined by Roberto Calabretto as a tragic theme (Calabretto 2014, 305). However, Mauro Giori considers it more of a dramatic theme and distinguishes it from the so-called "secondary theme" (it.

24. These musical themes and leitmotifs sensually and conceptually connect musical sounds to a particular character, collective, cinematic object, environment, mood or emotional affect. This is the result of a process of conventionalization that takes place at both the denotative and connotative levels of meaning (for more details on the connotative and denotative quality of leitmotifs, see Rodman 2006, 199). Some of the tunes resemble "leitmotivic themes" because of their potential to explicitly denote certain ideas and character traits.

25. Of course, the sigh gesture based on the intonation of a lament is also found in other musical themes. Nevertheless, its strong emotional, sensuous, interpellative, and conceptual quality manifests itself in the Neapolitan song as part of its essence and not as a figurative or arbitrary sonic remnant.

26. This is particularly noticeable in composite themes such as *Il delito di Simone*, which will be discussed later.

frase secondaria) (Giori 2021, 144-50) or Simone's theme, whose omnipresence significantly affects the autonomy of the other leitmotifs and the film score in general. Explained through the multidisciplinary discourse of psychology and musical semiotics, the opening theme serves as a tragic associative musical entity that provides a fatal annotation of suspense and agitation, with an ominous tone that recalls the anticlimactic projection of a still-hidden radical Otherness. Such discursive conceptualization finds its support in the connotative quality of the tune due to the collective musical association based on the culturally and semiotically conventionalized sensory signs. As a result, the tragic opening theme embodies a strong affective and interpellative pathos that anticipates (insofar as an instrumental piece can do so) the appearance of the transgressive characters and the tragic course of the event. Among recurring rhythmico-melodic patterns that operate through the sonic dissonance that evidently postpones the process of tonicalization, the predominant fateful leitmotif, consisting of the ascending and descending melodic shift of seconds, stands out. The recurring motif of the diatonic minor second, based in part on a motif from Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 4*, is sharpened by its incisive rhythmic quality and timbral depth, and serves as a structural fabric of many composite themes, embodying different kinds of identifications by connecting or separating the character traits of Rocco, Nadia, and Simone.[27] Nino Rota already pointed out the melodramatic quality of the opening musical reference, which seems to fulfil the same function in film as the overture in opera (Solanas Díaz 2017, 250). Since it is thematically and structurally linked to the song *Paese mio*, one could conclude that it represents the instrumental introduction to the song. However, the song itself provides other chains of meaning, some of which are taken from a different musical source.

The song *Paese mio* offers a form of both intertextual and inter-filmic knowledge of Barese's lullaby *Ninna Nana*.[28] Even more, both songs have similar content and structure despite their very different ideological paradigms (lullaby ≠ patriotic song).

Ninna Nanna		***Paese mio***	
Lyrics in Barese Dialect	Translation in English	Lyrics in Neapolitan Dialect[29]	Translation in English
Ninna-nanna, ninna-nanna vole, dirmisciamine tu, Sande Nicole. Oh, Oh...	Lullaby, lullaby glides, put them to sleep you, Saint Nicholas. Oh, Oh...	Vaj', vaje, quant' è grande o' munne, la strada è lunga assaje, nun piglio suonne. Uh, Uh...	Go, go, how wide the world is, the road is really long, and I can't fall asleep... Uh, Uh...

27. Since the characteristic musical and rhythmic features of the fateful leitmotif from the tragic opening theme are transferred to the six different musical themes, which in a certain way thematise the character traits of Rocco or/and Simone (*La gelosia di Simone, Addio di Nadia, Il delito di Simone, L'amore di Rocco, L'amore dei due fratelli* and *Ritorno di Simone*), Solanas Díaz preferred to call this musical reference "Rocco and Simone's passion theme" (sp. *tema de la pasión de Rocco y Simone*) (Solanas Díaz 2017, 244). Nevertheless, it is fair to say that the conceptual meaning of the tragic theme goes beyond prosaic passionate traits such as enthusiasm, desire, and excitement.

28. Nino Rota has already used the material of the song in Gentilomo's film *Immortal Melodies* (*Melodie immortali*, 1952). Unlike the song *Paese mio*, however, the diegetic vocal score functions as a collective religious signifier.

29. The lyrics of the song are written down based on the personal listening experience deprived of any visual confirmation. It does not represent a definitive textual inscription, especially considering the substantial normative uncertainties regarding dialectal writing.

Ninna Nanna		*Paese mio*	
Sande Nicole mi, ci va facenne, puerte le pecceninne addermiscenne! Oh, Oh… Sande Nicole mi, miragheluse, jabbre le porte a ci le tene achiuse! Oh, Oh…	My Saint Nicholas, what are you doing, bring the little ones to sleep! Oh, Oh… My Saint Nicholas, the miraculous, open the doors for those who keep them closed! Oh, Oh…	Bellu paise mije addù so' nate, 'u core mije cu te, l'aggie lassate. Uh, Uh…	My beautiful village where I was born, my heart I've left with you. Uh, Uh…

Table 1/ Lyrics and English translation of the songs *Ninna Nanna* and *Paese mio*.

Since the original sacred knowledge of the popular lullaby (in this film by Visconti) remains semantically elusive, the question arises as to why Rota chose this reference to express musically the power dynamics of migrant identities and their inner Otherness. The Lullaby contains neither specific knowledge of migrant bodies nor the visualized embodiment of a particular geographical feature, but instead provides the ideological address for the big "Other." Neither of the two Italian songs share a common dialectal feature. Nevertheless, Nino Rota has completely taken over the rhythmic, harmonic, thematic, and melodic basis of the song, inscribing in the musical field a new conceptual and empirical knowledge of the administrative region of Lucania, deprived of any marking of religious or feminine signifiers.

The sound of this sentimental patriotic song evokes the urban landscape of Milan, in particular the train station where the Parondi family's migratory life begins. Diegetic sounds of trains arriving and departing punctuate the song's musical flow, embodying wistful nostalgia. Although the sentiments of nostalgia and patriotic love are explicit in the lyrics, they are also conveyed through musical aspects such as tonality, thematic progression, pitch, interval organization, articulation, and prosodic aspects of vocal sound.

The accusation that diasporic communities were unable to adapt to the new environment became a common blanket statement. Yet, the affective sensuousness of *Paese mio* does not invalidate this cross-cultural stereotype, but rather confirms it by reflecting the Parondis' inability to conceal (even temporarily) their longing for the southern homeland. Since the textual and vocal components of the song remain trapped in the Lacanian Symbolic, the dominant order of language, this audio-visual gap automatically points to the impossible visual embodiment of Lucania, the lack of an original geospatial identification and its cultural specificities. Music itself cannot offer the possibility of overcoming the Otherness of Lucania, since it would presuppose the visual confirmation of its sameness.[30] However, the province is partially embodied in relatively well-preserved old photographs and paintings, even if their referential knowledge is considerably reduced.[31] The musical depiction of the rural province, on the other hand, is successfully recovered through the anachronic fusion of linguistic and

30. Yet, in the initial film scene, which was later cut from the final version of the film, there was the explicit visuospatial representation of Lucania. For more information about the erased prologue scene, see Pravadelli 2006, 237-39.

31. The photographs of Lucania are only shown briefly.

musical components, such as the evocative connotations of non-diegetic sound and the mixed spoken dialect of the Parondi family. This combination of various musical and linguistic (syntactic and morphological) features reassigns the Lucanians as a highly peculiar, non-privileged minority.

The realm of conceptual musical and linguistic knowledge of the song is continuously performed through the disembodied voice of Elio Mauro.[32] The rhetorics, declamation, expressiveness and sonority of the singer's piercing voice, representing the ideological voice of the marginalized "Other," clearly prevail over the homogeneous background sound of the guitar, mostly reduced to arpeggiated figurations. But does this necessarily mean that the musical meaning is predominantly derived from the textual component of the song? Even if it is the subject that always submits to language, as Lacan often argued, since the linguistic component usually conveys the most important forms of political, economic, geographical, national, and many other kinds of essential knowledge, music offers a more creative exploration of both perceptual-aesthetic experience and sensory enjoyment. It is fundamental to observe the dichotomy between the purely linguistic and the non-linguistic connotative aspects of the text[33] and how both aspects are connected to representative musical signals.

The Slovenian philosopher Mladen Dolar contends that the mere voice is "the animal part of man" that can only indicate pleasure and pain (Dolar 2006, 105). Speech, on the other hand, not only indicates but also expresses and manifests the "advantageous (useful) and the harmful," "the just and the unjust," "the good and the evil" in mankind (*ibid*.). Nevertheless, the voice itself can also express the ineffable through rhetorical and phonetic components when it takes on the meaning of language through the linguistic patterns of vocal activity. This is particularly evident in *Paese mio* through the specific musicalized interjection *Uh!* The lament, which consists of the (diffusely sung) vowel U, unites voice, music, and speech. Yet, it is the vocal component that serves to convey the music, not the music that conveys the meaning of the words, for the text (the interjection) primarily determines the gestural flow of the music that enters the process of musical denotation. When Deleuze asserts that music has a strong "deterritorializing force" and concludes that it is indeed the "deterritorialization of the voice" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 302), he is emphasizing the affective rather than the conceptual quality of musical sound. Nevertheless, the filmgoer can hear that *Paese mio* possesses, extracts, and transmits knowledge about something (the migratory journey and patriotic love for the homeland) and someone (migrant bodies).[34] How does this relate to the musical lament of the song? The lament possibly represents an exclamation of the "Other" through its timbral quality amplified by the sound of a woodwind instrument; the vocal-instrumental "othering" of unsurpassed loss. This vocalization of pain effectively conveys the film's message through the embodied character of musical meaning. The sound of this musical interjection can be a symbolic representation of something powerless or of

32. Mauro sang the version of the song used in the film.

33. Jacques Lacan, among many other thinkers, made a clear distinction between language and speech, pointing out that "to speak is first of all to speak to others" (Lacan 1993, 47; *cf*. Lacan 1988, 248-49).

34. Althusser noted, however, that authentic art cannot replace or convey knowledge in a strictly scientific sense, even though the knowledge of art can certainly be produced (Althusser 2001, 152-54). Considering that music is often classified as non-representative art from a structuralist or even post-structuralist perspective, it is quite possible that Althusser would disagree with the possibility that music produces a certain knowledge about something or someone. In the case of film music, however, things are different, because the music is ideologically, semiotically, and contextually connected to the visual and thematic content and is therefore used as a mediator of knowledge.

something unsurpassed and lost; something that, through its contextualization, represents the mourning for the distant but never forgotten hometown. Through the descending position of the melodic interval alone, this musical lament enters a certain tonal flow that becomes a sigh gesture through the process of musical denotation. The sigh gesture then operates as a conceptual musical signifier for rural Otherness and its inhabitants.

A slight dialectal blurring of the song, possibly due to the diction of the singer himself, may thus lead the audience to make their own associations between the music and Naples, even though the Neapolitan dialect obviously does not mediate the cultural heritage of Lucania and the local identity of the Parondis.[35] This calls into question the legitimacy of the Neapolitan song in the opening sequence, as Visconti and Rota emphasized the mixture of regional linguistic variations of southern Italian dialects rather than purely Lucanian or Neapolitan regional variants.[36] The choice of the "impure" dialect version of the song can be understood as a reinforcement of marginalized or excluded geographical alterity, as one of the inescapable instruments of identification, revival, and a strategic essentialization of their immediate differences. It should not be forgotten that the Neapolitan dialect is the representative example of Otherness: the distinctive and predominant "Other" of the Italian language, notwithstanding the fact that it has been declared the official language of Campania. It seems, however, that despite its linguistic foreignness, this musical reference is woven into the multidimensional core of the film. The sound of the Neapolitan song goes beyond its multimodal mimicry by musically connecting the actual themes of patriotism and migrant Otherness. But since the song is not part of the diegetic sound space, to whom (and through whom) does this ideological voice really speak?

One explanation is that the communication between the music and the audience takes place through the ideological operation that Louis Althusser defined as interpellation.[37] With reference to the connection between this song and the audience, interpellation here refers to the process of constituting the ideological film subject and its position during the acousmatic or visual listening experience. Although the call —*Hey, you there!*— was not issued by a repressive or ideological state apparatus, it exists in various forms in everyday life as a pervasive construct through which the subject, or in this case the listening film subject, operates within a particular ideology. By listening to the opening sound disrupting a public space in Milan, part of the film audience undergoes the process of total or partial interpellation, recognizing, identifying and internalizing the supposed Otherness as an essential sameness with itself. Even if the selected spectators are not aware of this ideological process of self-recognition, they indirectly respond to the patriotic, national, and cultural ideologies of the Italian diaspora,[38] transforming themselves from individuals into national and social subjects of the Italian state. This is achieved through the sensuousness of the musical content itself, which "forces" the listening subject to submit to the process of subjugation (since the subject cannot act outside the ideology, making the ideological process an inescapable instrument of

35. Although the song is slightly enriched with other local variants of the southern dialect (including Lucanian), the Neapolitan dialect remains the most recognizable.

36. Indeed, vernacular Otherness is not an uncommon part of the neorealist aesthetic, for years earlier Visconti had already made the film *The Earth Trembles* (*La terra trema*, 1948) in thick Sicilian dialect.

37. For a detailed discussion about the concept of interpellation, see Althusser (2014, 232-72).

38. That is why the song *Paese mio* can be understood as a point of identification; as a "hailing" sonic tool for strengthening the patriotic spirit of minority communities.

domination). Music, then, possesses not only knowledge and power over something, but over all of us, or more precisely, over those of us who closely resemble the "Others." The strategic musical governance between the film's opening credits and representative film images of a gloomy socio-realism demonstrates such identification.

Traces of musical Otherness are particularly salient in the instrumental version of the song [28:51-29:36], which, although reminiscent of other scenes (such as Nadia's acquaintance with the Parondi family in their home), primarily expresses diachronic Otherness and nostalgic regret for the lost past.[39] By relocating the music into a different audio-visual space, *Paese mio* represents, on a symbolic level, the restoration of something unattainable. For instance, the emotionally charged scene in which Rocco tells his youngest brother Luca how he hopes that one day he will at least be able to return to his village evokes strong feelings of deep attachment.

Figure 1 / The nostalgic recollection of the Parondis, emphasised by the song *Paese mio*
© Titanus-Les Films Marceau.

Rocco's patriotic affection and memories of home evoke associative recollection of Lucania above all, as he seems more sensitively connected to his roots compared to the other brothers.[40] Although Rocco's nostalgic voice was suppressed mostly in silence, it came out discreetly but clearly when he spontaneously performed the love song *Maria Donata* [33:22-33:47] barefoot

39. Diachronic Otherness here refers to the circular, non-linear or discontinuous infusion of various forms and shapes of alterity.

40. Rocco's patriotic affection might also confirm the following statement of Richard Dyer: "Rocco acts out of old, Southern, feudal values of familial loyalty [...]" (Dyer 2007, 254).

and in a low voice. Through the following thoughts of Rocco, the spoken language generates concrete, descriptive knowledge about Lucania:

> ROCCO: Remember, Luca, ours is the land of the olive tree, the moon sickness, and rainbows. Do you remember, Vincenzo? Before starting to build the house, the head mason throws a brick... at the shadow of the first person who happened by.
>
> LUCA: Why?
>
> ROCCO: As a token of sacrifice, to ensure that the house is strong and solid. (Visconti 2015 [1960], 2:44:42-2:45:27)

Nevertheless, this explicitly-spoken knowledge of Lucania is conveyed through the utopian and quasi-mythical evocation of the idealized rural space. This manifesto of self-sufficient rurality shifts from the abstract level to the more concrete level of musical understanding. It is therefore important to recognize that the musical component (especially the original non-diegetic score) constantly reminds the audience of the insurmountable marginal Otherness of the Parondis. Through the sound of the accordion, *Paese mio* exhibits a strong sense of identification with cultural origins and becomes a representative symbol of what has been lost. The indissoluble connection between the musical, linguistic, and visual patterns that together create an aural-visual embodiment of the hometown as an idealized space, make the unimaginable heterogeneous spaces of Otherness resonate. Therefore, despite its visuospatial and linguistic blurring, the integrated musico-textual or purely musical entity strategically provides knowledge about the migrations, patriotism, and cultural identity of the Parondis, as well as their indelible remembrance of Lucania. The numerous instances of the waltz, on the other hand, make it possible to decipher various manifestations of class and heterotopic Otherness that are worth closer consideration from a musicological perspective.

Waltz as a metaphorical representation of rurality: Sounds of a hidden audiotopia

Whether it is a ballroom dance, a folk dance, or a stylized instrumental composition, the waltz has recognizable rhythmic and metric patterns. Waltz's semiotic codes can be used systematically to locate the source of ideological and cultural power within the narrative audio-visual signifying system.

Rota's waltz in E minor entitled *Terra lontana*[41] again refers to the musically translated Otherness of migration and the family identity of the Parondis. Through the associative level of musical meaning, the waltz sounds do not hide their marginalized origin as a negative connotation of value but reveal their hidden socio-political dimension through the symbolic identification of the peasant working class. This is also transferred to the musical theme *La loro storia*, which has an identical compositional unity that makes it a sonic signifier of rurality and its Otherness. As Mauro Giori points out, the film's final waltz scene does not serve as a nostalgic reminder of Lucania's purity and goodness, but rather accompanies Ciro's recollection and anticipates the inevitable, if not radical, change of the Mezzogiorno (Giori 2021, 154).

41. Rota adapted this waltz, which is permeated with intertextual signifiers, for Coppola's film *The Godfather* (1972) (*cf*. Buljančević 2022b, 227-29).

The waltz *Terra lontana* is first heard as the mother and five brothers try to settle into a cold basement flat and revel in the image of snow [18:33-22:57].[42] Through its semantic content, this prolonged musical reference becomes a source of extra-musical knowledge, an internalized musical dramatization of the cultural conflict that sonically demarcates the visually excluded rural landscape. This is achieved through the Parondis' specific gestures, such as their uninhibited physical and affective expressiveness, which distinguishes them from Visconti's portrayal of the Italian urban population. Although purely musical Otherness primarily represents the Parondi family, it potentially denotes all "Other" individuals and collectives who do not fit culturally into mainstream society. In the case of the Lucanians in particular, the incidental waltz of the peasantry contextually transmits the logic of southern regional identity, which affirms rurality and rural dwellers within an urban geographic space. As a reminder of their identity as migrants, the waltz also subliminally evokes the cinematic memory of the Parondis' nostalgia for their predominantly rural homeland as a geographical, cultural, ideological, economic, and political contrast to the industrial metropolis of Milan.[43] Nostalgia is indeed an inevitable part of being a Parondi[44] when the music itself resonates sensory and affectively with the melancholy of the southern characters. Perhaps in this waltz, one must pay attention to the importance of the key itself and the tonal contrast between the first and second parts of the musical theme. The episodes in major and minor keys could be interpreted in a strictly conventional (though obsolete) sense, for the composer's intention is to provoke different sources of identification through the contrast between the musical forces of longing, melancholy, and optimistic remembrance of the distant homeland. This affective use of music ranges from a strategic reinforcement of nostalgia for a mythical proto-Italy that evokes an associative image of its inherent Otherness.

The sound of a waltz resounds like an echo of spatial and emotional Otherness, as a sensually representable and conceptual memory of the unattainable past. The encoding of musical Otherness takes place in the semantic core of the waltz itself, as it lies outside the diegetic narrative space. The sound of the accordion, typically used by Italian peasants, represents the sublime, almost stereotypical connection with the distant rural landscape that links a variety of instruments, their pitches, and the imaginary places they inhabit. It fluctuates as a musical reminder of the Parondis' migratory origin, as it shares cinematic space with their appearance, which is both joyous (like the reunion of the now extended Parondi family) and anticlimactically melancholic (the alienation and sense of environmental, cultural, and mental non-belonging to privileged urban society). The waltz theme of the Parondis is diametrically opposed to bourgeois and aristocratic waltzes, such as those by Johann Strauss, which were primarily, but not exclusively, intended for the ear of a noble listener or a member of a higher social class. Both types of waltzes, however, have one thing in common: their sound evokes

42. The coldness represents a radical change for southerners like the Parondis. Moreover, McElhaney points out that the change of clothing has great significance and even points to their (especially Simone's) individual personalities (McElhaney 2021, 40). It is also interesting to note Giori's observation that this is the only part of the film where Simone shows his willingness to work (Giori 2021, 147). This could explain why the waltz semantically represents the positive side of his character and does not explicitly express his egoism or moral depravity.

43. It is interesting to note Foot's remark that Milan is "so strange [...] that the migrants cannot even tell night from day" (Foot 1999, 214), probably alluding to the technology (e.g. the distribution of streetlights) of which the Lucanians were deprived in their village. The temporary perceptive inability to distinguish between day and night further reinforces the marginal Otherness and alienation effect of the Parondis.

44. Nevertheless, Geoffrey Nowell-Smith notes that Ciro does not have this kind of nostalgia, pointing out that by betraying his family, "he has broken the last remaining tie with the past" (Nowell-Smith 2003, 132).

memories of the past, of something unattainable that has been lost. Hence the need for at least a partial memory of the southern Italian landscape, which could be permanently preserved through the poetic, narrative, and evocative power of the instrumental sound.

Unlike the waltz *Terra lontana*, the musical theme *Valzer ai laghi/Valzer Bellagio* [1:00:14-1:03:13] represents the antagonism of class struggle and the appropriation of its alterity. As a musical concatenation of Nadia's and Simone's "othered" bodies, the waltz underscores their alienation in the form of class Otherness. As the inferior, economically -marginalized, and disempowered "Others," the lovers become undesirable to the elite guests in the garden of the Grand Hotel Bellagio.[45]

Figure 2 / Music as an aural reminder of class antagonism
© Titanus-Les Films Marceau

45. Nadia seems more willing to accept this alienation than Simone since she often faced rejections due to her gender and behavioral markers of Otherness.

What may seem ambiguous is that music carries within it the knowledge of legitimized domination over others,[46] but through the affectively pleasing sounds that appeal to a wide range of listeners, it perceptually mitigates the inevitable alienation effect. From a purely musical point of view, the waltz differs from the other two waltzes in its tonal center (C major), the factors of sonic (exhilarating, impulsive) characterization, the instrumentation (dialogue between piano and strings), and the slight changes in formal (rhythmic and metric) structure.[47] The music thus makes a clear distinction between two fictional narrative worlds in which the rich and the poor are isolated from each other. Therefore, despite its pleasant sounds, *Valzer al laghi* is in fact the signifier of the power of the nobility and the aristocrats, the same power exerted on the bodies of the subordinate subjects by acoustically masking the (visually apparent) cultural and class differences.

As the natural environment of Lucania is cut from the visual core of the film, the waltzing sounds evoke memories of the lost past through the concept of "othering." These off-screen sounds inhabit a cinematic space that is neither realistic nor entirely imaginary. By mirroring the spatial alterity that the unwanted bodies inhabit, the sonic space of waltz hypothetically reflects Otherness as a non-discursive site of heterotopic fields.[48] In these fields, sounds from different juxtaposed physical, cultural, social, and temporal spaces coexist simultaneously. Since film media function in heterotopic ways, redistributing pre-existing and new forms of audio-visual knowledge and power, what if the embodiment of a particular or alternative place is not a necessary condition for it to be considered a site of the outside, the undesirable side of utopia? By understanding waltzes as an instrumental mapping of Lucania, they are linked to the meta-conceptual materialization of the specific variant of sonic Otherness known as audiotopia. Josh Kun defines audiotopia as a "musical space of difference, where contradictions and conflicts do not cancel each other out but coexist and live through each other" (Kun 2005, 23). In Visconti's film, the sonic zone of audiotopia operates through the movement of displaced sound; as a conceptual musical transmission of geographical, cultural, and historical knowledge through musical diversity based on the juxtaposed sonorities of urban and rural areas.

Waltz sounds as spatio-temporal organs mediate between past and present, inside and outside, Lucania and Milan, geographical proximity and distance. These binaries are not abolished but coexist (as heterotopias) simultaneously with all their ascribed knowledge and musical images. Indeed, Italian rural heritage is partially saved from oblivion by the absorbing musical surface of the audiotopic overtone. The Milanese landscape,[49] then, is not presented merely as a disquieting space, certainly not in the sense in which Foucault defined heterotopias, calling them "disturbing" because of their surreptitious undermining

46. Since the "symbolic language of music is extremely ambiguous", as Max Dessoir stated from a hermeneutic perspective, the explicit words of the German philosopher just confirm the essential nature of music itself: its material elusiveness (Dessoir 1970, 298).

47. Though not indicated in the film, the second part of the score shares the same musical episode with the themes *Terra lontana* and *La loro storia*.

48. Foucault's concept of heterotopia, based on simultaneous, opposing narratives that acknowledge spatio-temporal plurality is also applicable to the "Other" sound. This paper, however, does not strictly follow Foucault's six principles of heterotopia (see Foucault 2008, 13-22), but rather extends the understanding of the term in the context of the composed score.

49. In the film *Rocco and His Brothers*, the urban landscape of Milan has its own representative jazzy tune that differs significantly from the rural themes in terms of style, instrumentation, character, and sensuality.

of language (Foucault 1989, xix). The role of constituting the waltz's sonic and geographical Otherness goes beyond the purely formal and emotional effects of the music,[50] and enters a conceptual level of representation. Moreover, as a sonic place of compensation, waltzes do not exemplify the rejected and unwanted sound that people, like heterotopias of deviance, involuntarily inhabit. Even the musical theme *Valzer ai laghi*, which is partly attributed to Simone's "othered" migrant body, conveys a certain cognitive dissonance that highlights his non-belonging to the urban elite class. The music of all three waltzes thus operates as a sonic vehicle that attenuates or strategically emphasizes the urban-rural dichotomy: an alternative musical memory that audiotopically interconnects the mountains (Lucania) and the plains (Lombardy) or the urban, suburban, and peasant inhabitants of Italy. This over-idealized memory, like the unattainable longing for the noble simplicity of an olive tree, belongs to the space of Otherness, which makes it suitable for cinematic closure. And yet, the musical image of the waltz inevitably denotes its undesirability aimed at a migrant "Other", or in other words, the undesirable qualities recognized by much of the Italian urban population who, unlike the Parondis, have not directly experienced the deterritorializing conflict. Thus, the cinematic sound-saturated utopia remains elusive.

Rethinking patriarchy: "Othering" femininity and feminine identity through the soundtrack

In his neorealist drama, Visconti solidified the patriarchal power mechanisms that portray female and male identities as inherently unequal. Not even the figure of the overprotective matriarch Rosaria challenges the prevailing patriarchal social order (McElhaney 2021, 45). With feelings of patriotism and nostalgia for the rural landscape primarily reserved for the Parondi brothers, Nino Rota sought other ways to musically embody the controversial female figure of Nadia. Accordingly, the musical representation of female subjects requires a gender issue analysis within the political and ideological systems of capitalism and patriarchy.

To begin the discussion of gender Otherness with the recognition of so-called feminine sounds, it is crucial to note that alongside the prevailing historical, social, and cultural aspects of music, sexual and gender politics are inscribed in the ontological plane of the film score. The spontaneous and jazzy musical theme of Nadia's *persona* [47:56-50:14] releases her repressed memories through processes of female heteronomy and oppression.[51] The integral musical fabric consists of specific melodic, rhythmic-metric and harmonic figurations—such as chromatically intensified sigh gesture, ascending leaps of a major and minor 6th, and playful syncopations—which not only function as a separate tonal unit but also form a generative dynamic of the contrapuntally and chromatically enriched theme *Milano e Nadia*.[52] Both structurally and conceptually, this composite theme combines two distinct sonic entities with an overlapping melodic gesture: one based on the soundscape of Milan and the other on the intimate recollection of the past. But apart from the playful jazzy features and the sudden melodic leaps that break the regular metrical accents, the themes

50. This statement indicates that the sound of waltzes *Terra lontana* and *La loro storia* recognize notions of rurality beyond the sonic expressions of emotion.

51. Nadia's theme emerges at the beginning of Chapter 2, entitled "Simone", when she tells Simone about her childhood memories. At this point in the narrative, they have already begun an affair.

52. The themes of Nadia and Milan are united into one in the LP.

share a common knowledge of the specific urban region and represent diversity of the film's overall musical content. Indeed, Rota's music tends to confirm the conservative approach to scoring masculine narratives,[53] especially when it comes to the sonic representation of male strength and the over-romanticized musical imprint of femininity. If we can agree with Amy Lawrence's assertion that sound in classical film is "associated with the feminine" (Lawrence 1991, 111), then one of the main reasons is that film music is often confined to the Romantic idiom because of its sensoneural exaltation. Indeed, Caryl Flinn has critically examined the prevailing tendencies in the Hollywood film industry to construct and romanticize femininity through the score in the late Romantic style (see Flinn 1992). Nevertheless, the musicalization of a toxic and gentle(r) masculinity in *Rocco and His Brothers* systematically outweighs the musical manifestation of stereotypical "hypersensitive femininity," for not only do the masculine themes occupy a larger part of the soundtrack, but the feminine sounds also display less stylistic and tonal variety. And it is precisely the hypersensitive femininity—conceptually and factually inscribed in Nadia's theme itself—that mirrors the effects of social conventionalization within the patriarchy.

As Simone de Beauvoir said, the female body is marked in masculinist discourses (Butler 1990, 17), which corresponds to the feminist response to the Freudian or Lacanian categorization of women as incomplete, castrated subjects. However, the explicit ideological vision of the devaluation of the female subject can be represented symbolically rather than literally through the sensual level of musical discourse. The character of Nadia would be an example of the inherently repressed personal and sexual "Other." More still, she is an "Other" not only for the first sex, but for all women who willingly submit to the conventions of patriarchy. Her role as a sex worker reinforces her stereotypical female body, which from a male perspective is often seen as exaggerated, hysterical[54] or even crazy. Following Irigaray's interpretation of Beauvoir's assertion, Judith Butler states that "woman became the [redesigned] masculine sex *encore*, parading in the mode of otherness" (Butler 1990, 17). This points to the phallocentric violation and coercion of female subjects and their autonomy. Although Nadia is only trying to survive in the consumer society, men reduce her provocative and transgressive sexual Otherness to fetishization. She is blamed for the overemphasis on lascivious conduct, or in other words, for her subversive feminine power, while the "first sex" is usually absolved from guilt.[55] This gendered injustice is explicitly demonstrated through the depiction of Simone's abnormality, whose promiscuity is clearly hinted at several times in the film, but not explicitly condemned, as in the case of Nadia. In this way, Visconti confirmed that Italian society of the late 1950s embraced Western patriarchal social norms that preferentially protected male interests. Furthermore, Nowell-Smith notes that unlike Simone, "she [Nadia] is completely emancipated from traditional conceptions of sexual morality" (Nowell-Smith 2003, 134), which automatically places her disenfranchised subject in the realm of the abject.[56]

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53. This musical "statement" by Nino Rota is neither literal nor direct, but subtle and symbolic, representative to the extent that instrumental sound is allowed to create extra-musical meanings.

54. Hysteria here refers to a medical diagnosis (i.e., a mental disorder) that used to be given lightly to women. But even though the medical diagnosis of hysteria was officially abolished by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980, conservative milieus still predominantly associate the hysterical trait with the female sex. After all, the figure of Nadia is constituted within such a phallocentric discourse that endorses the sexist traits of traditional femininity.

55. About women's subjection by men, see Pateman 1988.

56. Throughout patriarchal history, female subjects have often been portrayed as repulsive or inferior beings to be excluded from the (male-dominated) public sphere. Accordingly, the use of "abject" here derives in part from Julia Kristeva's concept of critical theory, which refers, among other things, to the discriminatory prevailing sociocultural

Another example of a stereotypical female sound would be the aurally seductive theme *Come tu vuoi* [1:55:15-1:59:37].[57] It musically represents the woman within the prototypical male environment, as it contemplates Nadia's cooperativeness and passivity or, in other words, her alienated, violated female subject subordinated to the phallocracy. The gendered, "feminine" traits of this tune are evident in the tonal polymorphism of the texture (which is also characterized by successive syncopations), the instrumentation, the visual composition, and ideological propaganda. Moreover, the ambivalent sonic narrative channels a more radical experience of female Otherness, albeit not through the strict description of excessive female sexuality, but rather through the emphasis on Nadia's (incomplete) object of unfulfilled desire.[58]

Figure 3 / Music as a conceptual tool of representing the female Otherness
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narratives and gender hierarchies toward marginalized people, including women (for the concept of abject, see Kristeva 1982 [1980]).

57. One of the gender stereotypes in music is the association of any sensual or overly romantic musical theme with femininity and female identities. For gender stereotypes in film music, see Laing 2007.

58. The object-cause of desire (or *objet petit a*) stands for something that has been lost in the Imaginary order, for something that cannot be regenerated in the Symbolic realm. It manifests the incompleteness of desire impossible to be removed or destroyed. However, the *objet petit a* is replaced by the compensatory objects that operate within the Symbolic.

The way she exercises her power seems utterly self-destructive, while the music makes this abnormal gap between the sensually seductive sound and the gloomy ambience of the club even more fascinating. That is how the musical knowledge operates as a source of gendered power that enables Nadia to embrace the image of her submissive alterity, even at the cost of violating her own selfhood. As she becomes increasingly aware of her supposed inferiority, Nadia succumbs drunk and disoriented to the advances of the morally corrupt Simone. However, not only is she not the master of her own desire, since desire from the Lacanian perspective is always the desire of the "Other" and a desire for recognition (see Lacan 1998, 38, 115, 158, 235-36, 251-52 and 275), but by allowing it to be directed by a pathological male subject, she denies her *persona* even the illusory possibility of achieving wholeness. And Nadia's wholeness seems even more unattainable because of her overemphasized and "monstrous" femininity, which is in fact the main cause of her abjection. Yet it is heteronormative patriarchy that has relegated her Otherness to the realm of the abject, while Nino Rota's appealing feminized theme, though consistent with normative versions of femininity, serves to reduce the circulation of male power. The ambivalence of the musical emotions in this case transcends the Chionian binary division into empathetic and anempathetic music,[59] as the pleasant "bohemian" sound appears empathetic to the environment in which the actors find themselves, but highly anempathetic to the internal projection of Nadia's overwhelming and disturbing emotions. Indeed, the music does not seem at all disquieting or dramatic and does not change with the developing conflict between Nadia and Simone, even when Visconti frames her face firmly in a close-up. In this case, the theme *Come tu vuoi*, in addition to its tonal representation of Milan's juxtaposed external and internal spaces, metaphorically embodies the ideological mimicry of patriarchal constructs that favors the delegitimized female subject.[60] Does this original score also reveal the emerging sense of femininity through the abjection of the highly stereotypical and culturally intolerable female "Other"?

Since the musical theme *Come tu vuoi* raises questions about gender dominance and male power by reflecting Nadia's transgressive desire, it can be explained in part by the following thought of Kaja Silverman: "[woman's] obedience to the male voice is what 'proves' its power" (Silverman 1988, 32). By classifying this score as feminine in terms of compositional dramaturgy and tonal sensitivity, pre-existing gender stereotypes and inequalities are confirmed at the ideological level of musical discourse. For how else could Nadia's *persona* be portrayed than by emphasizing her Otherness to such an extent that her musical representation requires a radical separation from the predominantly male sonic contours? The musical mapping of femininity, which remains reduced, fragmented, and quantitatively insufficient, even points to the fractal projection of female Otherness—a deconstructed chain of self-similar micro-alterities based solely on the clichéd hyper-feminine appearances. The music, then, does not attempt to conceal the discourse of male dominance, but rather supports the quintessence of an abnormal gender gap. This could explain why female identity does not contain more expressive and dominant musical content.

59. Although the French film theorist and composer clearly asserts that some music is neither empathetic nor anempathetic (Chion 1994, 8-9), the theme *Come tu vuoi* (in conjunction with dialogues and cinematic image) simultaneously depicts two opposing emotional resonances, demonstrating its affective ambiguity rather than affective sameness.

60. In fact, it is Simone who, according to Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, is trying "to possess her [Nadia] as of right in accordance with his primitive masculinist ideas" (Nowell-Smith 2003, 134).

In principle, the musicalization of the female "self" is conceptually subordinated to the masculine realm, even more so when Nadia, Simone, and Rocco share the theme of love. One may even consider Buhler's observation that "the love theme defines the heroine in terms of the relationship" (Buhler, Neumeyer, and Deemer 2010, 198; Buhler 2019, 205), possibly suggesting that "she is essentially identical to that relationship" (ibid.). The phenomenon of musical femininity can also be deciphered by incorporating recognizable female sonorities into the core of an exclusively male tune. The original theme *Addio di Nadia*, for instance, is formally and structurally based on Rocco's love, the contour of which seems to resemble a romantic lyrical phrasing.[61] The main difference lies in the instrumentation of the melodic line, for the figure of Nadia is primarily represented by string sounds rather than the combination of accordion and woodwinds that figuratively lends a masculine color to the filmic sound. Nevertheless, the sound fragment projects the ambivalence of Rocco's deep affection and his psychological disintegration and fails to adequately integrate feminine sentiments and the idea of femininity itself. In this composite score, femininity asserts itself in reticence and is swallowed up by the destructive aesthetics of male rejection and violence. Even Nadia's rape is anticipated by Simone's theme or "deteriorated love theme" (it. *tema d'amore deturpato-deteriorato*), as Giori calls it,[62] which consists of an abrupt and discontinuous phrasing that is typically masculine, albeit dynamically subdued. The sensuality of the feminine side of the tune was once again overwhelmed affectively and quantitatively by Simone's ominous musical print.[63]

The shocking scene of Nadia's rape, after which the fragment of the theme *L'amore di Rocco* reappears in slightly altered form, confirms the subordination of the female subject to ideology that tolerates toxic dominant male control. Even more startling is Rocco's acceptance of the objectification of physical and sexual violence towards women, who, despite his alleged naivety and righteousness, prefers his drunken, aggressive, and violent brother over the female victim he truly loves. As a narrative strategy, music acknowledges, remembers, and exposes gender violence, considering that violence is inscribed in the core of the film,[64] especially through the boxing careers of Simone and Rocco.[65] The music even conceptually condemns it by re-contextualizing the musical material originally associated with the leitmotif of romantic and fraternal love and later projecting it onto the film scene of traumatic emotional, sexual, and physical aggression.[66]

The intertextual and intermedial allusion to Bizet's *Carmen* is also obvious. Indeed, Nadia and Carmen share the hyper-feminized death reference and the inscription of double female Otherness,[67] apart from the ethnic Otherness reserved for the seductive gypsy. But these

61. Rota will adapt this theme for his ballet suite *La strada*, based on the soundtrack from the homonymous Fellini's film.

62. Giori found the given name in the composer's notebook (Giori 2021, 168).

63. The "ominousness" of Simone's being is primarily depicted through the affective potential of the film sound. The spectator listener will associate it with the figurations in the lower register.

64. Even though it may seem ambiguous, Gaia Servadio considers this Visconti's film as his "most human film" (Gaia Servadio 1981, 169).

65. According to Visconti, boxing figuratively represents the acts of violence to which Rocco's family is subjected (Cardullo 2011, 13). It is interesting to note, however, that the boxing scenes usually have no musical content, but are accompanied by relative silence, the human voice, noise or other types of ambient sounds (*ibid.*).

66. Mauro Giori also points out the various uses of this "love theme", noting the similarities and differences between brotherly love, the love between Nadia and Rocco, and the opaque love that Simone includes in these partnerships, represented by the hardened sound of the clarinet (Giori 2021, 160-63).

67. This refers primarily to the gender and class Otherness.

two tragic female figures also share a crucial pathological feature: the need to satisfy their own masochistic pleasure, or as the Polish American psychoanalyst Helene Deutsch noted as early as 1944: "Carmen's [which can also be attributed to Nadia's] archfeminine, tragically whipped-up masochism" (Deutsch 1944, 288). Even more tragically, the deaths of both Nadia and Carmen could have been prevented had they not chosen to step into the abyss instead of wisely avoiding it. Music, then, not only widens the gap between the female "self" and its Otherness, but also becomes a witness to a pathological and destructive desire.

After being raped, Nadia is completely lost in the dominant male environment, to such an extent that she decides not to even fight back. But instead of supporting her, the patriarchally interpellated subjects, first and foremost the matriarch Rosario, even accuse her of having triggered the radical Otherness of Simone's being: his anger, his jealousy, his untruthfulness and finally his killer instinct. It is precisely this cognitive-emotional dissonance that confirms Simone's transgressive behavioral models: his inescapable and dehumanizing potential musically amplified and prolonged by the inclusion of various juxtaposed sonorities in the integrative theme *Il delito di Simone*. This composite theme consists of the musical fragments of Nadia's *persona* [2:36:06-2:36:26], Rocco's love [2:36:27-2:36:51][68] and Simone's throbbing rage [2:36:51-2:37:36] and resembles a fatal semiotic triad that symbolically heralds the destruction of the female being. The score closes with a delayed cadenza, heightening the psychological tension of the killing scene through repetitive figurations and dynamic intensity. The most melodramatic, ambiguous, and almost biblical aspect of this scene is that Nadia, although she does not want to die, spreads her arms openly against a wooden post while Simone walks purposefully towards her. Moreover, Nadia's body language and sudden cries are extremely unconvincing, almost forcibly portraying her as more vulnerable, weaker, submissive, and irrational than she was. Given his stereotypical image of women,[69] Visconti's notion of the fragility of the female body was perhaps intended to confirm another gender role cliché rather than to emphasize the power of erotic intelligence.

For Audre Lorde, erotic power is the exact opposite of pornography or any kind of simplified, essentialized manifestation of femininity and female sexuality. According to Lorde, eroticism "as the nurturer or nursemaid of all our deepest knowledge" (Lorde 1994 [1978], 77) is a resource located on a deeply feminine and spiritual level (*ibid*., 75). Such a distinctively feminist approach to eroticism celebrates female power and vehemently resists the labelling of women as monstrous "Others." Therefore, the consideration of erotic power should be distinguished from the highly pragmatic erotic capital, which reduces female sexuality to trivial sex-appeal, commodity, and profit through the process of capitalization, thus coming closer to the post-patriarchal notion of femininity (*cf*. Buljančević 2021, 101-02).[70] Conversely, the characteristic

68. The leitmotivic theme of romantic and brotherly love that plays out in this scene characterizes Rocco's selfless nature, for it reflects the opposite of Nadia's (temporarily) emancipatory feminine theme or Simone's sinister musical print.

69. By responding to Cardullo's question "What's a woman's place, then?", Visconti stated the following:
[Women's place is] "in the home, with the men who marry them. They should be women: that's enough, if they do it well. Bed, kitchen, mothering: that's their place, just as all of us have our place, our duty, our job. A woman's job is to get man to eat the apple, to compromise him, if you will." (Cardullo 2011, 7)

70. Of course, passionate advocates of erotic capital, such as British sociologist Catherin Hakim, would disagree likely on this point. Hakim, who defined the term, accuses radical feminists and patriarchally interpellated subjects alike of criticising erotic capital, paradoxically claiming that to reject erotic capital is to reinforce the patriarchal order (see Hakim 2010, 511).

features of female eroticism in the musical representation of Nadia's subjectivity and selfhood underline her stereotypical female alterity and do not even redeem her erotic capital.[71] This suggests that the reason for Nadia's tragic end goes beyond her masochistic tendencies or the totalitarian exercise of repressive, pervasive phallocentrism. Should, then, the reasons for such injustice be sought outside the framework of patriarchy, as if the core of the problem lies in class differences and the very system that caused the alienation of her subject?

It should be remembered that Nadia is a poor sex worker, not an elite one, who has been deprived of the right to existential protection by the capitalist system. The coldness and even brutality of exploitative capitalist practices testify not only to the violence against the working class, but also to the violent representation of masculinity itself, which takes place at the ideological and political level of capitalist discourse. Simone and Rocco's boxing career is also a "metaphor for the alienation imposed by capitalism" (Sorlin 1996, 116), situated in a gender and class conflict and permeated by the various ideologies of division, inequality, and social power hierarchies in which immigrants, women not supported by capital and the poor classes are marked as ideologically invisible. These people and groups are automatically placed at the bottom of the consumer ladder, including Nadia and all members of the Parondi family. They are perceived as inherently different: as perpetually subordinate, marginalized "Others." The Otherness of sound thus reveals not only the sublime musicalization of an overwhelming desire, but also the kind of desire that, as a kind of Deleuze-Guattarian desiring-machine,[72] only fluctuates under the reign of capitalism. It is therefore important to highlight the interdependence between capitalism and patriarchy (cf. Eisenstein 1979, 41-56; Hartmann 1976, 137-69), especially regarding the gendered division of labor and the ability of music to reveal its inscribed knowledge within shifting power structures. A problematic question remains, however: Was the Italian metropolis corrupt or did it only bring to the surface more radical forms of Nadia's and Simone's constitutive Otherness?

Conclusion

A holistic or integrative listening of Visconti's *Rocco and His Brothers* uncovers sonic chains of Otherness that reflect the essence of the characters, the urban environment of Milan and the nostalgic memory of Lucania. The music also exposes political, socio-economic, and gender ideologies of division in post-war Italy. The purely musical division is based on the juxtaposition of rural and urban audio-visual spaces (e. g., the musical themes *Paese mio* and *Terra lontana ≠ Milano e Nadia and Come tu vuoi*). Nevertheless, the visuospatial foreignness of the rural space remains incomplete, despite the conceptual clarity of the semantic musical content that even affectively and sensually highlights the irreducible rustic strangeness. The waltz topic audiotopically situates the Parondis in a specific provincial background deprived of explicit visual confirmation. The incomplete manifestation of rural alterity, or, more precisely, the denied process of Lucania's visuospatial Otherness, is partially compensated for by its permanence in the Parondi family's collective memory. The musical component also opens possibilities for a comparative aural tracing of the shifting identities and Otherness of Rocco, Nadia, and Simone. Women, the working class, and immigrants are portrayed through

71. Nadia's inability to monetize erotic capital is reflected in the fact that she is constantly on the edge of existence and experiences "othering" on multiple levels.

72. For a detailed discussion about capitalist machines see Deleuze and Guattari (1983, 222-40).

the vision of alterity, which intensely reveals their alienated identities; they are alienated both in the classical Marxist sense and in a contemporary understanding of the term. In this way, the music takes all the engraved ideological, emotional, cultural, and socio-political aspirations of the Italian peasant family that continues its existence in the consumerist city of Milan and successfully transmits them. But "*[t]he Lucanians have been destroyed*," as Joseph Bennet asserts in the gloomy spirit of Italian neorealism (Bennett 1962, 288). The only shred of their original identity consists in their nostalgic recollection of Lucania. This ideal memory is inscribed in the structural and ideological level of the off-screen music. It is explicitly confirmed by the re-embodiment, or even a slightly modified repetition, of two predominant musical themes, *Paese mio* and *Terra lontana*. The character of Nadia, on the other hand, inevitably ends like many female characters in romantic operas: with a melodramatic, tragic death. Any music potentially attributed to her character falls silent at her passing. Nadia, however, will be remembered, if only as a feminine destructive gap that tore apart brotherly love. There is no place in this story for a woman as a whole or as an independent female subject. As the name of the final score—*La loro storia*—confirms, this is indeed their story: a "realistic tragedy" (Cardullo 2011, 15) about the Parondi brothers and their migratory journey.

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