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Cinematic Space in Rome's Disabitato: Between Metropolis and Terrain Vague in the Films of Fellini, Antonioni, and Pasolini

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Cinematic Space in Rome's Disabitato: Between Metropolis and Terrain Vague in the Films of Fellini, Antonioni, and Pasolini[1]

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"They were exhausting scenes . . . walking in the mud, in the slime, the quicksand," decried veteran comic actor Totò with only slight exaggeration while recalling "the most unbelievable places" he had to cross in the making of Pier Paolo Pasolini's film *Uccellacci e uccellini* (Hawks and Sparrows, 1965).[2] Shot mainly in Rome's extensive urban wastelands, known locally as the "disabitato," the film draws viewers into increasingly liminal states, physically as well as psychologically bewildering. From vacant lots and half-built overpasses, to shantytowns and collapsing farm houses, commonly recognizable monuments almost never enter the screen. Confirmation of location by reference to the city center is consistently and carefully denied.

Out of the maze of underbrush and ruins, however, emerges a document valuable not only for its portrait of an ephemeral Roman periphery (and the rough parallels that exist today), but also for how the disabitato both shaped and was shaped by Pasolini's cinematic artistry. Many postwar Italian films are likewise engaged with the overgrown edges of the city, where the landscape has gone to seed, has been bulldozed, is in the initial stages of being redeveloped, or is being furtively inhabited or otherwise used under the radar of local authorities. Such areas are commonly referred to as terrain vague, a term that has emerged from urban studies and gained currency in recent discussions in a variety of disciplines concerning space, place, and everyday life.[3]

In examining cinematic engagements—or, perhaps more accurately, interventions—with terrain vague, we are particularly

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interested in how films represent and misrepresent, reveal and conceal, exaggerate and minimize, and in short, selectively illuminate and seek to transform the urban interstice. Our dual exploration of the disabitato and film thus entails reading cinematic and geographic spaces informed by documentary research and fieldwork. We seek to verify—to locate, traverse, ponder—various "settings" of terrain vague in a number of films shot either partially or entirely within the disabitato, including Federico Fellini's *Le notti di Cabiria* (The Nights of Cabiria, 1957), Michelangelo Antonioni's *L'eclisse* (Eclipse, 1962), and Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Mamma Roma* (1962). Although there are many classic and recent films alike with rich footage of the disabitato to draw upon, from Vittorio De Sica's *Ladri di biciclette* (Bicycle Thieves, 1948) to Nanni Moretti's *Caro diario* (Dear Diary, 1993), given our limited space, we chose to focus on a selection of both well-known and relatively obscure work of these three major directors from the late 1950s to the early 1970s.[4]

This period in the history of Rome, marked by frenetic postwar expansion, is of particular interest to the study of the disabitato, which has spread and shape-shifted as the city has mushroomed. The early stages of this growth in the 1950s and 1960s was marked by a rapid expansion of residential development into the surrounding rural periphery, and by the 1970s, as John Agnew comments, "an integrated Roman metropolis had come into existence," extending well beyond the official metropolitan neighborhood boundaries.[5] Despite this intensive development, today 67%, or 86,000 hectares, of the total area of the Comune of Rome (128,500 hectares), consists of open areas, either with sparse or no presence of buildings.[6] This open space is made up of farm land, urban green space (including public parks and private estates), protected natural areas, and fluvial zones (such as the Tiber and Aniene rivers).

Many of these rough categories escape easy definition and can be referred to as terrain vague, what Ignasi de Solà-Morales defines as land in a "potentially exploitable state but already possessing some definition to which we are external," or "strange places" that "exist outside the city's effective circuits and productive structures."[7] Although Solà-Morales here focuses on still photography, moving pictures of terrain vague likewise "are territorial indications of strangeness itself, and the aesthetic and ethical problems that they pose embrace the problematics of contemporary social life."[8] In the case of Rome and postwar Italian cinema, one of the most pressing of such problems is, as Giorgio Bertellini and Saverio Giovacchini put it, the "ideological antagonism," stemming from the years of fascism, which pitted on one hand "a nostalgic attitude for a mythologized, distant past," typified in an idealized if outdated pastoralism, and on the other, "a longing for a brilliant future (modernization, an unknown interclass harmony and material well-being, or new cities and leisure activities) that appears on the horizon but is still largely unrealized."[9]

We have chosen in the ensuing discussion to focus on what we consider to be the films of Fellini, Antonioni, and Pasolini that most directly engage with the disabitato. In so doing, we hope to clarify distinguishing characteristics in each director's approach to terrain vague over time, as well as to offer closer readings of particularly representative films. These films all do their part, in one way or another, to explode

postwar ideological antagonism and related distortions in psycho-social geographic perception of the oft-scorned disabitato. In the forty to fifty years since these films were made, some areas of the terrain vague that they document have been left to their age-old, almost invisible ferment, others built over or made into official parks, and myriad new ones created. Fellini, Antonioni, and Pasolini, driven by divergent artistic visions and political and aesthetic convictions, were drawn to the disabitato for a wide range of reasons. And yet all were, in one way or another, held in thrall by its strange and compelling admixture of seeming stasis, sudden baffling growth, and sphinx-like resistance to definition. All three treated the urban landscape not merely as background but "as an additional character," which, as Wim Wenders contends, has "a history, a 'personality,' an identity that deserves to be taken seriously."[10] And yet the identity of the disabitato in Fellini's, Antonioni's, and Pasolini's work varies greatly. It is hard to imagine, for example, a greater contrast than between Fellini's appropriation of terrain vague as a carnival grounds to stage outrageous, frenetic fantasies, and Antonioni's ruthless, meticulous reassembling of microscopic details of suburban isolation to create disturbing psychological portraits of his main characters—to say nothing of Pasolini's brutally close-up depictions of the disabitato's poorest inhabitants in highly stylized portraits that draw as much from neorealism as surrealism.

In the spirit of what the architect and artist collective Stalker in their manifesto calls "actual territories," our research attempts to cross, and in doing so, temporarily inhabit and illuminate these "spaces of confrontation and contamination between the organic and the inorganic, between nature and artifice" that "constitute the built city's negative, the interstitial and the marginal, spaces abandoned or in the process of transformation."[11] We are interested, in other words, how film is inspired by and also depicts what Gil Doron terms "landscapes of transgression," derelict sites where "nature has started to reconstruct the built or (now) 'ruined' environment. . . . space[s] that opened in the dichotomy of what we perceive as city and nature."[12] A central concern is thus to study film both as a testament to a particular director's artistic vision of the disabitato, as well as a historical document containing evidence of transformation, of loss, of gain, in short, of "the process in which space comes into being."[13]

Our initial attempts to verify something of this process both within film and on the ground involved walking across areas of the disabitato, seeking to simultaneously better our understanding of terrain vague as concept and as physical site. Rephotographing frames captured from the films with an eye attuned to the interaction of people with their surroundings was a helpful starting point. Much came to light, such as how the staging of a scene betrays or pays homage to a site; how varying amounts of invention and "realism" can be injected by way of camera position and elaborate set design (or seeming lack thereof); and how the choice of locales and the sequencing of shots of travel through the city work to build a simulacrum of space. Some areas proved relatively easy to identify, such as the Don Bosco neighborhood bordering the Via Tuscolana and the nearby Parco degli Acquedotti, featured in the famous opening sequence of Fellini's 1960 *La dolce vita* in which a helicopter with Marcello Mastroianni on board carries a statue of Christ over the San Felice Aqueduct and then continues high above

the sprawling hinterlands of the city towards the Vatican (see figs. 1 and 4). Other areas proved more troublesome, such as the locations of Pasolini's *Uccellacci e uccellini* or his 1963 *La ricotta* (a parodic meta-film rich with scathing social criticism that documents a pseudo-film about the Passion of Christ) shot only a half hour away by foot but within relatively uncharted territory in the Valle Caffarella between the Via Appia Nuova and the Via Appia Antica.[14] These more complicated searches brought us to blurrier edges of the city where flocks of sheep, sunbathing teenagers, wrecked cars, and abandoned buildings predominate and give a sense of what Gianni Celati calls in *Verso la foce* (Journey to the Mouth of the Po) "a new variety of countryside where one breathes an air of urban solitude."[15]

▲

Fig. 1. A scene from *La dolce vita* of the helicopter flying across the Roman hinterlands.

Traversing from one location to the other, from (Fellini's) Via Tuscolana to (Pasolini's) Valle Caffarella, revealed much, from how the filmic landscape is packaged and edited into sometimes jarringly discrete, sometimes carefully connected scenes, to how the physical landscape has morphed over time into a related but distinct set of phenomena. And it is through travel that most people vaguely perceive terrain—vague within the confines of liminal areas of passage, what Marc Augé calls "non-places." These, he writes, are "formed in relation to certain ends (transport, transit, commerce, leisure)," and include airport lounges, motorways, and railways.[16] Henri Lefebvre would refer to these as examples of "dominated (and dominant) space, which is to say a space transformed—and mediated—by technology, by practice."[17] When traveling through such non-places, a simulated landscape emerges through signs; although the more intimate landscape "keeps its distance[,] . . . its natural or architectural details give rise to a text sometimes supplemented by a schematic plan."[18] Augé here refers to touristic sites, such as medieval villages or planned nature parks. It is rare, however, that a road sign, much less an explanatory brochure, indicates the tenuous existence of terrain vague. And even in the cases when signs hint at terrain vague —"no dumping," "unstable building," "no trespassing"—the reality on the ground often turns out to be

something quite different than expected. On the other hand, maps, assemblages of abstract locational signs, typically indicate terrain vague by way of inexplicit symbolic reference: a telltale blank zone.

▲

Fig. 2. A frame from Pasolini's *Mamma Roma* of the wastelands in front of the Don Bosco neighborhood and the Tuscolano II housing complex.

And what of film? Can film serve as form of map—however fragmentary and potentially misleading—to be read as an aid in the transgressive act of crossing from non-place into terrain vague? We think so, but with a note of caution. Maps of this sort are as helpful to find one's way as to lose it, and may have much or little to do with the everyday reality, currently or in times past, of a particular site. Either way, once on the ground, it often becomes apparent what of the landscape is given most emphasis in a film, as well as what is decidedly left out. At best, treating film as map entangles us in overlapping filmic and physical places where we may interrogate location through wandering, (temporarily) lost, across vacant lots with scenes in our heads. Operating in this way, we passed between cluster after towering cluster of postwar housing and across swaths of urban countryside, weaving our way from the EUR to the Via Appia Antica, or from there to the Via Tuscolana.[19] In these first attempts to use films as maps in order to locate terrain vague, we found ourselves practicing the opposite as well—that is, using terrain vague as a map in order to locate the films. In so doing, we often found ourselves trespassing beyond the limits of filmstrip, street, and field alike. In search of centripetal pathways, we often crossed, or when no other route was available, followed centrifugal arteries and small highways.[20] These containers of mass movement, examined from their edges, revealed myriad bleed-zones, pores of minor movement: human and animal tracks, dirt side roads, vacant lots with failing fences, and occasionally also the present-day remains of a filmic landscape.[21]

Fellini: The Disabitato as Stage

Some of the first filmic landscapes of the disabitato that we confronted—often the hardest to "authenticate"—were areas filmed or recreated by Fellini, the director perhaps most famously associated with Rome. It is where almost all of his films were shot, a city he fantasized about, meddled with, and ultimately recreated in bizarre assemblages of the highly personal and hyper-real. *Roma* (1972), his great homage to the city, begins with his first impressions and memories as a young man newly arrived from Rimini in the late 1940s after World War II. In short order the film suddenly switches to "modern" Rome with its tangled autostrade and chaotic traffic, in which Fellini and his crew find themselves trapped in the pouring rain engulfed by a cacophonous, unending crescendo of horns, shouts, and revving engines. This culminates in a giant traffic jam at night by a fake Coliseum alit with an eerie, red glow. Later in the film, even underground layers of the city are explored, where Fellini "documents" a visit through the Metro's tunnels under construction.

The architecture of the city is something of a co-protagonist, but an architecture that melds into a bewildering, synesthetic urban fabric: the buildings, the piazzas, the streets, the interiors become colors, smells, noises, voices. Fellini's sense of realism is an extravagant interpretation with a touch of magic. He says in an interview for TV called "Fellini, Roma and Cinecittà," that describing Rome from memory is already an alteration of reality and that this justifies his need to escape real space at times.[22] Every setting has to be revisited and reinvented in order to transfigure the reality and to joke around a little—or a lot. Many of his settings are entirely fabricated, from sections of the EUR in *Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio* (The Temptations of Doctor Antonio, 1962) and the Grande Raccordo Anulare (or GRA, the highway that encircles Rome) in *Roma*, to the Via Veneto in *La dolce vita*, but it is not always easy to tell the difference. As he says in the interview, "Rome is Cinecittà . . . and Cinecittà is Rome."[23]

It is common to hear both foreigners and Italians alike comment on how a random, usually somewhat bizarre experience in Rome seemed to be "right out of a Fellini film." What does this mean exactly? Was Fellini simply (or not so simply) adept at capturing a surreal overtone to everyday Roman existence through his inimitable blend of neorealisic documentation and, over time, increasingly absurd, dreamlike reinvention? Or is it that after viewing a film such as *Roma* or *Intervista* (Interview, 1987), under its influence, we are more susceptible to a certain wishful thinking, to embellishing and elevating a chance encounter from the simply strange to the truly carnivalesque? Perhaps the answer is due, in varying degrees, to some combination of the two. We often found ourselves pondering this conundrum in hindsight, such as after being chased by a prostitute who had burst out of the bushes along the Via Appia Antica crying "Vieni qui amore, vieni qui!"—to say nothing of visiting the Gran Carnevale Romano on the Via Tiburtina with its collection of hokey homemade floats, live mules, a brass band, and diminutive ringleader in tweed and a derby hat shouting into a bull horn. Moments such as these, beyond mere hyperbolic anecdote, seem plucked out of *Roma* or *I clowns* (The Clowns, 1970), and lend some weight to the idea that Fellini was indeed

able to simulate the city, including its physical form, through dissimulation—a sleight of hand by which he displays the everyday as extraordinary.

No doubt Fellini was aided in this regard by Rome's unpredictable mutability, its sprawling disorder, and its inevitable collapse. In another interview, with Costanzo Costantini, he states that "I'm not one of those aesthetes who claim there's no need to act against the decay of Rome, on the other hand, why not speed it up? And then, all the same, I look with affection upon this panorama of wreckage, of ruins and catastrophes. The torn-up roads, scaffolded monuments, archeological ruins and cosmopolitan crowds give it the air of a theater, a set, a half-dismantled stage, of a city in the process of being moved and rebuilt somewhere else. Rome is a mysterious planet."[24] Fellini's ability to exaggerate reality to its breaking point—to create an extreme caricature of Rome—in certain cases serves to make the ordinary more recognizable, to breathe life into what normally might seem deadening. In *Roma*, for example, his transformation of an autostrada into an impossibly hyperactive and chaotic zone of swarming, mechanized humans, complete with a horse-drawn wagon, transvestites and prostitutes camped out on the roadside, dead cattle, and a screaming busload of Napoli soccer fans, actually humanizes the supreme non-place of Rome, the GRA, by turning it into a landscape of transgression, a terrain vague. Rather than a place devoid of a recognizable, intimate sense of humanity, the roadway is bursting with it, inviting us to partake and trespass, to step over the bounds of acceptable spatial behavior. Rather than impersonally utilized, it is inescapably—albeit hellishly—inhabited.

But what of the GRA in "reality"? Can such bizarre and unrestrained behavior be encountered on the roadway today? The GRA is certainly chaotic, and at many times, especially after holidays, jammed with traffic, yet perhaps not particularly worse than many equivalent roads around other major urban cities in the world. However, when there is an evitable detour, especially along the western reaches of the highway where construction of its "final" segment has lagged for years, hints of Fellini's vision can be glimpsed, especially in the roadside shanties, dusty animal pens, ragtag flocks of sheep, and scores of prostitutes. Wide swathes of terrain vague flank much of the GRA along its circumference of the city, giving the roadway a sense of a transgressive landscape. To be sure, in order to reach the GRA from virtually any part of the city involves long, tortuous, and oftentimes painfully slow routes through terrain vague. In *Roma*, Fellini gathers various commonplace examples of life from both the city and the nearby periphery and concentrates them to the point of madness on the highway. Exit the GRA during rush hour on the Via della Pisana, for example, and drive inland towards the city center, passing by Il Corviale, a gigantic, kilometer-long housing project flanked on one side by the remains of a rough borgata and on the other by scruffy pastureland, and you may find yourself coming to the conclusion that Fellini's vision might not seem to be so far-fetched.

Fellini's urge to include everything is of course doomed to fragmentation and failure, but as Andrea Zanzotto puts it, a poet from the Veneto who collaborated with Fellini on a number of films, including *Casanova* (1976) and *E la nave va* (And the Ship Sails On, 1983), what else can we really do but hope, in the best of circumstances, to

"find a place for how much / scattered across the world remains / (head and tails, tails and head) / of sixthsense/thirdeye / adequately rendering it / trembling and wild in the weighing and evaluating—/ but as if it were too sweet and tender game—/ in the extreme of wideangling"?[25] Even if at the end of shooting *Roma* Fellini claimed that he "had the frustrating sensation that [he] hadn't even begun to scratch the surface," as art historian Hubert Damish observes, in this film "Fellini offered us a totally new point of view: the city seen from below, from underground."[26] Damish's comment is in reference to psychoanalysis, but could in certain respects be applied to architecture and geography, especially in regard to terrain vague, which when crossed with an "intensified perception," offers glimpses of an urban unconsciousness, repressed yet inexorable dreams, what Stalker terms "the unconscious becoming of urban systems."[27]

Fellini's interest in the disabitato as a staging ground for fantasy is evident in most of his films, including his first solo feature, *Lo Sceicco bianco* (The White Sheik, 1952), much of which was shot in the scraggly pine woods and on the half-wild, half-humanized littoral near at the edge of Ostia, a small and popular ragtag coastal town by the mouth of the Tiber. It is here that the fantasies are materialized of a honeymooning young wife (Brunella Bovo) infatuated with an absurd yet "dashing" hack actor (Alberto Sordi) of the fumetti (photographic comic books). However false and demeaning these dreams eventually turn out, they are allowed to run their course, carrying the action from the city center to the beach and then back again. Fellini shot portions of many of his films near Ostia, including *I vitelloni* (1953), *La strada* (The Road, 1954), *Otto e mezzo* (8 ½, 1963), and *Amarcord* (1973). It is also where, along a desolate stretch of road, Pasolini was brutally murdered in 1975.[28]

Le notti di Cabiria, the tale of a happy-go-lucky but hopelessly naïve prostitute (Giulietta Masina), also filmed in part near Ostia, is in many respects is Fellini's most sustained engagement with the disabitato as a site of transgressive inhabitation—in the form of postwar borgate. In this respect it is in ways similar to *La strada*, a film in which a simpleton waif (Masina again) plays the part of a clown for an itinerant muscleman (Anthony Quinn) who together travel from one drab, ramshackle outpost to another, both along the outskirts of Rome and well beyond the city limits. The emphasis in *La strada* is as much if not more on non-places (highways, curbs, gutters, side yards) as on terrain vague (often dirt lots used as impromptu carnival grounds). *Le notti di Cabiria*, on the other hand, is set almost entirely in Rome, and ranges from seemingly anonymous rural slums and the emerging Don Bosco neighborhood near Cinecittà, to the Baths of Caracalla and the Passeggiata Archeologica along the Via Appia Antica. As opposed to later, more experimental work in which entire neighborhoods were fabricated, most of *La notti di Cabiria* was shot on location.

In order to scout out many of these locations, and then later to help him with dialogue, Fellini enlisted the help of Pasolini after having read his poetry and *Ragazzi di vita*, a novel written in an improvised Roman dialect about the lives of the street children of the borgate. The encounter proved to be the beginning of a short-lived, rather ill-fated collaboration due in part to major differences in aesthetic and political outlook, as well as Fellini's uneasiness with Pasolini's open homosexuality. Nonetheless,

Fig. 3. A scene from *Le notti di Cabiria* shot in the future Piazza di San Giovanni Bosco. At left are the lineaments of what will become Steiner's apartment building in the later *La dolce vita*.

the two set out in the morning, as Pasolini describes it, "from Piazza del Popolo in his massive and cushy car, drunk and exacting (like him), and road by road we eventually reached the outskirts: was it the Flaminia? the Aurelia? the Cassia? . . . Dragging me through that countryside lost in the sweetness of a honeyed season, he recounted the plot of *Le notti di Cabiria*."[29] As Fellini describes it, "I wandered about with him through certain quarters immersed in a disquieting silence, certain infernal borgate with suggestive names, such as Cina medioevale (medieval China), Infernetto (Little Hell), Tiburtino III, Cessati Spiriti (Ceased Spirits)."[30]

Whether or not a setting was decided upon during the trip, and this seems rather unlikely, it remains clear that Pasolini's knowledge of local Roman dialects (which Fellini lacked), and his vision of the borgate as expressed in his poetry, essays, and fiction, as well as in person, had a profound effect on Fellini and the making of *Le notti di Cabiria*. As is evident in their brief descriptions of the trip, each held quite different views of the borgate. Pasolini felt a deep affinity for the working class and poor, and indeed sought them out, even living for periods of time in the borgate (albeit initially out of necessity).[31] Fellini, on the other hand, found the borgate fascinating, fertile ground for his cinematic fantasies, yet kept these areas at arm's length. For him they were material to be refashioned then cast aside for the next reverie. These differences are apparent of course in the filmic interpretations each created of the borgate, Fellini turning them into active subjects capable of the fantastical, albeit always under his strict, puppeteer-like control, and Pasolini referring to them more as quasi-sacred objects, sources of the raw, pure energies of the downtrodden proletariat, that he revered yet mined for evidence in support of his aesthetic and philosophic convictions.

In 1960, three years after the devastatingly sad yet still hopeful *Le notti di Cabiria*, which ends with Cabiria tearily dancing along with scooter-riding teenagers after having narrowly escaped being murdered by her turncoat, thieving fiancé, Fellini explores the hedonistic and morally vapid world of celebrities, artists, the rich, and reporters in a Rome well into its headlong race towards modernization in the caustic and experimental *La dolce vita*. Marked by depersonalized and chilly, newly built tenements scattered across dusty, weed-strewn fields, where Marcello, the main character and gossip column journalist lives with his depressed and suicidal wife, Rome's periphery in *La dolce vita* becomes a grim and foreboding, nearly ahistorical place, testimony to the results of heedless postwar expansion. As Carolyn Springer observes, the film exhibits a city marked by a "loss of continuity, both temporal and spatial, with the traditions and values associated with the past and the provinces."[32] Movement is often dependent on the car with its disorienting speed and power to isolate the main characters from their surroundings and other people.

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Fig. 4. At top is a scene from *La dolce vita* in which the shadow of the helicopter carrying Mastroianni and the Christ statue is projected on the side of a recently constructed building; below is the street in 2006 with the same building now surrounded by the developed quarter. The Church of San Giovanni Bosco is visible in the background.

This jarring split between history and the present, underlined throughout the film, is foreshadowed in the opening helicopter sequence, which carries us from the patchwork of the Don Bosco quarter under construction to a playing field studded with ancient Roman ruins, flies high above the sprawling suburbs, suddenly jumps to the Vatican, and then finally, rather than transporting us to the seemingly promised Piazza di San Pietro, instead lands us in a nightclub. The film jumps back and forth between the periphery and the old city center, but never coherently links them spatially for the viewer. Alessia Ricciardi contends that "The architectural settings of the film's scenes appear to alternate between two different styles: that of a benign, dream-like *ancienneté* associated with the pleasure principle and that of a grim, functionalist modernity associated with the reality principle."[33] And yet, it was in the outlying periphery that Fellini was most able to experiment, to tinker with reality, to more fully bring his fantasies to the screen, whether in the studios of Cinecittà or the nearby fields and surrounding borgate.

The Don Bosco quarter is less than half a mile to the north of (and in a certain sense includes) Cinecittà. At its center is the Piazza di San Giovanni Bosco, next to which the character Steiner in *La dolce vita* lives in a modern apartment building. Just after Marcello's discovery of Steiner's murder-suicide, Fellini tricks us into believing that the piazza is part of the EUR by superimposing footage of Marcello on the apartment's terrace over an image of Nervi's Palazzo dello Sport and the adjacent mushroom-shaped building (commonly referred to as "il fungo") in Piazza Pakistan located near the heart of the EUR (see fig. 5). And yet earlier in the film, Marcello walks from the apartment into the nearby church of San Giovanni Bosco, which while roughly resembling the fascist-era architecture of the EUR, is a give-away to the actual identity of the neighborhood.

▲

Fig. 5. Superimposed footage of Marcello on Steiner's terrace over an image of the EUR.

In addition to nearby ancient aqueducts, the church is one of the quarter's few noticeable monuments, and was what in fact first led us in our searches to the area. Sustained panning shots of the church and nearby tenements occur a number of times in Pasolini's *Mamma Roma*; also, in *Le notti di Cabiria*, during her ill-fated courtship with the disingenuous thief, Cabiria makes a brief appearance near the church in the middle of a dusty field with what was to become Steiner's building nearing completion in the background (see figs. 2 and 3). With printouts of frames from these scenes in hand, we spotted the church for the first time while walking near the catacombs of St. Callixtus on the Via Appia Antica, and then decided to cut over to find it. During our trek through the fields, we then stumbled upon the Valle Caffarella and soon realized that it was the setting of *La ricotta*. We thus in short order started to understand how overlapping areas of the disabitato could be packaged into diverse, and quite contrasting, cinematic realities—from a crucifixion paired with a feast in *La ricotta*, to a publicity photo shoot with a mule in *La dolce vita*—or how the disabitato could simply serve as the inspiration for its own complete refabrication.

A case in point, even when Fellini chose the not faraway EUR as the setting for his first color film, *Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio*—a bizarre face-off between inhibition and morality, sensuality and puritanism, fear and desire very little of the footage was actually shot on location. Fellini recreated a miniaturized version of the EUR in order to enlarge Anita Ekberg to enormous proportions so that she towers above the quarter, once magisterially bureaucratic, now sheepishly dwarfed. Ekberg, scantily dressed and advertising milk, appears on a billboard erected amidst riotous neighborhood celebration in a vacant lot directly across the street from the outraged moralist Doctor Antonio's apartment on Viale Asia. After the doctor fails to repress his obsessive desires, Ekberg magically steps out of the photograph at night, and then from the Palazzo della Civiltà e del Lavoro (commonly known as the colosseo quadrato, or square coliseum) chases him along the Viale della Civiltà e del Lavoro to the Palazzo dei Congressi. The city in this episode becomes a theater of the grotesque framed by an agonizing series of repeated geometric porticos and arches.

When asked why he chose the EUR for this film, Fellini wryly responded by saying that

> I love this place so much that in fact I live on Via Margutta, because as you know, things you like must live in your dreams, you must fantasize about them and desire them! The metaphysic atmosphere of the EUR reminds me of De Chirico's paintings. You have the impression of living inside one of these paintings, in a world ruled only by aesthetic connotations and you relate to objects and solitude in a different way. There is a sense of suspension as if you are floating above a flat horizon, a feeling of improbability and temporality, which is psychologically comforting for a fabricator of images like me.[34]

Fellini often commented on how much he admired Rome and its familiar comforts, almost as if the city were an extension of home, with its streets seeming corridors and its piazzas rooms. And yet his love of the air of a stage set, of the disorienting sensation that certain locations could be transformed into any place (as well as "anyplace"), consistently attracted him to the ill-defined edges of the city.

Antonioni: The Absent Presence of Terrain Vague

In contrast to Fellini's effusive reassembling of reality, in particular of using the disabitato as a staging grounds in order to reinvent, Antonioni's approach instead is a controlled engagement with carefully delimited spaces in order to document. Similar to Fellini, he plays with an architectural model, but a physical one at its actual scale with people moving through its buildings and streets. His interest in terrain vague revolves around ideas of liminality and vacancy, of the edges of consciousness, identity, and place. The sense of transgressive space, almost always conjoined to its converse, repressive space, is often conjured in his work by exploring the confines of a building or an intersection, rather than the expanses of a empty field.

A student of architecture in his youth, Antonioni masterfully uses the interiors of buildings and both urban and rural landscapes in his work, a practice evident at the very beginning of his career in *Gente del Po* (People of the Po Valley, 1943–'47), a short documentary film on his native cultural landscape. His framings of settings closely correspond to his characters' feelings and states of mind. Dialogue, often strained and faltering in his later films (at times even indicative of near aphasia), is secondary to the sequencing of images of the positions and movements of bodies and objects in space. "Landscape and the elements" in his films, according to Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "are powerful determinants of the action, but so are smaller spaces, the emptiness or constriction of a room, the closeness of a blank wall. The physical prevails over the social, and landscape cuts characters down to size."[35] Even more emphatically, Michael Schwarzer argues that architecture is so important for Antonioni that it becomes a character in and of itself, a "protagonist and antagonist, nucleus for the slow collapse of perception into a space between the actors' lives, a visual language with a power all its own."[36] The distinction between humans and their surroundings fades to the point that, as Ted Perry points out, "there is no 'background' in the usual sense; all is foreground because, like a Möbius strip, there is no clear demarcation where one stops and the other begins."[37]

Evident in many of Antonioni's films, such as *L'eclisse*, *La notte* (The Night, 1961), and *Il deserto rosso* (Red Desert, 1964), is what William Arrowsmith refers to as the director's "familiar polar geography—the comparison and contrast—of city center and countryside, as well as their interim world at the periphery . . . the neither-nor space where the city gives out, where the paving abruptly stops and the high-rise palazzi of the *quartieri nuovi* yield to shacks and open fields."[38] In *Il deserto rosso*, Antonioni's first color film, the focus on desolate landscapes, both urban and rural, is intensified. The action oscillates between a grey, seemingly abandoned Ravenna neighborhood, to nearby industrial wastelands dominated by factory noise, fire, and pollution. The unstable mental state of the main character, Giuliana (Monica Vitti), seems underpinned, if not exacerbated, by her precarious surroundings. In *La notte*, too, there is an attempt to parallel the decay of the city outskirts with the emotional or psychological states of characters. This is perhaps most evident in the slow, uncertain wandering of Lidia (Jeanne Moreau) from the hospital in Milan's city center to the industrialized periphery and the tree where she and Giovanni (Marcello Mastrioanni) formerly met

during a time when the area was still relatively rural and served by a small tramline. An abandoned farmhouse, its overgrown courtyard, the untended tree, and the weed-covered tram tracks are the most evident signs of the former landscape—now a terrain vague temporarily overlooked at the margins of new, large-scale development.

The ominous beginning of *L'avventura* (The Adventure, 1960), shot in a similarly doomed landscape, this time a liminal area of Rome within view of Saint Peter's Basilica, portends a story beset with loss and the threat of becoming lost. The character Anna (Lea Massari), soon to disappear on the island of Lisca Bianca, is shown passing from a walled garden with her father to a dirt road in view of new buildings under construction. He explains that their family house is to fall prey to the advance of the nearby housing developments and then, distraught, bemoans the distance he feels growing between him and Anna. The scene is carefully framed so that the housing projects appear between Anna and her father, and that the basilica rises to his side. The new construction seems to indicate cultural instability caused by the onslaught of modern consumerism, whereas the basilica, as Schwartzer comments, may indeed serve "as a counterpoint to the present chaos in both architecture and society."[39] However, the glimpse of the Vatican may also indicate the implacability and inescapability of concentrated power, here symbolized in the modern world's most archetypal example of monumental Christian architecture.

This passing reference to the Vatican calls to mind its more forceful yet similarly brief appearance in *La dolce vita*, as well as the distant and much less distinct glimpse of the Chiesa dei Santi Paolo e Pietro and the colosseo quadrato in *Uccellacci e uccellini* (see fig. 9). All three of these scenes of monumental buildings are framed by shots of the periphery, yet with significantly differing results. Fellini seems to want to mock, or at least underline, the faltering hold of the Vatican on a fast degenerating Italian society. Pasolini, on the other hand, makes his shot of the EUR the only reference in *Uccellacci e uccellini*, however indistinct and fleeting, to a recognizable "official" quarter of Rome. This is perhaps in part to downplay the relevance of the built city to his main characters, as well as to add a surreal twist to the viewer's already distorted sense of disorientation in the film, which is set almost entirely in either the borgate or in the countryside to the north of Rome near Viterbo. And in *L'avventura*, all architectural images, whether of condemned rural structures, rising modern housing complexes, or the implacable Vatican, are soon, oddly enough, dominated by a small fisherman's shack in which the mildly distressed characters take refuge during their futile search for Anna amidst the island's bewildering rocky landscape. In all cases, however, these various forms of terrain vague seem to indicate snarls of desire, loss, and change, as well as to act as elusive anchors to the movements of the main characters who wish to escape from their sterile everyday routines, but tend to only ensconce themselves deeper. Terrain vague in each case prophesies instability, yet also renders a certain transgressive, transformative action possible—however misdirected and eventually destructive that action may prove to be.

In *L'eclisse*, Antonioni's minute examination of a pocket of suburban space in the EUR—and a far cry from Fellini's playful, absurdist fantasy in *Le tentazioni*—terrain

vague and transgression are generally felt, rather than seen. In this story of stale and sterile love and the isolation of modern life, Antonioni painstakingly examines a lesser known pocket of the new "borghesia romana" not far from the Palazzo dello Sport and the artificial lake, between a still peripheral Via dell'Umanesimo and Via della Tecnica in the EUR's southwest corner. *L'eclisse* certainly offers a more coldly realistic observation of the EUR than *Le tentazioni*, but one that is similarly almost entirely divorced from the historic center. The one notable exception is the stock exchange scene in Piazza di Pietra where, amidst the chaotic scenes of yelling and wrangling brokers, the ill-fated end to the relationship between Piero (Alain Delon) and Vittoria (Monica Vitti) is foretold in a shot of the couple separated by an ancient Roman stone column. The isolating column, in turn, also acts as a reference to the dominating and bleak landscape of the modernist neoclassical EUR.

Even in the film's final scene, which reveals the result of inaction rather than action—the apparently independently taken yet shared decision of the two tentative lovers not to meet at the corner of an unfinished building—there is an attempt to connect the human psyche and the stark landscape of the EUR. Terrain vague, on the other hand, is only glimpsed in patches along the outskirts—between buildings and at the ends of half-built avenues—but is never given the space of the full screen. Indeed, terrain vague in the film, while always nearby, is most notable for its absence. Even when Vittoria and Piero sit in a grassy vacant lot, their view (and ours) is dominated by the towering fungo building—what a number of critics have read as an allusion to nuclear war (see fig. 6). Emphasis instead is placed on containment and immobility, on the desolateness of the neighborhood, what Schwarzer refers to as "a cemetery for the living."[40] It is pictured, as Lefebvre describes a plan by Le Corbusier, as the result of a catastrophic urbanism which prevents us "from thinking about the city as a place where different groups can meet, where they may be in conflict but also form alliances, and where they participate in a collective *oeuvre*."[41] Lacking a nearby center of diverse human activity and interaction, as well as access to (which includes an accepting knowledge of) untamed open space, the characters have little choice but to wander within the confines of their predetermined and alienating quarter.

Even today the EUR in places gives the impression of an unfinished neighborhood, especially on the weekend when government workers have evacuated the numerous ministries located there. Vittoria's apartment on 307 Viale dell'Umanesimo, however, is now surrounded by an upscale neighborhood notable for its appearance in *L'ultimo bacio* (The Last Kiss, 2001), in which a group of sociable young friends regularly meet to frolic in the fountain in front of the Palazzo dello Sport. The impression in this more recent film, as well as on the ground, is of an area well past the point where vacant lots dominate, even if at times an air of abandonment can be felt. There is a sense that the developers' original goal has been largely realized of creating a "noble neighborhood," slated for this and other nearby postwar suburbs, such as Casal Palocco a few miles down the Via Cristoforo Colombo, visited in the early 1990s by a characteristically quirky and suspicious Nanni Moretti in *Caro diaro*.

Fig. 6. Vittoria walking near the "fungo" building and a torn-up vacant lot in *L'eclisse*.

With these many changes to the EUR, forecast to a degree by Antonioni, the question arises of whether a film that plays with the isolation of the developing modern city and its inhabitants alike, such as *L'eclisse* does, be possible today in the EUR? Has the EUR district developed past the framework imposed by *L'eclisse*? Our impression is that, despite the development and infilling of vacant lots, including the growth of a few bustling commercial streets, there remains an underlying sense of emptiness in the EUR that parallels the isolation depicted in the film. Antonioni's focus is so tight that most of the film's locations in the EUR are within a radius of five minutes by foot from Vittoria's apartment. He so carefully selected buildings and prospects of the cityscape, that we are never given an organic vision of the EUR. If there were the beginnings in the early 1960s of the vibrant shopping area on viale Europa, for example, we wouldn't be able to tell from what Antonioni shows us in *L'eclisse*. That said, finding rough parallels to locations in *L'eclisse* isn't particularly difficult—though of course creating a contemporary homage (or god forbid a remake) of the film, is another matter altogether. Oddly enough, a part of the neighborhood that until recently would have still qualified as terrain vague is literally across the street from the couple's ill-fated construction site meeting spot at the intersection of Viale della Tecnica and Viale del Ciclismo—a scruffy park and the abandoned velodromo at its center (built for the 1960 Olympics, closed in 1968, then demolished in 2008 to make way new swimming pool and fitness center). This area for years fell into disuse and decay from the time of the film, in which its pristine yet empty presence is underlined by a large sprinkler and a stack of building materials.

Then again, perhaps the relative lack of rural wasteland matters only so much to Antonioni's vision of terrain vague. As opposed to Fellini's expansive, wide-angled recreation of the EUR in *Le tentazione* and Pasolini's minimized, telephoto glance of it from distant fields in *Uccellacci e uccellini*, Antonioni's analysis of the area is

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Fig. 7. Scene from *L'eclisse* showing the half-built building where the two lovers fail to meet at the end of the film, along with a portion of the eerily quiet surrounding neighborhood. The "fungo" building is visible in the background.

decidedly microscopic and enclosed. The only moment that Vittoria and Piero find themselves, seemingly by accident, outside of the built world is when they sit on the strip of unkempt land near the "fungo" building. There is no sense that this provides a source of escape, or that the vast expanses of open (yet unseen) land nearby are a source of comfort. On the contrary, the characters are limited by the confines of tightly delimited urban spaces. Seemingly inhibited by both mental and architectural or urbanistic constraints, Vittoria and Piero appear to exhibit the malaise that results when transgressive space is off limits, when there is no recourse to "empty spaces" or "voids," which, as Careri writes, are a "fundamental part of the urban system, spaces that inhabit the city in a nomadic way, moving on every time the powers that be try to impose a new order."[42] Certainly Vittoria's and Piero's non-appearance at the end of the film at the intersection where they had previously promised to meet seems to confirm their tendency for an isolation reflective of their immediate surroundings. This said, it may be true that the two are simply unsuited for long-lasting attraction to take hold. Piero is thoroughly engrossed in the competitive capitalistic world of finance, while Vittoria seems to yearn for less materialistic goals—but a finer-grained understanding of their inner personalities is hard to determine, given the characters' difficulty in expressing themselves when together.

Nonetheless, Antonioni's decision to document the abandoned meeting place from which the couple has vanished, instead of portraying the two going their separate ways, reinforces the overwhelming presence of the meticulously sterile suburb as a force which seems to make puppets of the two. At this point the camera ruthlessly interrogates the streetscape and closes in on seemingly insignificant details of the area's everyday existence, such as water leaking out of a barrel, swarming ants, and stiff-lipped passersby. The movie turns into a mini-documentary: all that which at the beginning seemed

background now becomes the main subject. Many of the elements, now familiar from earlier scenes—the intersection with its crosswalk, the building under construction, the failing streetlight, the mechanical sprinkler, the pile of construction materials, bus wheels, residents of the EUR walking along the wide streets—are brought to the fore and take on a disturbing significance, that of a widespread, failed urbanism, which indeed "eclipses" the abandoned story of abandoned love. And despite the fact that this final sequence can also be interpreted as a non-judgmental, vaguely appreciative, perhaps even Zen-like aestheticization of this splintered intersection of the EUR, as Antonioni himself says, "All the objects that I show have significance. There are seven minutes in which only the objects remain of the adventure: the town, material life, has devoured the living beings."[43]

Pasolini: Transgressive, Dangerous Space

A more explicit devouring of living beings by their peripheral Roman surroundings—in this case the working class, or unemployed and often homeless, rather than the upper-middle class—is at the heart of much of Pasolini's literary and cinematic production, especially films such as *Accattone* (Beggar, his first full-length feature from 1961), *Mamma Roma* (1962), *La ricotta*, and *Uccellacci e uccellini*. In these films, set progressively further out from the city center, from the Testaccio in *Accattone* (the first planned working class neighborhood in Rome from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries), to the Tuscolano II housing complex in *Mamma Roma* (not far from the Piazza di San Giovanni Bosco and Cinecittà in the Cecafumo sub-quarter), to the Valle Caffarella in *La ricotta*, to the farthest reaches of the disabitato along half-built autostrade and beyond in *Uccellacci e uccellini*. These early films expose and interrogate what John David Rhodes terms "the story of the periphery's rapid and reckless growth, legible in countless anonymous apartment buildings and housing projects . . . the story of Rome's redefinition in the postwar period."[44]

Accattone, the tale of a spirited yet impoverished pimp seemingly predestined for an early end, indeed provides a graphic illustration of the urban underbelly of this postwar redefinition. With few exceptions, such as the Ponte di Sant'Angelo's brief appearance at its beginning, the film focuses almost entirely on squalid slums whose hovels appear cobbled together from scraps by their destitute yet resilient inhabitants, who like Accattone, must call upon an indomitable, common human spirit in order to survive. In pointing the lens on Rome's downtrodden, at times tragic, yet also vigorous and vital borgate, Pasolini radically reshaped their depiction in cinema, as Bertellini and Giovacchini argue, representing them "not merely as . . . site[s] of oppression to be transformed and eliminated, but as the context where new, oppositional values were forged."[45] This catalytic energy stems from what Pasolini envisions, according to Maristella Casciato, as "a certain sacred quality" contained within "the decadence of these places, their degradation of environmental, social, and human values."[46] The power then, of Pasolini's cinema, is that it, as Adelio Ferrero writes, "makes sacred once again a world that from extreme marginality is already sliding into the past and into myth."[47]

Mamma Roma, a title that certainly suggests mythology, is the story of a prostitute (Anna Magnani) who decides to "retire" in order to open a vegetable stand and bring her illegitimate son Ettore (Ettore Garofolo) from the country (the village of Guidonia, located between the neighborhood of Rebibbia and outlying Tivoli) into the city to live with her. After a brief stint in Mamma Roma's flat in a squalid Liberty-styled tenement near Campo Verano, the two eventually settle in the newer, yet ultimately just as stigmatizing and oppressive, Tuscolano II housing complex near the present-day Parco degli Acquedotti. Initially, Mamma Roma is convinced that the move will be a step-up in the world. Here they are soon discovered, however, by Mamma Roma's ex-pimp, who in threatening to reveal her besotted past, forces her back into the profession in order to pay for his silence. As this drama plays itself out, Ettore starts to make friends, spending most of his time in the nearby open fields peppered with fragments of Roman ruins and aqueducts, as well as rows of wretched shanties. Pasolini frequently contrasts the dense (and in his mind failed) housing development with this nearby terrain vague, contextualizing the overall setting with a number of sustained panoramic shots (see fig. 2). Despite all the good intentions of his mother, Ettore is soon drawn into petty crime, and like the much less innocent Accattone, meets a similarly tragic fate—in a prison-bed scene that eerily reconstructs Mantegna's *Cristo Morto* (Dead Christ).

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Fig. 8. At bottom is a scene from *Mamma Roma* showing Mamma Roma's former pimp crossing Via Lemonia in the Don Bosco Quarter; at top is a photograph of the same street in 2006, now thoroughly developed.

A reversal of the loud and dominant mother figure played by Anna Magnani in *Mamma Roma*, is the deaf and mute one played by Silvana Mangano in the short film *La terra vista dalla luna* (The Earth Seen from the Moon, 1966), the story of a father and son (Totò and Ninetto Davoli) in an absurd and desperate search for a wife/mother replacement. Shot in color, it is set in a clustered, squalid borgata and includes a short scene of publicly aired desperation atop the coliseum (a plea for money in order to buy a house)—a seeming reference to Alberto Sordi's similar, if less tragic, plea for money in order to go to America in *Un Americano a Roma* (An American in Rome, 1954). *La terra vista dalla luna* ends where it begins, back in the borgata in the characters' old shack with the line dividing life and death rendered uncertain through the absurdist yet disturbing twist: Mangano returns from the tomb, zombie-like, frightening Totò and Davoli and raising the question whether the sub-proletariat are in fact forms of the walking dead.

Not quite dead, but certainly not quite human, Totò and Davoli also appear *Che cosa sono le nuvole* (What are the Clouds, 1967), an absurdist spoof loosely based on *Othello* in which their puppet-like characters finally find peace while gazing at the clouds after having been cast upon a heap of garbage in a landfill—once again at the margin of the city in what seems a thinly veiled reference to the borgate. The actors' best known work with Pasolini, however, is in the earlier *Uccellacci e uccellini*, a comic and at times surreal, fable-like journey on side roads and through fields of a buffoonish father and his cheerful yet empty-headed son accompanied by a philosophical, talking raven. It continues Pasolini's break from neorealism not long before amplified in *La ricotta* and creates a strange yet familiar universe dominated by metaphors. The raven is depicted as an idealistic and moralizing intellectual trying to rationalize the ambiguity and confusion of life (in part Pasolini parodying himself—as he does in *La ricotta* with Orson Wells playing the part of the director). Evident in the film, too, is a critical grappling with the doctrines of Christianity and Marxism. Partway through, father and son suddenly are transformed into Franciscan monks with the task of learning to speak to birds and then illuminating them—first raptors, then songbirds—to the teachings of Christ. Pasolini even inserts a section of striking documentary footage of Palmiro Togliatti's funeral in 1964, attended by an estimated million people.

In more than any of his other films, Pasolini's focus here turns entirely on the marginal city, which rather than functioning as an empty landscape, rather becomes an at times grating, at times soothing, countermelody for the characters who wander, seemingly without end, across vast stretches of terrain vague, from fields along the Ciampino Airport, to the neighborhood of Torre Angela on the east side of Rome not far from the GRA, a shantytown near Ostia, and the hills surrounding the beautiful Romanesque complex of the church of San Pietro in Tuscania near Viterbo.

Scattered throughout the journey are myriad dwellings of the poor, including various examples of casali Romani.[48] The built space here is spontaneous architecture, vernacular structures with little obvious historical connotation. Most, built by workers from scrap materials, rise in what Pasolini called "boundless places where you think / the city ends, but instead / begins again, inimical, / a thousand times over, with bridges

/ and mazes, excavations and scaffolds / behind giant waves of tenements / that cover entire horizons."[49] Pasolini "viscerally loved the periphery," as Piero Spila notes, because of its precariousness, of its being "on the point of disappearing, of being swallowed by the new, advancing city."[50] This uncertain existence seemed to him to be somehow outside of history, or as he often put it, "ahistorical," and thus all the more malleable and open to interpretation.

Pasolini's cinematic shaping of the disabitato (and his subjects in general) relies in large part on his peculiar skill at what we might call painterly filmmaking, a practice explicit in *Mamma Roma* and *La ricotta*, and also present in *Uccellacci e uccellini* with its richly visual and suggestive metaphysical landscapes. As Ferrero puts it, one of his essential motives in these films is to create in "cinema a mannerist re-composition of realty."[51] Pasolini's framing of shots in *Uccellacci e uccellini* almost always includes elements of the scattered city, from lone houses and medieval towers, to cheap apartment buildings and worn-out roads—underlining, as many renaissance paintings do, the connections between landscape, its inhabitants, and their spiritual and moral beliefs (or lack thereof). Most shooting is at the level of the human eye. Pasolini's strength in filmmaking comes not so much from technical virtuosity or elaborated movements of the camera, but instead from masterful, pictorial framing of characters combined with their environments. In ways evocative of Piero della Francesca's famous painting of the Duca di Montefeltro in front of his territories, Pasolini films Totò and Davoli next to ramshackle shantytowns and half-built highways—except of course the latter, rather than owners, are the dispossessed.

Relationships of ownership in Pasolini's work are indeed often unclear. Such scenes raise many questions, as troubling today as they were in the 1960s. To whom does the disabitato belong to? Who has the right to use and/or develop the disabitato? Is social and environmental injustice to be endlessly repeated, or are there other solutions? At one point during the film, at a fringe of Rome where the city nearly disappears in its process of grafting onto the countryside, father and son wander along a half-built overpass, an infrastructure that underscores the uncertainty of the sub-proletariat. Here and elsewhere in the film, the recognizable city remains far in the distance, well beyond the edge of the screen. Only once towards the end of the journey, as noted before, does Pasolini frame a small EUR district, catching the bare outlines of the Palazzo della Civiltà e del Lavoro and the Chiesa dei Santi Paolo e Pietro (see fig. 9). Throughout the movie the absence of the familiar city makes one think about it more. "Where is the rest of Rome?" viewers are likely to ask themselves. Vast stretches of nowhere land are all that Pasolini offers. And yet by doing exactly this, Pasolini is able to intensify our perception and render ourselves able to listen as "a necessary condition in order that the territories [areas of the disabitato] unveil themselves to those who desire crossing them."[52]

Pasolini's work, like that of Antonioni and Fellini, certainly reminds us of the importance of "the small, the empty, the open" spaces in a city that, as Wenders states, "allow us to recharge, that protect us against the assault of the big."[53] And yet, as important as the disabitato was to all three, each according to his own particular artistic vision

Fig. 9. An outtake from *Uccellacci e uccellini* of Totò, Davoli, and the raven strolling through a field with the EUR in the background.

produced startlingly different visions, choosing to exaggerate and minimize, magnify and suppress, and ultimately reinvent and reshape the disabitato. Fellini saw the disabitato as a potential circus ground, a place to play out his personal fantasies on the level of the masses. He tried to breach the line between artifice and reality, between his own dreams and those of a greater humanity. In essence, the disabitato was the ultimate stage for him, loosely but decidedly connected a peripheral Roman reality, mysterious and manipulable because just outside of the political and religious power center of Italian society. Even more suspicious of this center, Pasolini instead sought to simultaneously document yet also aesthetize the disabitato, focusing on the sub-proletariat while exploring and enlarging his recurrent interests in power relations, religion, and death. Rather than a stage, the disabitato becomes an ideal background upon which to paint his cinematic visions, thereby allowing him to escape to a degree the linguistic specificity of word and allowing access to a more universal language. And lastly, Antonioni treated the disabitato as a mixed architectural and psychological residue, the tattered edges of the troubled (upper-middle class's) collective consciousness. His meticulously orchestrated shots of interiors and exteriors, both of people and places, communicate something of the suspension of life at the margins of our perception.

Indeed, all three directors have a common interest in exposing all that which we fail to fully perceive, be it terrain vague of the mind or earth, or more likely some combination of the two. Their films draw us out of our comfortable (or uncomfortable) shells of material reality, and invite us to traverse, rethink, and in so doing, perhaps even reconfigure overlapping cinematic and physical renderings of our everyday world.

Notes

1. This paper has its origins in a two-week film retrospective presented by Manuela Mariani at the American Academy in Rome from January 23 to February 3, 2006, entitled "Roma: Architettura nel Film/Rome: Architecture in Film." The event featured films set in Rome and explored how architectural aspects of the eternal city such as intersections, piazzas, buildings, and neighborhoods are employed in a variety of cinematic approaches, from Rossellini's neorealism to Fellini's magic realism. In part, the series examined how urban fabric, whether actual or fabricated, is woven into plot and characterization through the manipulation of focal point, perspective, and setting. Included were movies by directors such as Elio Petri, Michelangelo Antonioni, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and Peter Greenaway. Each evening consisted of a short introduction (with the use of clips and stills from films related to the evening's theme) followed by the main feature. The series highlighted the close links between cinema and architecture, specifically how both forms of art recreate temporal and social structures, and how they delineate and explain lived space.

2. Giacomo Gambetti, *Uccellacci e uccellini: Un film di Pier Paolo Pasolini* (Milano: Garzanti, 1966), 246.

3. For a seminal discussion of the term, see Ignasi Solà-Morales, "Terrain Vague," in ed. Cynthia Davidson, *Anyplace* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 118–23.

4. For two useful resources on films set in Rome, see Flaminio Di Biagi, *Il cinema a Roma: guida alla storia e ai luoghi del cinema nella capitale* (Roma: Palombi, 2003), and Americo Sbardella, *Roma nel cinema*, (Roma: Semar, 2003).

5. John Agnew, *Rome* (Chichester: Wiley, 1995), 153.

6. Paolo Giuntarelli, "La natura in città: I parchi di Roma come prolungamento della campagna nella trama urbanizzata," http://www.interenvironment.org/pa/Giuntarelli.pdf, 320. Accessed May 24, 2009.

7. Solà-Morales, "Terrain Vague," 119, 120.

8. Ibid., 122.

9. Giorgio Bertellini and Saverio Giovacchini, "Ambiguous Sovereignties: Notes on the Suburbs in Italian Cinema," *Suburban Discipline*, eds. Peter Lang and Tam Miller (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1997), 93.

10. Wim Wenders, "The Urban Landscape from the Point of View of Images," *The Act of Seeing*: *Essays and Conversations* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 97.

11. Stalker, "Manifesto," http://digilander.libero.it/stalkerlab/tarkowsky/manifesto/manifesting.htm. Accessed May 15, 2010.

12. Gil Doron, "The Dead Zone and the Architecture of Transgression," *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action* 4.2 (2000), 255.

13. Stalker, "Manifesto."

14. The Valle Caffarella, now a portion of the Appia Antica Regional Park, is an extensive area of ancient Roman, medieval, and modern ruins, pastures, caves (some of which are inhabited by the otherwise homeless), and scrubby, marginal land of uncertain use lined by nearby imposing postwar tenements. It is bordered by the Aurelian Wall, the Via Latina, Via dell'Almone, and via Appia Antica, along which appear occasional signs indicating entrances and paths whose promises of a neatly defined park almost everywhere immediately disappear into transgressive spaces.

15. Gianni Celati, *Verso la foce* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1989), 9.

16. Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, transl. John Howe, (London: Verso, 1995), 94.

17. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, transl. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (London: Blackwell, 1991), 194.

18. Augé, *Non-Places*, 97.

19. The EUR, short for Esposizione Universale di Roma, is a neighborhood begun in the 1940s during fascism in modernist imitation of classic Roman architecture. Left unfinished until the late 1950s, it has since become a center of office buildings and upper-middle class residences. For a helpful overview of films shot in this area, see Laura Delli Colli, *EUR, si gira: Tra cinema, architettura, fiction e pubblicità, la storia e l'immagine di un set unico al mondo* (Roma: Lupetti, 2005).

20. For his discussion of the distinctions between the "centripetal system, subject to constant change, showing for so little on maps, and playing so insignificant a role in the history of material progress" and "the impressive, widespread, permanent centrifugal system of highways which we associate with Rome and other empires," see John B. Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1984), 22.

21. An interesting approach to the problematic representation of history in film, particularly the interplay between images of space and time, is evident in a number of recent studies that employ Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope. See, for example, Alexandra Ganser, Julia Pühringer, and Markus Rheindorf, "Bakhtin's Chronotope on the Road: Space, Time, and Place in Road Movies Since the 1970s" *Linguistics and Literature* 4.1 (2006), 1-17, and Vivian Sobchack, "'Lounge Time': Post-War Crises and the Chronotope of Film Noir," in ed. Nick Browne, *Refiguring American Film Genres: History and Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 129-170.

22. Federico Fellini, quoted in "Fellini, Roma and Cinecittà," DVD, Supplementary Material to *La dolce vita*, directed by Federico Fellini (Port Washington, NY: Koch Lorber Films, 2004).

23. Ibid.

24. Costanzo Costantini, ed., *Fellini: Raccontando di me* (Roma: Riuniti, 1996), 129.

25. Andrea Zanzotto, *The Selected Poetry and Prose of Andrea Zanzotto*, transl. Patrick Barron (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2007), 187.

26. Costantini, *Fellini*, 125, 152.

27. Stalker, "Manifesto."

28. Nanni Moretti's scooter ride, composing the first segment of *Caro diario*, culminates in a visit to the site where he peers through a chain link fence at the forlorn monument to Pasolini, which sits in an overgrown, scraggly field.

29. Costantini, *Fellini*, 94–95.

30. Ibid., 95.

31. Noa Steimatsky makes the interesting observation that Pasolini's earlier films explore "the Roman *borgate* . . . as sites of marginality, exotic landscapes external to hegemonic Italian culture" whose inhabitants, "still bear traces of traces of archaic physiognomies and pro-modern cultural forms, [and] could enact saints' tales of martyrdom." See Noa Steimatsky, "Pasolini on *Terra Sancta*: Towards a Theology of Film," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 11.1 (1998): 239.

32. Carolyn Springer, "Fellini's Poetics of Fragmentation: Images of Rome in *La dolce vita*," *Canadian Journal of Italian Studies* 11.37 (1988), 160.

33. Alessia Ricciardi, "The Spleen of Rome: Mourning Modernism in Fellini's *La dolce vita*," *Modernism/Modernity* 7.2 (2000), 212.

34. Federico Fellini, quoted in *Fellini e l'EUR*, directed by Luciano Emmer (Rome: RAI, 1972).

35. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "Antonioni: Before and After," *Sight and Sound* 12 (December, 1995), 20.

36. Michael Schwarzer, "The Consuming Landscape: Architecture in the Films of Michelangelo Antonioni," *Architecture and Film*, ed. Mark Lamster (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000), 199.

37. Ted Perry, "Introduction," *Antonioni: The Poet of Images*, William Arrowsmith (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995), 12.

38. William Arrowsmith, *Antonioni: The Poet of Images* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995), 52.

39. Schwarzer, "The Consuming Landscape," 200.

40. Ibid., 202.

41. Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, eds. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (London: Blackwell, 1996), 207.

42. Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes: Walking as an Aesthetic Practice* (Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo, 2002), 181.

43. Michelangelo Antonioni, quoted in Peter Brunette, *The films of Michelangelo Antonioni* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 88.

44. John David Rhodes, *Stupendous, Miserable City: Pasolini's Rome* (Minneappolis: U of Minnesota P, 2007), xii.

45. Bertellini and Giovacchini, "Ambiguous Sovereignties," 101.

46. Maristella Casciato, "Rome Cannot Bear the Present," *Harvard Design Magazine* (Summer, 1999), 19.

47. Adelio Ferrero, *Il cinema di Pier Paolo Pasolini* (Milano: Mondadori, 1978), 38.

48. Casali romani are clusters of vernacular farm buildings found in the Campagna, the hilly countryside surrounding Rome.

49. Pier Paolo Pasolini, "Sesso, consolazione della miseria," *Tutte le poesie* (Milano: Mondadori, 2003), 925.

50. Piero Spila, *Pier Paolo Pasolini* (Roma: Gremese, 1999), 16.

51. Ibid., 44.

52. Stalker, "Manifesto."

53. Wenders, "The Urban Landscape," 100.