Non-Places in Postwar Italian Film:

Roma Città Aperta, *Ladri di Biciclette*, and *Le Mani sulla Città*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Italy has 55 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, 50 of which are Cultural Sites, the most of any one country in the world ("UNESCO World Heritage Sites"). In a simple manner, one can call this evidence of the incredibly abundant cultural and historical wealth present on Italy's landscape. As the former home to the Ancient Roman Empire and the birthplace of the Renaissance, the Italian Peninsula boasts an undeniably strong historical résumé. For instance, entombed within the single building of the Basilica of Santa Croce in Florence are the likes of Michelangelo, Galileo, and Machiavelli (except for a few of Galileo's fingers stored several blocks away in Museo Galileo). Certainly, one could not fault Italians for having an affinity for their land which was home to such incredible people and civilizations, remnants of which still stand today. And thus, it is an intriguing subject for study under humanistic geography, which analyzes people's relationship to the places they inhabit. These relationships can be seen within cinema, which contains the filmic representations of the cities, places, and spaces that real citizens inhabit on a daily basis. As such, films can reveal how directors conceptualize these places through how they are used artistically and metaphorically.

This work examines the manners in which characters relate to the places they inhabit and frequent within the films of *Roma Città Aperta* (Roberto Rossellini, 1945), *Ladri di Biciclette* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948), and *Le Mani sulla Città* (Francesco Rosi, 1963). In these films set during World War II, the war's aftermath, and the time of Italy's economic boom respectively, the evolving geography and landscapes are foregrounded. The German occupation in Rossellini's film, the economic hardships of De Sica's film, and the rapid, poorly regulated growth during the economic boom in Rosi's film are three very distinct chapters in Italy's modern history. As such,

these three films, with their cities made central entities, can speak to three distinct sets of conditions and changes in Italy's urban history since World War II.

In particular, this work will analyze how the protagonists and antagonists of the films relate to anthropological places and non-places, concepts which Marc Augé describes in his work *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*. Anthropological places hold content of social identity (such as a park), historical identity (such as the White House), and/or individual or collective identity (such as one's childhood home). Non-places hold no such content and are related to by people through 'solitary contracutality', such as the airport or unemployment office (Augé 76). In this paper, 'protagonist' refers to the most prominent, positive characters of the films, the ones shown to be morally justified, fighting the good fight, or even simply the characters deserving of the spectator's sympathy. Conversely, 'antagonist' will here refer to the prominent, negative characters of the films who are immoral, threatening or dangerous, and who otherwise earn the spectator's disdain. To put it into universally understood terms, the protagonist refers to the 'good guy' and the antagonist refers to the 'bad guy'. These protagonists and antagonists of Rossellini, Rosi, and De Sica's works are deeply connected to the places and non-places in the films, and their interactions with said places will reveal the underlying conceptualizations of them.

In *Ladri di Biciclette* the protagonist, Antonio Ricci, has a rather negative interaction with a church, while one protagonist of *Roma Città Aperta* is an upstanding priest who offers his church as sanctuary to an Austrian deserter, fleeing the oppressive Nazi army. These different relations and interactions between a protagonist and a church reveal different conceptions of this institution and place. Within his church, the priest of *Roma Città Aperta*, Don Pietro, is an integral part of the community and of the resistance against the Nazis. Meanwhile, the many

locations that Antonio Ricci occupies (which oppress him as extensions of the institutions that he turns to for help) suddenly have begun to treat him like a faceless patron, a number, or like no one at all. That is to say, his relations with the place have become contractual, they obligate that he follow certain rules or engage in certain behavior. These places are also without ties to social, historical, or individual identity; Antonio as a person and Italian citizen is unable to truly receive the attention or assistance of others except when he violates the rules of the establishment. On the other hand, the antagonists of *Roma Città Aperta* and *Le Mani Sulla Città*, Major Bergmann and Edoardo Nottola (both of whom seek to control the city), become propagators, administrators, and inhabitants of establishments such as those that cause Antonio Ricci so much harm, non-places. These villains produce the non-places on the landscape, utilize them to manifest their malicious control over Rome and Naples, and their very beings are deeply entwined with them. Both Bergmann and Nottola almost exclusively exist in offices above the city, nowhere in particular, and exert control over the city through voodoo doll-like mediums such as photographs, maps, models, and alike. In such ways, one can identify the conceptualizations and connotations of these locations/places that exist in the minds of these influential directors, that is Rossellini, De Sica, and Rosi.

Through their roles in film, such as association with a protagonist or antagonist, the locations are used to convey meaning, and acquire new meanings that reveal the way they are thought of by people in the real world. In De Sica's film we can read how he believes Italian institutions like the Church, the police, and alike have negatively transformed or abandoned their patrons. The manner in which Antonio Ricci relates to his surroundings creates a sense of loneliness. The 'Antonio vs. the world' theme of *Ladri di Biciclette* is constructed as the people and places of the city continually reject him. In Rossellini and Rosi's films, the encroachment of

these harmful non-places and those who govern them is a threat to Roman and Neapolitan identity. Bergmann and Nottola, tyrants of the city, contaminate it with non-places and assault the places they do not control that house the common men and women of Italy. Thus, in addition to the use of geography to convey meaning, a very negative representation of non-places is crafted. A disdain for the non-place then seems to arise in their films, and these works of art can teach us about how different Italians at different points in time have related to their surroundings and to the transformations of the landscape that accompanies modernization.

The Films

Roma Città Aperta (1945) is Roberto Rossellini's film, made just after the end of World War II. It tells the story of the ordinary Romans caught in the German occupation of Rome. The film focuses on the lives of the Italian characters of Pina, a mother and fiance to a resistance member named Francesco; Manfredi, a leader among the resistance fighters; and Don Pietro, a priest who assists the activities of those opposing the Germans. We also see much of the occupying Nazis and their cohorts, such as Bergmann, the military official in charge of Rome; Ingrid, the woman who aids him by assimilating into Roman society; or the Italian *carabinieri*[1] who assists the Nazis. At first, the story depicts the lives of Pina, Manfredi, Don Pietro, and others in the neighborhood and city as they resist and evade Nazi oppression, or simply try to survive in the hostile environment. But as the Nazis close in on the agitators (namely Manfredi, Francesco, and Don Pietro), the apartment that served as the center of the story is raided, during which Pina is shot and killed. As many who have seen and studied this film know, the second act

[1] A police officer, the one in *Roma Città Aperta* is a representative of the Fascist powers assisting the German occupation.

following this event is entirely different in its tone. While in the first act there is a sense of hope, like a light at the end of the tunnel or the flower that grows through the crack in the concrete, the second act is much darker and defeating. The film becomes a life-or-death struggle for the characters, now looking over their shoulders for Nazis at every turn. However, even though the occupying Nazis win the battle over the Roman protagonists of the day, Rossellini's message is clear, they will not win the war, and they will not break the spirit of those remaining or those to come.

Francesco Rosi's *Le Mani Sulla Città* (1963) could essentially be called an exposé regarding the corruption and ineptitude of Neapolitan politicians and bureaucrats, and the quickly changing faces of Italian cities. The film documents a fictional Naples, in which a building collapses, presumably due to incompetence and willful ignorance, and a young boy is seriously injured. However, the public aftermath of the incident is the real subject matter, and the political arc of the film flows through three stages of partisan politics between Nottola (the political Right) and De Vita (the political Left): (1) denial of culpability vs. outrage, (2) cover-up vs. investigation and accountability, and finally (3) moving on having accomplished nothing, changed nothing, and even having rewarded the culprits. The man at the center of it all is Edoardo Nottola, a city councilman and owner of the largest real estate development company in the city. As the villain of our story, Nottola clearly has a hand in the collapse of the building. He also abuses his position as a city councilman and member of the majority party to award government contracts to his own company; he deceives the citizenry; and he is the lord of the non-place. Much like Bergmann of *Roma Città Aperta*, Nottola 'gets his way' and ascends further up the political ladder, but unlike Rossellini's film, *Le Mani sulla Città* does not suggest that Naples will soon be free of Nottola's tyranny. Instead, the film makes a full circle back to

where it began with the protagonist, De Vita, again screaming into the wind as Nottola stuffs his pockets at the expense of the people of Naples.

Vittorio De Sica's *Ladri di Biciclette* (1948) is set in post-war Rome. It focuses on Antonio Ricci, an unemployed man living a difficult life similar to many others of the time. Along with many other men he waits outside the unemployment office to be given a chance at supporting his family. Finally, one day, he gets chosen for a job hanging up posters, but he must have a bicycle to do so. And so, after reclaiming his bicycle from a pawn shop, at the expense of the family's nicest bedspreads, Antonio seems ready to begin a much more stable, prosperous chapter in his family's life. However, on the first day of his new job, his bicycle, an item requisite to his family's well-being, is stolen on the crowded streets as he hangs up a poster of Rita Hayworth. For the remainder of the film, Antonio seeks the help of different societal institutions (police, church, union, etc.) as he searches for his bicycle. However, the different entities and people in the city are of no help to him or even actively impede him. In the end, Antonio, despairing over his inability to provide and rotten luck, resorts to stealing another person's bicycle. But, he fails and his son, Bruno, has witnessed this desperate and reproachable act. And it is Bruno's confused and concerned face, grappling with his respect for his father and Antonio's visible shame, that truly conveys the tragedy in the film.

Chapter 2: Augé's Non-places

In recent times, people's moral and social consciences have expanded rapidly to pay more and more attention to the things they eat, listen to, watch, and wear. But can the same be said of the places they inhabit on a daily basis? Tourism and travel certainly focus on the places people

go through a lens of exoticism, but what of the supermarket? The train station? The Planet Fitness in the mall? In this regard, Marc Augé's work, *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*, can shed light on the ways that we relate to our surroundings. His theories can spark a chain reaction that begins with becoming more conscious of the places around us and ends with both a better understanding of these places as well as possible feelings of disorientation and uprootedness. It is like wielding a double-edged sword when people become disillusioned about how their surroundings can comfort them, unsettle them, bind them, free them, give them identity or take it away. One edge can work to bring a clearer understanding of how a person interacts with and relates to their surroundings, and the other edge can disorient and disconcert them. And through Augé's theories, one can understand their relations with the places and so-called non-places that currently surround them in what he calls supermodernity.

According to Augé, supermodernity is characterized by three figures of excess: the overabundance of events, spatial overabundance, and the individualization of references (33). The present is characterized by an overabundance of events, or rather information of events. Constant inundation of information about current events creates difficulty in orienting oneself in time. It has become impossible to know the present, there is too much to know about it. Unable to consolidate these countless events into a meaningful point in time, people struggle to give meaning to the past or decide on how to move into the future. As Augé quotes Pierre Nora: "What we are seeking [in historical evidence, sites, etc.] is what is different about us now," (qtd. in Auge 21). However, with overabundant information of events, it becomes next to impossible to decipher what we are in the present. Collective and individual identities evolve with the news cycles and with the increasingly frequent interactions and confrontations among peoples across

the globe. Attempting to keep pace with a nation's public consciousness or the cultures contained within it is like chasing the sun around the Earth.

Next, spatial overabundance refers to an excess of space that is "correlative with the shrinking of the planet," (Augé 25). Connections through both physical and virtual transportation have contracted the world to a point of having everything within reach, while at the same time offering abundant space to all its inhabitants. This abundance of space and connectedness leads to the overlapping of the global and the local. Countless cultures and people can scatter and gather anywhere they please, blurring the lines that once seemed to separate discrete identities that lent themselves to ethnological study. Doreen Masssey describes it well in her essay *A Global Sense of Place*, "How, in the face of all this movement and intermixing, can we retain any sense of a local place and its particularity?" (24).

The third characteristic, the individualization of references, has left behind the time when the individual could be considered representative of, or an expression of collective identity. Like the Catholic who intends to practice their religion in their own fashion (Augé 30), it has become more difficult to interpret collective identities through the individuals. This can be understood through Augé's examination of Chateaubriand's account. Chateaubriand says of a trip to Attica: "the spectacle I was contemplating, had been contemplated by eyes that closed for the last time two thousand years ago," (qtd. in Auge 72). Augé states that it is at this point in Chateaubriand's observation that the traveller's contemplation ends. It ends "the moment it turns back on itself, becomes its own object, and seems to dissolve under the vague multitude of similar views from the past and still to come," (Augé 72). Thereby, it seems the identity and meaning of the actual place has also dissolved, leaving little left except for it to serve as a reference to a point in time. The traveller or even the 'authentic' citizen turns their gaze onto the place only to turn it back on

themselves, transforming it into a simple stepping stone that allows them to reach a self reflective position. Previously, modernity was supposedly a time in which the old and new were intertwined (Augé 89), in which the chimney of the factory is in operation and the spire of the church watches over the faithful. However, supermodernity transforms the old into a spectacle (Augé 89), and so the spire can now only watch over admiring tourists and visitors and serve as a mirror, reflecting the thoughts of the spectator back onto themselves.

From these chimneys and spires comes the most important part of Augé's work: non-places and anthropological places. Beginning with anthropological places, he describes these as "any space in which inscriptions of the social bond (for example, places where strict rules of residence are imposed on everyone) or collective history (for example, places of worship) can be seen." (Augé VIII). They are places that are invested with meaning and are concerned with relations, history, or identity (Augé 43). A chapel for instance, can be described as a place where the community gathers and forms bonds, that has been a seat of leadership in the town for decades/centuries, and that symbolizes the denomination to which they collectively belong. Therefore, this example would embody all three different characteristics of relations, history, and identity that an anthropological place can concern itself with. The anthropological place therefore houses the social, the historical, and/or the personal identities of the indigenous people.

After this comes the non-place, which Augé defines, in a relative manner, as not an anthropological place. Therefore, a non-place is defined as neither relational, historical, nor concerned with identity (Augé 63). Furthermore, non-places designate "two complimentary but distinct realities: spaces formed in relation to certain ends (transport, transit, commerce, leisure), and the relations that individuals have with these spaces." (Augé 76). He states, "As anthropological places create the organically social, so non-places create solitary contractuality."

(Augé 76). This is most clearly manifested in the archetypal non-places of airports, train stations, and alike. Where an anthropological place would confirm individual identity, the non-place reduces this identity to 'passenger', 'employee', etc. (Augé 81). Additionally, this newly anonymous passenger is "Alone, but one of many, … in contractual relations with [the non-place] (or the powers that govern it)." (Augé 82). Also, "The link between individuals and ... [the] non-place is mediated through words, or even texts," (Augé 76). These 'instructions for use' can be "prescriptive ('Take right-hand lane'), prohibitive ('No smoking'), or informative ('[Gates B1-B16 ahead]')," (Augé 77). The non-place thereby strips away the identity, and even autonomy, of the individual, while stranding them in a space devoid of significance linked to their own identity in any way.

That being said, both the anthropological place and the non-place "never exist in pure form; places reconstitute themselves in [non-places]; relations are restored and resumed in [them]," (Augé 64). They are like "opposed polarities: the [anthropological place] is never completely erased, the [non-place] never totally completed," (Augé 64). As such, the nuances of the real places and spaces of the world can easily interfere with these abstract categorizations that would leave us almost mechanically comforted in places and invariably detached from our identity in non-places. However, these opposing categories of places surely call to mind many examples in daily life, and by sorting those places in this framework, the definitions can take on much more real meaning. Upon which, one can gain invaluable understanding of how they relate to their surroundings and how their surroundings can change and evolve. Additionally, the fluidity of the place and non-place, and the rift between theory and reality is important to take note of. As will be shown, the churches in *Roma Città Aperta* and *Ladri di Biciclette* are not a place or a non-place on account of being a church. It is the relations that people have with them

and the human interactions that take place within them that constitutes placehood or placelessness.

I will examine how places and spaces are represented and utilized in Rossellini, De Sica, and Rosi's films to uncover the ways in which different Italians have come to relate to the landscape of supermodernity. Does a certain place represent a threat to their identity, or is it comforting and reassuring? What sort of places does the exemplary Italian protagonist inhabit? What sort of places does the foreign or corrupt villain frequent? And even, how do the characters of a film manipulate the places and spaces of the diegetic world, and to what end? By asking questions such as these, one can uncover how filmmakers conceptualize the places around them through the manner in which they craft representations of them to convey meaning.

Chapter 3: The Antagonists

Roma Città Aperta (1945) and *Le Mani Sulla Città* (1963) are films in which the relationships between the antagonists and the city are central issues. Major Bergmann, the occupying Nazi of Rossellini's film, and Edoardo Nottola, the profiteering real estate developer of Rosi's film, attempt to extend their reach over the city through reconstructions of the city. Both men create these reconstructions inside of their offices through maps, pictures, and models. Like voodoo dolls, these reproductions stand in for the real spaces and places they wish to exert their control over. However, they are not equal to the real spaces and places of the city. Both men use the non-places that "only exist through the words that evoke them," (Augé 77), but in addition to words they use images and even three-dimensional models. Bergmann's maps, pictures, and information networks construct a new Rome within his office, one that is only

Rome in name. Likewise, Nottola uses maps, models, and images to fabricate a false Naples. And via these voodoo doll cities, the two villains manipulate the real Rome and Naples. Through the maps, models, images, and alike, the villains can (to an extent) affect and alter the real cities that they have imitated. They also propagate non-places in the real cities to extend this control. They do this by contractualizing the relationships that the citizens have with both old and new places, as well as by erasing and replacing the anthropological places when possible. Things such as curfews, evictions, and high rents are the tools by which these men subject the citizens to contracts and through that, control them. Likewise, actions such as Nottola's construction of commercialized areas cause detriment to the identity and soul of the city as they replace the anthropological places. Thereby, they forcefully turn the citizens into users of the non-places, rendering them "Alone, but one of many, … in contractual relations with [the non-places] (or the powers that govern it)." (Augé 82). Thus, the films link the antagonists, Bergmann and Nottola, to non-places, and works to show how the contractuality and lack of identity in non-places antagonizes the identity and freedom of the protagonists and other characters.

This relationship between the antagonists and the non-places is one crafted to demonstrate both the threat of the antagonists and the threat of the non-place. In both films, the danger is not only to the lives and happiness of the citizens, the identity of the city is also in danger. In *Roma Città Aperta*, the city is ruled by a foreign power, and in *Le Mani Sulla Città*, the city is being forcefully altered for the sake of profit and vague modernization.[2] The non-places appearing and replacing the anthropological places are a threat to both the physical face and intangible identity of the city. The association between antagonists and these contractual places, lacking in content of identity, reveals an Italian awareness of non-places; and through the

[2] The goal of modernization in the film is that of an unquestioned movement towards luxury, amenities, and the other trappings of a 'modern' nation or city.

disdain one is meant to feel for the antagonists, a disdain for the non-place's effects on the people and cities is also visible.

Roma Città Aperta

First, at the beginning of the film, after Manfredi's escape, we cut to Major Bergmann's hand over the map of Rome. As he says, this map of Rome is divided into 14 zones. These zones represent the way in which Bergmann and the Nazis have tried to alter the identity of the city and establish strict control over the soil. Bergmann lauds the 'Schroder' plan as one which will supposedly allow them to efficiently comb the city for insurrectionists, with the application of minimal force. He claims that it has been implemented in '*diverse città europee*', although it is clear that the diversity of the cities across the continent is being ignored. A plan applicable to many European cities is one that ignores landscapes, cultures, ideologies, and social networks unique to the cities. For instance, it is not a plan that took into account the community and connections of the Church, specifically of Don Pietro, nor would it be sufficient to prevent Manfredi's escape over the rooftops or the characters' use of an underground passage into their apartment building. And while Bergmann speaks of the efficacy and simplicity of this plan, a soldier barges in to inform him that Manfredi has escaped his reach. The immediate contradiction between Bergmann's words and his failure in capturing the rebel makes it clear that the city on his map and the city outside his window are not the same, in fact, the curtains are drawn shut on that very window. It would seem that the type of power and control that he has over the city in his office is, at best, analogous to power and control over Rome. He can control the correlative, fictitious, voodoo doll city, but he cannot control the real Rome.

Furthermore, when Bergmann says "Every evening I take a long walk through the streets of Rome without leaving my office," (Roma Città Aperta 6:45) he is describing how the information network and the photographs allow him to walk around, surveying the city. Almost like a god, Bergmann claims to be in his office and on the streets of Rome simultaneously. As David Forgacs wrote, "The map in sectors depicts the Gestapo's mode of subdividing and controlling the city. Metaphorically, though, it resembles a web. At its center is this fastidious Nazi who, without having to leave his base … [can] exert himself physically" (Forgacs 112). Thereby, Bergmann is constructing non-places in his office, ones which span across the entire city. This certainly does speak to the power over the city that Bergmann has, he can collect information from his 'walks', from the soldiers within his information network, and from the torture of partisans,[3] all at the same time. Compare Major Bergmann to Don Pietro of the same film. As the local parish priest, Don Pietro is a leader in the community who houses and helps the weary and persecuted at the church, and someone that walks the real streets of Rome. Bergmann on the other hand, stays seated in his office, in which he has reproduced the city, thinking of power and other abstract things. As Don Pietro interacts with the city, we see that he is a true, physical citizen of Rome, struggling alongside his fellow Roman protagonists. But all of Bergmann's efforts are towards controlling or altering the city from his removed throne, and this characterizes him as the foreign antagonist who does not know the city and who could not completely control it through the proxy 'non-city' in his office (as we saw with Manfredi's earlier escape). This is the "Place completed through the word", through the passwords of the landscape, exclusive to the locals (Augé 63). The intimate knowledge and familiarity with the city that characters like Don Pietro and Manfredi have 'completes' the place, that is, it is vital to the relationship between a person and an anthropological place that belongs to them, and to

[3] The resistance movement fighting the Germans, of which Manfredi, Francesco, and Don Pietro are participants.

which they belong. But Bergmann does not know these passwords, he does not have the familiarity with the soil that the Romans possess.

This is the way that Manfredi escapes Bergmann at the beginning of the film, with the passwords that he does not know. And this is how we know Bergmann's supposed vice-grip on the city is not fully translated into the real world. The Rome that exists in the map and the photographs is only an idea. It does not contain the passwords, the customs, or the characteristics of the anthropological places in Rome. Instead, a fictional city, a non-place in and of itself is created. Augé says as much: "Certain places exist only through the words that evoke them, and in this sense they are non-places," (Augé 77). Furthermore, anthropological places and non-places are "opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed," (Augé 64). Therefore, despite Bergmann's attempts, he will not be able to erase the places of Rome and replace them with absolute non-places, in which he would be able to completely contractualize and control the inhabitants. He will not be able to remove the identities ingrained in the landscape of Rome, nor can he gain control over the landscape which only gives way to those who hold the passwords. However, in this sense, his true form as an antagonist is not one who threatens the lives or safety of the citizens, but one who threatens the identity of the city. His attempt to control the landscape and erase Roman ownership of it is what is truly offensive and malicious about him to the protagonists trying to defend their home.

Le Mani Sulla Città

Le Mani Sulla Città contains many similarities to *Roma Città Aperta*, with an antagonist that assaults the city through methods very common to those of Major Bergmann. In the opening

scene we see well-dressed men atop a hill, in an area of undeveloped land. The villain we will come to know as Edoardo Nottola is giving an impassioned pitch to the others about the gold of the modern day. Land, real estate, buildings, places, and space itself "is the gold of today" (Le Mani sulla Città 1:08) according to Nottola. It is a fitting expression to introduce the themes of the film, largely dealing with the manner in which control over the land can translate into control over the people inhabiting it. Immediately after, the number of men in suits has increased and they now surround a model of the plans for the undeveloped land seen earlier. In a rather ominous scene they discuss the plans for the urban development of Naples, framed in terms of the local elections, the rebirth of the South, national politics, and alike. Almost like giants, they loom over the fictional miniature city, their voodoo doll stand-in for the city outside, as the select few in the room decide the future of the landscape. The model, in turn, is undoubtedly littered with *palazzi*[4] and other places designed to generate revenue for those inside the room and their cohorts. Thus, the model forecasts the spread of such non-places over the land, buildings and structures that will leech money from the citizens, unconcerned with the preservation or development of the social and cultural identities of Naples. The barren model, full of vaguely similar buildings and wide roads certainly lacks the now common urban-planning concept of placemaking.[5] However, Nottola's model is a purely economically motivated idea of development, hence the absence of *parchi*, *piazze*, or *marciapiedi.*[6] This will be our first clue as to how Nottola and the others in these first two scenes intend to shape their city.

Next, after a short helicopter ride over the city, we come to the scene of the collapse of the old apartment building. This scene, without any music or genuine dialogue, is presented to

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[4] This literally means palaces, but has come to refer to large apartment buildings as well.
[5] Placemaking is a philosophy of urban planning in which cities are designed for *people*, not cars or structures. Public spaces are designed to encourage physical, social, and cultural activity by its users. ("What is Placemaking?")
[6] This translates to parks, plazas/squares, and sidewalks respectively, places which would lend themselves to human use and social activity.

the audience as a sort of 'pure' profilmic event. With little stylization beyond the camera work, Rosi creates a sense of verisimilitude and truth in the scene. It is this 'untainted' profilmic event, essentially unfolding in real time, that will take on countless meanings and interpretations throughout the film. The unforeseen but perhaps preventable collapse of the building and the young boy injured in it will be subjected to the speculation, scrutiny, spin, and self-serving interpretation of the most important people in Naples. Thus, the frenzy begins as politicians scramble to determine where to place the blame, what to do with other decrepit buildings and their residents, how this affects urban development plans, etc. Through these initial scenes, containing the introduction of Nottola's faction and the collapse of the building, Rosi has successfully primed the audience to reflect upon the often overlooked world of urban-planning. He introduces the antagonists trying to extend their control across the physical city of Naples and presents an event that will elicit responses from those all across the political, economic, and social sprectums. With the apartment collapse as a catalyst, the misdeeds of the men from the opening scenes will be uncovered and yet will go unequivocally unpunished.

Edoardo Nottola's similarity to *Roma Città Aperta*'s Major Bergmann is evident in his representation, methods, and association with the non-place. He stays in his office, manipulating the city through many different conduits and tools like Bergmann. In his office, Nottola has a map of Naples on the wall, a model of the city, and windows and images to gaze at the cities both real and fake. He also has people who synthesize newspapers or take and make calls for him. In short, all of his voodoo dolls and tools that allow him to act upon the real city are within arms reach. In a manner reminiscent of Bergmann's walks, Nottola paces back and forth with the sounds of the city audible from below, surrounded by the false city that is his office. In this way he performs his own walk through the streets. Nottola however, is physically changing the face

of his city as a real estate developer. He is also not a foreign entity, unfamiliar with the landscape, but an internal threat that can manipulate the soil much more effectively. This is a significant shift from *Roma Città Aperta*, where the recent war and occupation had provided a foreign antagonist. The difference between Nottola and Bergmann is the difference between protecting Italian identity from the foreign and protecting that identity from an internal, 'modernizing' cleansing of the landscape. Before, the non-places were associated with the occupying Nazi, Bergmann. But now, Nottola is the embodiment of a whitewash, a gentrification, and the non-place itself; and, almost like a virus, the non-places are spreading to threaten the city's identity.

Nottola works either to construct or to destroy and replace within Naples. One of his goals in the film is to construct modern apartment buildings, of course with high rent. Midway through the film, Nottola confronts De Vita and brings him to such a building. The apartment the men are in, which is Nottola's creation, is devoid of furniture, decorations, etc. In other words it is devoid of any "inscriptions of the social bond ... or collective history," (Augé, VIII) that would mark it as an anthropological place, particularly as a place of relations where people have made their home. Furthermore, in such a residence, where the rent is already intimidating if not crippling, one can imagine how Nottola can further manipulate the inhabitants. As we see in the film, local Italian politics at the time are perhaps more social than they are purely political or ideological. It is shown that votes can be bought and sold or solicited and extorted, so it is not unimaginable how a public figure may leverage his position as a landlord. These social politics are the very mechanisms through which Nottola is able to take his political base to the Center party and win a majority with them in the elections. He is subjecting the citizens, his tenants, to contractual relations with these places. If they inhabit these places, they can be under his control

whether it be the pet policy of the building or how they vote (for fear of a raise in rent or even eviction perhaps). In this way, the emptiness of the apartment and what we know of Nottola's methods frame it as a non-place in the scene. He is propagating the non-place and trying to create "A world where people are born in the clinic and die in the hospital, where transit points and temporary abodes are proliferating under luxurious or inhuman conditions." (Augé 63). By constantly removing anthropological places to replace them with new, blank structures that he can control, he believes he can control the citizens within them. This constructs Nottola as an internal threat to the identity of the city, as opposed to Bergmann's foreign threat, but he weaponizes the non-place all the same.

Rosi further elaborates on the voodoo doll-like tools, through which the city is manipulated, in the scene with the map of the bureaucrats who could not possibly distinguish between two walls and one. In their inquiry regarding the collapse of the apartment building, De Vita, Balsamo (of the Center party), and other councilmen head to an office to investigate the demolition of the adjacent building by Nottola's company. De Vita asks an official there if the buildings were simply adjacent or if they shared a wall, which would undoubtedly be an issue when considering demolition. The official responds "How can we possibly establish that? This map is on a scale of 1:2,000 … Our pen nibs are 1mm wide. So it's technically impossible to tell one wall from two given our tools." (Le Mani sulla Città 29:43). Here, Rosi precisely lays out the limitations of the map, the bureaucrats' voodoo doll, as well as the incompetence of the administrators of the city. Just like Bergmann and Nottola's reconstructions of the city within their offices, the officers of city hall believe themselves to have an accurate, sufficient means of surveying the city. Yet in actuality, the means by which Bergmann, Nottola, and city hall interact with the city is severely lacking. How could one tell if there is one wall or two? Well, perhaps if

they interacted with the actual city of Naples it would be as simple as looking at the buildings. This ignorance of the real places and spaces of the city is the sin of the bureaucrats. To be unfamiliar with the city, interacting only with lines on a map, topped with a deplorable indifference as to how the city is affected by their decisions frames the bureaucrats as harmfully passive bystanders and accomplices to Nottola's propagation of non-places at the expense even of people's lives.

Finally, towards the end of the film, Nottola walks the streets before the elections will take place, one of the few times he is out in the city itself. However, the walls of Naples' buildings are buried beneath endless political posters imploring that you heed their advice and follow their instructions. The buildings, the places of the city, are supplanted by the requests and commands of politicians and their parties. This is the non-place in which 'instructions for use' are mediated through text, rather than interpersonal interaction (Augé 77).[7] Walking the street, Nottola is surrounded by his own face and the faces of others like him. The walls of the city that once conveyed their age and history become a bulletin board, a political space with the substance of their identity literally covered up. At which point, even the streets have become a space that demands you enter a contract with those who control it, a non-place.

Edoardo Nottola is thus framed as a very similar villain to Major Bergmann of *Roma Città Aperta*. Both films employ the concept of non-places to demonstrate threats to Italian identity. Bergmann and Nottola's artificial constructions threaten to encroach upon the actual landscapes of Rome and Naples. The two antagonists are deeply connected to, and reside in the non-places. If villains, like monsters, can be reflections and manifestations of a given society's

[7] Such as the airport, where signs list all the items you cannot have or must remove from your person in order to pass through security, the non-place mediated through text is an environment in which you are instructed to do something through text. This non-place does not simply aim to control human interaction, it eliminates it in favor of interaction with text, objects, or you might say with the non-place itself.

fears, it would seem that Italy fears the erosion of their identity (Bell). As such, non-places and those who propagate them are the shadowy figures threatening from both outside and within.[8] Nottola and Bergmann act as exemplary figures of 'what not to do' for the viewer. That is, their values, their objectives, and their methods are to be avoided and resisted. Likewise, the non-place's contractual nature, and inability to store culture, history, or social inscriptions are to be seen as offensive by the person who feels that the land is their own. In this way, *Le Mani Sulla Città* and *Roma Città Aperta* reveal that the antagonist and the non-place are intrusions, almost like pathogens on the land, something unwanted and worthy of fearing or even despising.

Chapter 4: The Protagonists

In contrast to the non-place antagonists, the protagonists of course also have their own associated places and symbolic relations with places and non-places. Protagonists such as Don Pietro of *Roma Città Aperta*, De Vita of *Le Mani sulla Città*, and Antonio Ricci of *Ladri di Biciclette* are deeply tied to the anthropological places of their cities and/or are resistant to the non-places of the antagonists. They resist the contractual obligations of the non-place and use the anthropological places to evade, counteract, or fight the antagonists. For instance, Don Pietro skillfully navigates the city, staying out of reach of the Germans thanks to his intimate knowledge of the spaces and places. Meanwhile, Antonio Ricci is forced, by his circumstances, to confront nearly the entire city of Rome (which has become contaminated with non-places) and attempt to force it to meet him and his family's needs. Whether Antonio is breaking rules or

[8] One would not have trouble arguing that Bergmann and Nottola stand in as Hitler and Mussolini-esque figures, Bergmann being a Nazi, and Nottola explicitly comparing/trying to distance himself from Mussolini. After World War II, Hitler and Mussolini achieved supervillain status and anyone reminiscent of them was an appropriate "James Bond-type villain" that represented what was to be avoided, socially, politically, and morally (Bell).

seeking unconventional assistance, we see that he only makes progress on his 'journey' when he breaks free of the non-place's constraints. And lastly, De Vita of *Le Mani sulla Città* tries to combat the propagation of non-places (such as commercial centers and high rise apartments) in Naples for many moral, economic, and cultural reasons. Just as the non-place is depicted as a threat to Italy through antagonists, the protagonists convey that non-places must be resisted and their proliferation prevented.

Ladri di Biciclette

Vittorio De Sica's *Ladri di Biciclette* is a heart-wrenchingly lonely film. It is the story of a man forsaken by his city and essentially left to fend for himself and for his family. There are no words more fitting to describe the film than 'Antonio versus the world'. One of the ways the film portrays the lonely desperation of the protagonist is through his defunct relationship with societal institutions such as the unemployment office, the church, and a local fortune-teller who acts almost like a people's church, a makeshift institution of urban life. The failings of these institutions are visible in how they treat Antonio. They treat him like a nameless, faceless customer of sorts, offering nothing beyond the bureaucratic, robotic, and procedural avenues for help when he needs it most. In this manner, they operate like non-places. Augé says, "As anthropological places create the organically social, so non-places create solitary contractuality" (76). And it is this solitary contractuality that alienates Antonio in a city that has all but rejected him. In the scenes involving the unemployment office, church, and fortune-teller's apartment, the functionings of non-places strip people's identities away and bind them to obligatory behaviors. Additionally, it is of course our protagonist that exemplifies the plight facing so many after the

war, as Antonio struggles to survive.[9] Thus, De Sica depicts Antonio's suffering at the hands of non-places to demonstrate their detriment to society, casting the non-place as an enemy of Roman identity and people and conveying the harmfulness of non-places.

The opening scene of the film takes place in one of the housing projects of Rome, *Valmelaina* specifically. As a bus arrives in the neighborhood, we see men gathered around what we will come to find is an unemployment office in post-war Italy. De Sica's opening sequence demonstrates the relationship between citizen and government, relationship here meaning the manner in which people are categorized and deployed like tools in a supposedly charitable and supportive welfare system. This opening scene also establishes Antonio Ricci's circumstances, conveying his desperation as well as revealing a small ray of hope. When Ricci's name is called to assign him a post, he learns that he will need a bicycle, or else the job will go to someone else. And when he explains that he does not have one at the moment, a plethora of other unemployed men declare that they have bicycles. So, the brilliant exchange between the government official and the men plays out as follows:

> *"I have a bicycle!"*
>
> *"Me too!"*
>
> *"But you're a bricklayer. You're in a different category."*
>
> *"Change my category!"*
>
> *"You can't!"* (Ladri di Biciclette 3:24)

Within this dialogue lies the essence of the non-place. In the airport you are a passenger, in the hotel a guest, and at the unemployment office a bricklayer, a turner, or for Antonio, someone who puts up movie posters. This contractual, procedural interaction between the official

[9] The Italian economy was greatly harmed by the war, which was accompanied by the collapse of the Fascist government. Many struggled to find work and the country had to be rebuilt in almost every sense of the word, the government, the economy, and the cities and towns themselves.

and the unemployed men (as opposed to an organically social interaction or alike) is what characterizes the unemployment office as a non-place in the scene. The men show up in the morning, names are called, and they either get to report to work or come back the next day. Additionally, the unemployment official views a bricklayer working another job as a square peg trying to fit into a round hole. Thereby, with their identities reduced to job titles, forced to make the commute each day, praying to the deities of unemployment for charity or luck, these men have come to know the pain of the non-place, particularly as they are dependent upon one.

The dominance of the non-place in this interaction is further enforced by the filmic elements, particularly through the camera angles. The government official stands on the steps, above street-level, dressed in much cleaner, more elaborate clothing with a cigar in his mouth. So, along with his physical location and appearance, the camera stays at a low angle, placing him on a pedestal compared to the common men crowded around. Furthermore, only once he has been assigned a post may Antonio join him on the steps above the crowd. The rest of the men, however, are looked down upon by the camera and the official. The unemployed citizens remain at street-level, clad in the only clothes they can afford, and are forced to lament this arbitrary process and hope that their name is pulled from the hat of post-war Italian bureaucracy. It is also important to note that although the point of contact with the unemployment office is the staircase afront the building, the non-place is the unemployment office itself. Four walls does not make the place or non-place, it is the human interaction, and certainly it is the 'unemployment office' (and unemployment official) that the men are interacting with here, whether it be on the steps or otherwise. In contrast to figures such as the unemployment official, Antonio is a modestly dressed common man, the film associates him strongly with the streets, and street-level, of Rome. He will traverse the city by foot and even be repeatedly rebuked by the very buildings,

establishments, and institutions that reside in the world beyond or elevated above street-level. De Sica has thus depicted a peculiar relationship between the citizens dependent upon this institution, looking to it for hope each day, and the officials whose concern for them does not extend beyond what role they may be permitted to fill. The unemployment office is a source of a cruel charity, but the men flock to it almost religiously for hope or aid each day. And with Antonio and the other men at its mercy it is clear how the citizens suffer at the hands of this non-place.

Next, complementary to the unemployment office is the fortune teller. If that office is a sort of church of the unemployed, to which the downtrodden men look for help, then De Sica would have you believe that the fortune teller's apartment is the church of their wives. We soon find ourselves at this very place where the parallels between the two stare us in the face. Housewives make a pilgrimage, climbing the steps up to the apartment and crowding around a woman like subjects around their queen. Waiting patiently for their turn, the people seek the same hope from the fortune-teller as Antonio sought from the unemployment office. Maria even credits the seer as much as Antonio credits himself or the government for his finding a job. However, it is quite apparent to us that we are not witnessing the admirable community leadership of a local woman or a spiritual gathering of the people, we are witnessing the operations of a business. In fact, it is a debt to the fortune-teller that has brought Maria there that day. The people line up, the seer offers her soothing prophecies, and the money is handed to the woman on the left. The procedural, almost robotic movements and interactions of the people here show it to be a non-place, at least to those who visit her home as patrons of her business, because "an insider's place can be an outsider's non-place" (Augé VIII). A place where if you wait in line and pay, the seer will quell your fears and send you on your merry way. The fortune teller's

non-place profits off of the misfortune of others simply by uttering promises of good fortune, essentially bleeding families from the wives' end while the husbands drink too much, can't find work, or alike.

And lying in wait after the pseudo-churches of the unemployment office and the fortune teller's apartment, there is the Catholic Church itself. The scene in the church, where Antonio has followed the old man who may know the thief, is an especially revealing moment of contracuality replacing the organically social.[10] The only interactions present are the interactions between the institution of the church and the church-goer (listening, singing, or moving when prompted to), and the conflict between Antonio and the rules of the establishment (how one is meant to behave in a church). Running like a well-oiled machine, the members of the church line up to be shaved, they must leave their mess tins in the yard, file in for service, and obey the procedures of a holy place. Yet, a modern viewer may be reminded of scenes in which young men have their heads shaved and are rushed through the paces of entering the military, while deliberately stripped of identity. The occasional chimes of the woman running this operation such as "Don't waste time." (Ladri di Biciclette 47:26) remind them of the obligatory movements. Throughout the scene, Antonio is asked to keep quiet and observe the procedures of the non-place. In fact, he only ever becomes the object of someone's attention when he disrupts the charity machine that the church seems to be operating. And as we see ways in which the patrons of the church are bound to certain movements and behavior, we do not see ways in which organic social, spiritual, or other events can take place.

As such, Antonio's escape from the church is even aided as his pursuers are obligated to kneel at the sound of a bell and when crossing the aisle. He, on the other hand, refuses to obey the rules of conduct of the church. He does not kneel when under the conditions that force his

[10] The sociality and interaction that people can naturally create in a place, when they are allowed to do so.

pursuers to do so, he enters areas of the building he is not permitted to, and the noise and commotion he causes is entirely inappropriate in a church. In this way, De Sica's representation of the Church contains only the cold contractuality of a non-place, devoid of the real soul and identity that such a place should have. The organically social is overwritten and excluded by the actions required by the establishment. Operated more like a soup kitchen, or even like the military in moments, the church lacks the connection to religion, as well as the social connections, that would constitute an anthropological place. It is here that our protagonist begins to defy the contracts (rules of conduct) that have previously confined him in the non-places. As Antonio becomes more desperate, he breaks more rules, and as he does so, he also begins to make progress in his situation such as discovering the address of the thief from the older man he is essentially harassing in the church.

Antonio's renouncement of conventional methods and courses of action is further exemplified in his return to the fortune-teller. As he breaks free of the limitations, procedures, and behaviors that he previously allowed to bind him, he sees results of his efforts at last. First, he abandons the notion that his problem can be solved with conventional methods and resorts to seeking the supposed spiritual counsel of the fortune-teller. As if to confirm Antonio's decision, to a young man seeking romantic advice she utters the line, "Sow in a different field" (Ladri di Biciclette 1:05:44) as the camera tracks in on Antonio. Then, thanks to Bruno, he breaks protocol and cuts the line. The fortune-teller allows this bending of the rules and predicts that he will find his bicycle right away or not at all (largely reiterating the sentiments of the trade union and the police). And upon exiting the apartment building, Antonio spots the very thief he was searching for walking down the street in front of him. Chasing him into a brothel, Antonio proceeds to break more rules, becoming practically unhinged at this point, and as a result he catches the

young man. Therefore, we see that although he does not find his bicycle in the end, it is once Antonio tries to break out of this cycle of limitations and dependence on societal institutions that he finally makes progress in his goals. Even though these institutions and crowds of people around him prove insurmountable in the end, it is clear nothing would have been achieved by assimilating into the systems at play. Only by defying the non-places and taking matters into his own hands did he truly achieve some agency and move forward in his journey to secure his family's well-being.

This manner in which Antonio and others relate to the societal institutions, to their contractual obligations, and to the reduction of their identity is a large theme in the film. Antonio in particular visits the welfare office, the police station, the trade union, the church, and the fortune-teller standing in for a form of urban housewife spirituality. But all of these institutions largely fail to aid Antonio in his plight. The institutions that are meant to constitute a functioning society have all become places which have lost sight of their original function, and now operate somewhat mindlessly, as if simply running through the paces. The effect of this is that they become non-places, ones which treat people like mere customers or 'users' of the non-place. Compare the way that the unemployment office, church, and fortune-teller treat Antonio to the way we experience an airport or store today. These non-places accept Antonio with no regard for his identity beyond perhaps proving he is qualified to use the place, as we would at an airport. Then, the non-place demands that Antonio follow the procedures and act according to the rules of the establishment, which is particularly visible in the church. This lack of concern for identity and the contractuality of the non-place is the result of an anthropological place's loss of soul. The church, a place of worship, has become a place where you line up, get shaved, sit quietly through the service, collect your meal, and leave, at least through De Sica's representation.

It is through this loss of placehood that any hope of help for Antonio is lost. In the eyes of these institutions, Antonio is simply another face among the crowd. As has long been said, this film conveys the gravity of the quotidian. A stolen bicycle can mean ruin for a family. Yet, according to the non-place, Antonio is at best a man who lost a bike and at worst, no one of importance at all. The consequences of his loss and his tragic circumstances are of no concern to these institutions. Thus, in his representations of these non-places, De Sica masterfully captured their essence decades before Marc Augé coined the term. Furthermore, it is visible in this film that the non-place represents the death of a place and the loss of identity, personality, and organic society in De Sica's mind. And it is the protagonist, Antonio Ricci, who both stands against the non-places and suffers at their hands, in place of the common citizens watching the film. Through this, De Sica shows the threat of the non-place, and the necessity of resisting its contractual constraint of citizens.

Roma Città Aperta

Roma Città Aperta is not a film overtly centered on the story of a particular character. However, the protagonists of Pina, Don Pietro, Manfredi, and others are linked to the anthropological places of the city, and their intimate knowledge of it aids in resisting German occupation. Pina is an important member of the community and strictly inhabits the apartment building, church, and similar anthropological places that house the activities of said community. Similarly, Manfredi and Don Pietro, the resistance leader and priest, are positioned in anthropological places and use their local knowledge of the landscape to evade and resist the Nazis. By geographically placing them (in a metaphorical and physical sense) in opposition to

the non-place antagonist of Bergmann, Rossellini paints them as defenders and allies of the landscape. And thus, in the same way Bergmann assaults the Roman landscape, identity, and spirit, the protagonists of the film take on the role of guarding these treasures, which in turn support their efforts as variables that Bergmann fails to account for or address.

In particular, Don Pietro and his church serve as a hub for interaction and activities in the community. He is a jack of all trades, he can referee soccer matches for the kids or provide refuge to a Nazi deserter. Unlike the church in *Ladri di Biciclette*, Don Pietro's church is the geographical center of his role in the community and his social interactions. The use of places of worship to evade the occupiers is referenced repeatedly and they take on a new place-hood as havens for like-minded patriots. Likewise, social events such as Don Pietro's interactions with Pina and Agostino (his fellow clergymen and assistant) or teaching the children of the neighborhood occur, whereas Antonio Ricci was simply shuffled along in something almost like a conveyor belt for producing churchgoers. At other times, Pina is seen praying in the church or discussing the war with Agostino. It is also the site of mourning for Pina's death and where Francesco later says goodbye to Pina's son Marcello as he must flee from the encroaching Nazi forces. The church in this film takes on the social attributes of an anthropological place and is associated with the morally righteous character of Don Pietro, which reveals Rossellini's positive conception of the institution and the character.

Don Pietro also brilliantly makes use of the city's other anthropological places. Whether he is residing in the church, watching over the residents in their apartment building, or carrying out covert missions for the resistance fighters, Don Pietro is truly a patriot, loyal to the Italian soil. He knows the passwords of the city, as made explicit in his use of whistling and code-phrases to identify allies and gain access to the places in the city under their control. In

short, the intimate knowledge of the city that the Italian protagonists possess is what aids them in their fight against the occupying Germans. This is exemplified by Don Pietro's assistance of the rebels, the underground passage used by men and children of the apartments, Manfredi's rooftop escape, and alike. As Don Pietro tells Bergmann after his torture of Manfredi, "You tried to destroy his soul, but you only destroyed his body!" (Roma Città Aperta 1:36:09). Likewise, Bergmann can impose all the rules and curfews he wishes, he could level buildings and continue taking lives, but he cannot change the soul of the city. The protagonists will fight endlessly to protect this identity and soul of the city, things which are inscribed in its anthropological places, against Bergmann's non-places and non-place-ification.

Le Mani sulla Città

Lastly, if one were to identify a protagonist in *Le Mani Sulla Città*, it would likely be De Vita. A talented orator and the man on the side of morality, De Vita is the closest thing we have to a protagonist, although it is not as if the film is *about* him. At best he represents the political left as an upstanding morally righteous David fighting the Goliath of corrupt Italian politicians, and at worst he is the ineffectual but good intentioned left wing politician. Nonetheless, as the 'protagonist' in such a film, De Vita is not only the moral choice or the charismatic one, he is also the man on the side of Neapolitan identity. He is characterized as a man that will protect the identity of the city, even when the identity of the city is not a particularly prominent issue in the film. I argue that Rosi uses this link between De Vita and the anthropological places, the identity of the city, as simple characterization for the most part, when the film about corruption, urban development, politics, and morality does not entirely address the issue of threats to more abstract

social or cultural identities. This of course supports the idea that the non-place represents a threat to the Italian characters, and when trying to situate a villain in a film they are often placed within and symbolically tied to non-places, and vice versa for the protagonists.

Early in the film, we arrive in the city council room of Naples, where we will first meet our protagonist, the leader of the left, De Vita. One of his first lines will characterize him as not only a man seeking justice for victims of this incident, but as a defender of the identity of the city. He lays the blame on the "shameful private speculation that is changing the face of our city." (Le Mani sulla Città 16:09). Here, De Vita not only accuses private speculation of bringing physical harm to the citizens of Naples, but also of harming the identity of the city itself. However, the alteration of the face of the city is not related to building safety codes per se. Instead of sticking to the issue of safety regulations, it is important to Rosi that De Vita, as the protagonist, demonstrates himself to be the ally of the anthropological place. To be the morally correct character he must defend people's homes and all the places imbued with social, cultural, and historic significance to the people of Naples, even if the discussion at hand is one of people's physical safety rather than preservation of culture and identity.

The scene which most demonstrates De Vita's protagonist status occurs in a vacant apartment where Nottola confronts De Vita. Their conversation comes to a head as Nottola stands by the window and De Vita stands in the corner of an empty room. At first, De Vita is filmed in a long shot and the camera, the blank space he inhabits, and Nottola are all bearing down on him. Nottola tries to argue that he is improving the city and improving living conditions. But as De Vita begins to retort, the camera cuts back to him in a medium close-up. With the simple, white, striped wallpaper as background, De Vita brilliantly exposes the true nature of Nottola's sins. Foregrounded here, in the center of the frame against a plain

background, De Vita is afforded all of our attention and thrust into the spotlight by Rosi. While it is true that he is seen more intermittently than a Don Pietro or Antonio Ricci, in this moment De Vita is the 'star of the show'.

De Vita's remarks on Nottola's sins are encapsulated within the line, "It's your methods I'm against, not the buildings." (Le Mani sulla Città 50:10). This line perfectly conveys the nature of what Nottola's urban development is doing to the city. The actual stone of a prison cell is no different from the stone of a family's fireplace. The materials, design, appearance, smell, taste, or texture, that is, the physical properties of any structure, cannot make it a non-place. It is the human interactions or lack thereof that makes the place or non-place. Edward Relph wrote, "Location or position is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of place," (Relph 29), and the same can be said of its physical properties. Nottola not only uses underhanded tactics, kicks people out of their homes, and even possibly has a hand in the collapse of their home on top of them, but he also creates the non-places that alter the face of the city that De Vita wishes to protect. He imposes the high-rent apartments, the shopping malls, the sports stadiums, and alike on the landscape. If De Vita operates in morals, to an ineffectual extent one may argue, then Nottola operates in contractuality, in bringing the city under his control and people under his thumb. These are the methods that De Vita opposes, the contractuality of Nottola and the non-place, lacking the markings of humanity and identity.

As De Vita gets his final words in against Nottola, at the moment his last line has been uttered, the camera cuts to black. Without any interest in Nottola's reaction to De Vita's lambasting of him (despite Nottola being the most prominent character in the film), the camera moves on to the next scene, also centered around De Vita. Along with this cut to black, we hear a man calling out names from a list and fade in to see people's belongings being packed onto

trucks as evictions take place. This arduous bureaucratic process of evicting people from their homes, requiring the indexing of people and removal of all that signified their relations to the place, transforms the home into a non-place. The government, in this case, is going down the list of families and wiping their homes of their 'placeness' as De Vita looks on in disgust. Similarly, De Vita's resistance within the bureaucracy of the government shows him to stand against the non-place-ification that those like Nottola wish to execute. He is insistent on an inquiry into the collapse of the apartment building, and makes every effort to uncover the corruption at hand. He remarks that it can take years to get a permit for demolition, and yet it is uncanny how quickly a permit was obtained in this case. In line with De Vita's remarks, one can imagine the damage that could be done to the city, both to its structures and its people, should Nottola acquire free-reign over the government. De Vita's resistance to an immoral, corrupt bureaucratic process is thus portrayed as resistant to the non-places, the changes that Nottola is attempting to make to the city.

As with *Ladri di Biciclette* and *Roma Città Aperta*, the protagonist, De Vita, is also inextricably linked to the anthropological places and successfully or unsuccessfully stands against the non-place. In *Le Mani Sulla Città*, it is perhaps even clearer how these relations to the geography of the city are used for characterization as opposed to conveying a message on their own. Rosi's film explores the political and economic issues of the city, while issues of culture or of the city's identity are essentially only brought up by De Vita. This characterizes him as the preserver and protector of the citizens' and city's identities, while those like Nottola, inadvertently or not, dispose of cultural, social, and historical identities from the landscape. *Le Mani Sulla Città* does not carry quite the same warning of threats to Italian identity that *Roma*

Città Aperta or *Ladri di Biciclette* do, and yet the characters are still deeply connected to the landscape and places that are manifestations of Italian life or those that are devoid of it.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Marc Augé's concepts of anthropological places and non-places were very much aligned with the contemporarily emerging field of humanistic geography, a movement among geographers to not simply examine geography as it pertains to the physical world, but to take note of the human experience of place, with our interactions with places as phenomena. Whether applied to human experience or film, it is a discipline which is supremely suited to analyzing the relations between person and place. And despite the fact that Augé and humanistic geographers confronted the issues of place in the 60's and 70's, concepts very similar to the relationships between a person and a place that they would later describe had already been identified, depicted, and employed in films such as *Roma Città Aperta*, *Ladri di Biciclette*, and *Le Mani sulla Città*.

Roma Città Aperta was a film that examined the changes and trauma that Rome experienced under Nazi occupation. *Ladri di Biciclette* examined the increasingly alienating Rome that De Sica witnessed post-war and post-fascism. And *Le Mani sulla Città* examined the rapidly developing Naples during Italy's economic boom, complete with corruption, profiteering, the power of private enterprises, and alike. Each film responded to developments in their city's identity, whether it came under new rule, entered new economic conditions, or otherwise. Furthermore, all three films decidedly took up arms against the new developments and the new entities on the landscape. Using Auge's theories, the representations of the anthropological

places and non-places in the films are such that one kind of place is depicted as desirable, and the other kind of place is shown to be unwelcome on Italian soil. Through associations with the characters that assault Italian cities and people, the non-places are cast as villains alongside Major Bergmann and Edoardo Nottola. Likewise, through associations with the characters that defend their city, stand for what is right, or simply wish to provide for their family, the anthropological places are cast as protagonists alongside Don Pietro, De Vita, and Antonio Ricci. The non-places are also characterized by control and contractuality as tools to achieve Bergmann and Nottola's desired domain over Rome and Naples. Meanwhile, the anthropological places can assist the protagonists, or rather be vulnerable and require protection. In this manner, Rossellini, De Sica, and Rosi make clear that they resent the proliferation of the non-places (invariably the 'new' entities) in their cities.

In Don Pietro's conflict with Major Bergmann he must combat the foreign villain who seeks control over the city. De Vita must resist the whitewash of Naples that would subject the citizens to Edoardo Nottola's reign. And Antonio Ricci is the unfortunate soul who must confront the entire city of Rome, which has turned antagonistic. He is forsaken as "just another case of a stolen bike" (Ladri di Biciclette 23:19) and left to fend for himself in a hostile environment, one which meets his every move with resistance. Each film has protagonists desperately trying to resist or survive these developments and changes in their cities and in their societies. Thereby, these films tell the story of three different filmmakers' reactions to the progression of their cities into supermodernity and the increased prevalence of contractual places. The films convey a wariness of and even disdain for the non-place through the 'antagonization' of it as an entity that threatens the social, historical, collective, and individual identities contained within the cities.

Moving forward, these ideas of anthropological places, non-places, and other concepts of humanistic geography are also lenses through which new meanings and messages can be uncovered when the question is asked of how the characters of a film relate to their physical surroundings. The analysis of spaces and places within a film is undoubtedly a key component of film analysis at large, and further interdisciplinary work incorporating film analysis and humanistic geography can open new pathways to understanding the films themselves. For instance, such an interdisciplinary approach to contemporary cinema may reveal much less friction between characters and non-places as such places (e.g. sites of public transport, airports, possibly even offices) have come to be so integral in modern life. Likewise, Doreen Massey argued for a global sense of place, a sense of place that was not exclusionary along racial, ethnic, or national boundaries (Massey 28). From this, have anthropological places come to be seen as positive only for the people to which it belongs? Or similarly, what sort of place (place as in an experienced location) is a Confederate monument? Issues such as these will provide ample topics for research in the future, hopefully through film as well as through geographic study.

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