

**Prudence, Resistance and Charity**  
**in Roberto Rossellini's Rome, Open City**

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With its use of contemporary events, location shots, and a complex plot that mixes comedy, tragedy, and passion play, Roberto Rossellini's 1945 film Rome, Open City founded the movement known as "Italian Neo-Realism," whose echoes in serious film continue to this day. Yet in addition to its cinematic genius, the film offers an effective presentation of the Christian teaching on the relation between religion and politics. It is not on the basis of tales of resistance, no matter how edifying or true, that Italy and Europe can be rebuilt, Rossellini argues, but on the basis of the Christian commands to "love your enemies" and to "forgive those who trespass against us." By reflecting on Rossellini's masterpiece I examine the triumph and the tragedy of the Christian Democratic Europe that Rome, Open City foretold and helped to found.

Roberto Rossellini's 1945 Rome, Open City is a film about Nazi oppression and Italian resistance. The film teaches that resistance to oppression is noble, and frequently humanly irrepressible, although often childish and futile. It is not on the basis of tales of resistance, no matter how edifying or true, that Italy and Europe can be rebuilt, Rossellini argues, but on the basis of the Christian command to "love your enemies." Rossellini shows how one can acknowledge the human weakness that makes us not just resist, but hate the sinner, while at the same time acknowledging this hate as a passion the Christian teaching calls upon men and women to overcome. By reflecting on Rossellini's masterpiece I propose to examine the triumph and the tragedy of the Christian Democratic Europe that Rome, Open City foretold and helped to found. The film was recognized as Christian, perhaps most acutely by the Marxist critics who condemned it.<sup>1</sup> Yet the film's teaching for the Europe of Year Zero, 1945, was so at odds with its own time and our own, it is hardly understood even today, more than six decades after its release.

Roberto Rossellini was a Roman playboy and a product of the Fascist regime's efforts to beat Hollywood at its own game. Mussolini's Italy created the first modern film school in the West, the Centro Sperimentale Cinematografico, headed by his son, Vittorio, and instituted the first system of protection and taxation to support a local film industry, thereby providing the model for postwar cultural policies in Western Europe (and Canada and Israel, for that matter). The great question about the postwar Italian cinema is whether it is part of antifascism, or part of the legacy of fascism.<sup>2</sup> Certainly Rossellini, like Renoir and Eisenstein, was politically quite flexible, but over an even bigger range.<sup>3</sup> His first war trilogy was made under (and supported the politics of) the Fascist regime. His first film, La nave bianca (The White Fleet) shows the Italian navy functioning as efficiently as battleship Potemkin after the mutiny, and I am told has large debts to Eisenstein. His second film, Un pilota ritorna (A Pilot Returns), displays the Italian war effort in Greece, and Rossellini's third

film, L'uomo dalla croce (The Man with a Cross) presents the war in Russia as a literal crusade against international Bolshevism, and in centering around a martyr-priest killed by Italy's godless enemies anticipates the plot of Rome, Open City (Liehm 1984, 46; Bondanella 2004, 56-58).

But it is his 1945 Rome Open City (Roma, città aperta, also known in English as Open City) that was the first Italian film of the sound era to achieve genuine international recognition. The film was a box office and critical smash in Italy, the United States, and France, where it received the Palme D'Or at Cannes in 1946. It is the film that launched the movement that would become known as "Italian neorealism" -- where the defining features of neorealism are an encounter with contemporary social or political problems, the use of non-actors and ensemble cast, and, technically speaking, long takes rather than visible montage or invisible editing.<sup>4</sup>

Rome, Open City is generally regarded as one of the most influential films in the history of cinema. The film uses contemporary events, location shots, scenes from ordinary life ranging from two girls carrying a giant water jug, to a toddler sitting on a potty, and a complex plot that mixes slapstick comedy, tragedy, and passion play. For purposes of this paper, I wish to attend not only to the film's cinematic genius, but principally to its teaching on politics: indeed, it may have been the most effective presentation of the Christian teaching on the relation between religion and politics in the 20th century.<sup>5</sup>

The problem the film sets for itself is no less than to refound European civilization after the war. What is the situation left by the war? It is well set out by Hartmann, the only German officer in the film who is also a gentleman, in a speech responding to his Gestapo superior Bergmann's claim that the Germans are a master race:

*Wir bringen es nicht weiter als morden, morden, morden! Ganz Europa haben wir mit Leichen übersät, und aus diesen Kriegen wächst unaufhaltsam*

*der Hass, Hass, überall Hass! Wir werde vom Hass wertilgt ohne Hoffnung.... Alle werden wir sterben, sterben ohne Hoffnung.*

We bring nothing but death, death, death! We have filled all Europe with corpses. And from these wars spring hate, hate, everywhere hate. We will be wiped out by this hatred, there is no hope for us!.... We will all die, die without hope (Rossellini 1985, 89).<sup>6</sup>

Hartmann is worldly, and his speech about hate reflects the world's wisdom -- he is also the instrument of worldly wisdom in that he is the one who actually kills the martyr-priest Don Pietro with a coup-de-grace pistol shot to the head when the Italian firing squad under Hartmann's command deliberately muffs the job.

One might think that Hartmann's hopelessness is only for Germans, but that would be too easy a solution and is denied by the film. If the Germans are exterminated by the hate of their victims and enemies, which is perhaps no less than they deserve, then even the avengers will drown in their own righteous wrath, Rossellini warns us. In the face of this problem, the task is to find a way to live, and, as Don Pietro puts it in his last speech to a human being, the task is not to die well, but to live well. To live well for many in Europe after 1945, to live well despite your past as one of the "Tedeschi" or "Fascisti," as (German) Nazi or (Italian) Nazi collaborator, or, for that matter, as Stalinist or Stalinist collaborator.

Like many great works, Rome Open City has a reduplicating plot, or rather, its plot lies in the enmeshing of multiple doubles. At one level the plot appears to be the tale of three couples: two Italian, Pina and Francesco, Marina and Manfredi; and one German who destroys their hopes, the Gestapo colonel Bergmann and his lesbian sidekick Ingrid.<sup>7</sup>

Pina (Anna Magnani) is the widow of a pilot, mother of one son, Marcello, and pregnant and due to be married to her lover, the underground printer Francesco. It is the story of this family, about to be joined in marriage but instead shattered by the Gestapo murder of

Pina, that frames the movie. Yet Pina and Francesco are in a way only the above-stairs echo of a more significant -- or seemingly more significant -- couple, the actress Marina (Maria Michi), and her lover, the Communist and resistance leader known by his nom-de-guerre of "Giorgio Manfredi."<sup>8</sup> Marina, actress and whore, betrays Manfredi to the Gestapo -- we will encounter the same actress in a similar role in the first sequel to Rome Open City, Rossellini's 1946 Paisà, in an episode set months after the liberation of Rome.<sup>9</sup>

Manfredi is the film's "McGuffin," he is whom all seek, the resistance leader pursued by the Gestapo and their puppets in the police of Rome, whom Don Pietro risks his life futilely to preserve. He is the seeming key, the man on whom the future ostensibly depends: as Francesco says, Manfredi can explain, where he cannot, why the "winter" of Nazi occupation will eventuate in a "spring" of a better future:

Pina: But when will it end? Sometimes I just can't go on. This winter it seems like it'll never end!

Francesco: It'll end, Pina, and spring will come back, and it'll be more beautiful than ever, because we'll be free. We have to believe it, we have to want it! See, I know these things, I feel them, but I can't explain it.

Manfredi'd be able to, he's been to university, he's traveled. He can talk so well. But I think that's the way it is, that we shouldn't be afraid now or in the future. Because we're in the right, the right's on our side.<sup>10</sup>

One can see why as late as the 1990's Angela Dalle Vacche could still be fooled by the apparent plot: "Manfredi in Open City," she writes, "embodies the nation as a whole, not just the working class" (Dalle Vacche 1992, 182-183). The enigma of the film is to understand why Manfredi (and his like) are not the salvation of Italy or Europe, despite his manifest heroism, why the efforts to protect him, to save him, are ultimately meaningless, why their failure is meaningless, and what the film offers in their place as meaningful.<sup>11</sup> Marina, we

know from her first appearance in the fourth minute of the film is going to be key to the mystery of the vanity or failure of Manfredi. I will argue that Rome Open City valorizes Marina's will to live above Manfredi's (or even Don Pietro's) will to resist: what compromises her will to live is her unwillingness to be poor, to be a scrounging housewife, to live like Pina only without the romanticism that gets Pina killed.

The third and final coupling in the film is the perverse coupling of the campy and effeminate Gestapo officer Bergmann and his lesbian sidekick Ingrid, the only coupling of the film whose sterility is not accidental but essential. No doubt in linking Nazism to homosexuality the film is least politically correct and least palatable today.<sup>12</sup> This is, I think, the only thing in the film that needs not just to be explained but to be explained away.

In addition to the doubling of the couples there is the doubling of the Resistance and its foes. Not just the adults but their children, too, are carrying out armed resistance to the German occupier, under the command of Comrade Romoletto, a pudgy eleven-year old. Rossellini at one point cuts from the adult resistance to the children's resistance.<sup>13</sup> This forces us to consider whether the resistance fighters are more than overgrown children, and whether resistance is more than a child's game -- though like all good children's games, with a serious possibility of deathly danger. In the game of resistance adults may be as out of place as the priest Don Pietro trying to referee the children's catechism class football game.

The foes of the Resistance are the Tedeschi (Germans) and the Fascisti. The Fascisti are in a way commedia dell'arte versions of the Tedeschi, or perhaps one should say Punch and Judy versions of the Tedeschi -- the menace of the Fascisti only becomes clear when one sees them not in themselves but as mirrors or helpers of the Tedeschi. The Fascisti have subordinated their will to that of the German occupier, but they are incompetent servitors, whether called to suppress a bread riot at a bakery, to assist the Gestapo in making arrests, or in carrying out an execution by firing squad.

Of course Italy cannot be redeemed on the basis of her failure to be as evil as she ostensibly wished to be. Rossellini shows how the rejection of evil that springs from human weakness is an insufficient consolation, using the figure of the Austrian deserter who joins Manfredi in the refuge of Don Pietro's sacristy, and is captured together with them. The Austrian quits the war because he cannot go on, after the "inferno" of the Battle of Cassino. Yet the Austrian kills himself when captured: his inability to live as part of the Nazi new order is simply a consequence of inability to live simply. The figure of the Austrian shows us that disgust with the evils of the war is not a sufficient basis for a new life after the war.

The only major figure who is unique within the film is the priest, Don Pietro.<sup>14</sup> Don Pietro is, as Pina calls him, a partisan priest: he participates in the Resistance, not just hiding Resistance fighters but acting as courier of money and information. Don Pietro does not let his sense of morals interfere with doing what is right: if necessary, to prevent the exposure of resistance arms to the Tedeschi he uses a frying pan to whack a sick old man who won't be quiet. Don Pietro does not chastise Pina for coming pregnant to the altar with Francesco. In this he contrasts favorably with the Communist Manfredi, whose insistence on sermonizing his ex-mistress Marina gives her the final push to betray him to the Tedeschi, as we shall see.

Don Pietro describes himself to Bergmann as "one who humbly practices a little charity," and refuses to accept Bergmann's description of Manfredi, the communist and veteran of the sacrilegious Civil War in Spain, as his enemy.<sup>15</sup> Don Pietro will fight the Germans, even if illegally: he does not dispute Bergmann's description of him as a traitor punishable by the rule of war of the Reich, nor does he dispute that Manfredi, and by extension, himself, are franc-tireurs liable to be shot under international law (Rossellini 1997, minute 83; Rossellini 1985, 128-129). The priest's equanimity in the face of Bergmann's capital accusations is astonishing. Don Pietro, alone among the partisans, fights his own hate for the Germans.

Don Pietro is the only Italian in the movie who does not blame others for the fate of Rome, a declared "Open City" at the mercy of her German occupiers and American would-be liberators.<sup>16</sup> Because Don Pietro understands and preaches that the fate of Rome is punishment for the sins of the Romans, Don Pietro has the power to forgive and absolve, which Manfredi, the Communist, crucially lacks.

Don Pietro is, of course, a martyr, though the quality of his martyrdom, that to which he bears witness in his martyrdom, is not readily manifest. Unlike Christ, Don Pietro is not killed by the Romans (or the Jews), and he is not innocent in the eyes of man or according to the laws of man. As Harry Lawton writes, "Don Pietro is shot for his deeds, not his faith" (Lawton 1978). Unlike Lawton, I will argue that these deeds are the merely human side of Don Pietro, and the movie is intended not as a revelation of his deeds but as a passion of his faith, a passion of grace. In his martyrdom, Don Pietro becomes a man and puts away childish things, renouncing the anger (or thumos) that motivates resistance.

The film is built around two apparent melodramas, reflecting the two heterosexual couples. Yet the tale of Pina and Francesco ends on the morning of her wedding about halfway through the film. Pina asserts "I am not afraid" (43), but she turns out to be too afraid to face life without Francesco, and so dies: Pina is killed by the Germans as she chases after the truck hauling away her beloved after the raid on their building (55). If you have seen one still from Rome Open City, you have seen the still of Pina's pregnant corpse, shot from the feet stretched on the ground to show her stocking and garter. This indulgence of the viewer's necrophiliac desires reminds us by contrast that there is something almost manly in the romantic inflexibility of Pina. Yet precisely from this moment, when all seems ruined, the machinery of the plot has already been set to work to eventuate in the spiritual rebirth of Europe.

The second melodrama is that of Marina and Manfredi, the actress and the Communist fighter she loves and betrays. Marina, we learn from watching her operate in Paisà, has a boundless will to live and thrive. Her addiction to cocaine is not, as Manfredi thinks, the center of her life: it is what she uses to make the unbearable, the life of an actress/whore in German-occupied Rome, bearable. What Marina wants, but does not know how to get, is a family. The crucial dialogue preparing us for this repudiation takes place when Pina meets Manfredi, and hears of his affair with Marina:

Pina: A woman can change, especially when she is in love.

Manfredi: But what makes you think she is in love?

Pina: Why shouldn't she be? (13).

Manfredi leads a raid on the German truck convoy carrying off Francesco, and successfully frees him and the other detainees. On the run after the raid on Pina's building, the two are scooped up by Marina. Marina welcomes the two of them into her small but lavishly appointed apartment and busies herself with domestic chores to welcome her lover and the wedding-day widower Francesco. But Manfredi refuses to be reconciled to Marina, and his refusal is reinforced when he finds a bottle of injectable cocaine in Marina's handbag (cocaine supplied by Ingrid, the lesbian Gestapo operative, in the hopes of getting information from Marina about Manfredi). Marina tries to sell Manfredi a phony story about returning the cocaine to the dentist, but realizes that Manfredi does not believe her:

Marina: Why are you looking at me that way? You don't believe me.

Manfredi: I don't believe you. Anyway, your life is your own. I haven't any right to tell you what to do. Who am I, anyway. Just one ... who has passed through one moment of your life.

Marina: You were going to say, "one of the many guys."

Manfredi: But I didn't say it.

Marina: But you thought it. Yes, I've had lovers, of course. What was I supposed to do? How do you think I bought this furniture, my clothes, everything? With my pay? My pay covers my stockings and my cigarettes, that's all! I've just looked out for myself, like everybody else. That's life.

Manfredi: Life is what we want it to be.

Marina: Words, words! Life's dirty and ugly. I know what poverty is, and I'm scared of it. If I hadn't done what I did, today maybe I'd be married to a trolley conductor, and I'd be dying of hunger... me, my kids, and him.

Manfredi: Poor Marina! And you think happiness means having a fancy apartment, fancy clothes, a maid, rich lovers. For this you have given up the only thing that makes life worth living even now, when things are blackest.

Love, love for one's husband, for one's children, for one's comrades. That which you call love is a poor, dirty thing.

Marina: You didn't seem to mind!

Manfredi: I hoped you would change. I see now I was wrong. Poor Marina!

Marina: If you'd really loved me, you'd have changed me. But you're just like all the others -- no, worse, because at least the others don't preach at me!<sup>17</sup>

Though Manfredi preaches to Marina about family, his preaching is not an effort to change her, but an explanation for repudiating her. Manfredi will not reform or rehabilitate Marina; instead he uses the fact that she is a whore to break off their relationship.<sup>18</sup> Manfredi, in keeping with the Communist attitude to reactionary classes, would not save the film's Magdalen, even if he could. He does not believe in the redemptive power of love -- and he may be right about human love, about man's love for man, woman's love for man, or even of man's love for God. What can redeem us, according to the Catholic doctrine of grace, is only

God's love for human beings. "Christianity," says Rossellini in a 1952 interview, "does not pretend that everything is good and perfect: it recognizes sin and error, but it also admits the possibility of salvation. It is the other side who only allow man to be perfectly consistent and infallible" (Rossellini 1973-74, 76).

In any case, Manfredi is not young, and has a professional revolutionary's fear of human attachments. One might ask whether his scorn for Marina is the explanation or the excuse for his refusal "to make an honest woman out of her," as the saying goes.

Marina informs on Manfredi to the Gestapo not out of weakness but out of strength. Pressed on the phone by Ingrid, Marina does not at first pass along Manfredi's whereabouts. Meanwhile Manfredi is searching her handbag and finds the cocaine (Rossellini 1997, minute 64; Rossellini 1985, 106-108). Only after Manfredi has broken with her, and to add insult to injury, virtually called her a whore who has given up the only thing that makes a woman's life worthwhile, the prospect of a husband and children, does Marina find the determination to hand over her false lover to the Nazis. Marina's betrayal of Manfredi comes out of the same kind of strength that motivates the partisans. By betraying Manfredi, Marina asserts her freedom, that is to say, her possibility of changing from whore to wife and mother. Marina asserts her freedom by punishing Manfredi for denying that she has the possibility to freely change herself. Of course the betrayal is horribly self-destructive, though Marina's vitality, unlike Pina's, exceeds her capacity for self-destructiveness. We will see Marina (or the actress who plays her again in Paisà, Maria Michi), now using the name "Francesca," just another Roman streetwalker, except for her vain hope of finding the right man in an American soldier. But there is hope for "Francesca," as for Marina, as long as she continues to hope, as long as she refuses to succumb to the sin of despair.

In Rome Open City only the Church offers the possibility of the overcoming of evil through forgiveness, through charity rather than righteous anger. What the Germans and their

Italian puppets deserve is expressed by Don Pietro when he curses them upon seeing the tortured body of Manfredi: "You are damned! You will be crushed in the dust, like worms! You are damned" (95). For this curse, Don Pietro immediately begs forgiveness from God. This curse is not to be lifted by human works alone: as Don Pietro has already said to Pina, who questions the justice of Rome's own passion, "we have so much to be forgiven, so we must pray, and forgive much" (31).

At the zero hour of 1945 the Church bears witness through suffering, not through preaching, since the standards the Church holds out and the consolations it offers are still clear to all Europeans. The Church knows human weakness, and so can atone for it: consider that the Church, depicted in Rome Open City sheltering enemies of the Nazis, would soon be sheltering Nazis from Allied vengeance. In that way the Church provides a small, and perhaps distorted, model, of what would be necessary for a Europe in which the hatred so richly earned by the Germans will somehow be overcome.

Rome Open City formally contrasts resistance and martyrdom. The children running away from their successful attack on a German fuel truck are paired with the boys walking slowly away from the martyrdom of Don Pietro, most notably by the heavy use of music. Ostensibly Rome Open City is a drama of resistance, and by elevating the Italian Resistance the film performed much the same function on the international scene that Gaullist propaganda performed for France: the film made it possible to imagine Italy as one of the Allies. Yet we have seen that the film is, at a deeper level, a critique of resistance. Rossellini and the Church he depicts accept resistance as humanly inevitable, but deny that the memory of resistance can provide the basis for going on as Europeans, not least because to go on as Europeans means to go on as Italian and Germans, as former Fascisti and former Tedeschi, no less than as heroes of the resistance (if any survive until Liberation).

Writing in 1958, and perhaps reflecting on the miracle of European rebirth and reconstruction, the "Spring" that Rossellini's Francesco had prophesied, Hannah Arendt saw the ground of constructive human action in the linked possibilities of forgiveness and natality:

If left to themselves, human affairs can only follow the law of mortality, which is the most certain and the only reliable law of a life spent between birth and death. It is the faculty of action that interferes with this law because it interrupts the inexorable automatic course of daily life, which in its turn, as we saw, interrupted and interfered with the cycle of the biological life process. The life span of man running toward death would inevitably carry everything human to ruin and destruction if it were not for the faculty of interrupting it and beginning something new, a faculty which is inherent in action like an ever-present reminder that men, though they must die, are not born in order to die but in order to begin ... Action is, in fact, the one miracle-working faculty of man, as Jesus of Nazareth ... must have known very well when he likened the power to forgive to the more general power of performing miracles, putting both on the same level and within the reach of man (Arendt 1958, 246-247).

What does forgiveness have to do with natality? Arendt, who herself did not have children and who regarded the duties of bringing up children as chains that bind us to the "biological life process", is thinking centrally of the metaphorical rebirth of the reconciled sinner as a "new man" capable of acting on new principles and creating new laws. But not just metaphorical but literal natality also requires forgiveness. In the first place, in order to bring up children we parents have to forgive ourselves, that is to say, we have to refrain from using our failings with our children yesterday as an explanation, and hence an excuse, for our failings as parents today and tomorrow. Second, our children have to learn, in becoming free

adults, to forgive us: that is to say, to see themselves as free to act, notwithstanding whatever unjustifiable burdens we parents have mistakenly imposed upon them.

European vitality, as Rossellini depicts it, therefore has two related conditions. The first is faith in God's saving love, and the possibility of forgiveness and reconciliation between sinners. The second is faith in one's own ability to be a father, the faith that Francesco expresses in permitting Pina's son to call him "Papa" (Rossellini 1985, 67).

Both the public opinion and demographic statistics of contemporary Europe, and Italy in the foremost, suggest that both faiths are lost from European post-Christians. The problem, one might say, is not unrelated to the thing that most separates us from Rossellini's teaching, the new sexual and personal mores that undermine marital and especially parental commitments, at the same time that they force us to recognize the film's "homophobia." Barring a return to the Church the only hope for Europe is that Europe's aging "young people," including homosexuals and lesbians, threatened both in their freedoms and their demographic prospects by militant Islam, find a faith in the future of Europe that makes it possible for them to bring children into that future, to be parents. That, however, may be a greater miracle than any performed hitherto by God or his saints.<sup>19</sup>

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**Notes**

1. Though the most perceptive critique of the political doctrine of Rome Open City from a revolutionary Marxist takes full advantage of more than two decades of hindsight (Cannella 1973-74). Michael Rogin (2004) reads the film as a prophetic elegy for the lost possibilities of the Popular Front. Rogin, like the Italian Communists of the 1940's is fooled by a name: In the Stalinist lexicon a "Popular Front" means an alliance of all "progressive" elements under the hidden leadership of disciplined party cadres; but Rogin uses "Popular Front" to describe the Italian resistance, which as Gestapo chief Bergmann correctly points out in the film in fact united members of all political factions, from the Communists to the Monarchists to the even more reactionary clericalists. For the Resistance, patriotic resentment of the German occupier was a stronger motive than ideology. The 1973 English editor of Cannella's essay sees the confusion: "The apparent culmination of the Resistance was the formation of the post-war Popular Front coalition government, which included Christian Democrats, Communists, and Socialists. Although the reality behind the front became clear for all to see in 1948, when the Communists and the Socialists were thrown out of the coalition, the interclass alliance of the Resistance and the post-war Popular Front government remains a pre-eminent symbol for the Communist party to this day" (Cannella 1973-74, n. 3). Cf. the formulation of Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (1976-77, 112): "Rossellini," he writes "politically had very little to do with the neo-realist movement at all -- or rather had to do with it only in the years in which anti-Fascist unity also comprised Christian Democracy."
2. Sam Rohdie (1981) argues, for example, that the beginnings of the neo-realist aesthetic are not to be found in opposition to fascism. Rohdie rather locates the beginnings of neo-realism among those fascist filmmakers and film critics, most vocally Antonioni, who wanted the

Fascist state to use its power over the Italian cinema industry to elevate rather than commercialize the intellectual content of the product.

3. It is common to speak of Rossellini's fascist films as a past the director himself found shameful or embarrassing; see e.g. Marcus 2004, 78. It is true that these films are still largely unavailable because of the ban on Fascist cinema imposed by the Italian film and critical establishments after 1945, but I have yet to find any evidence that Rossellini himself ever disavowed or downplayed the significance of his first war trilogy in perfecting his craft or his teaching.

4. The echoes of Italian neo-realism in serious film continue to this day. Among the late heirs of neo-realism perhaps the most important is the Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami, who in films such as The Wind Will Carry Us, Where is the Friend's House and Ten seems to have realized Cesare Zavattini's program for a cinema without technically proficient actors, a prepared script, or most of the techniques of editing (Zavattini 1953). In Ten, Kiarostami has also managed to eliminate cinematography by relying on a fixed camera.

5. Rossellini himself describes the film as "didactic" (Rossellini 1973).

6. Rossellini 1985 is the English translation of scripts transcribed from those prints available to the editors in 1972. While I will give page references to this volume, the reader is forewarned that I have corrected the translation frequently according to my own sense of the Italian in the restored film published on DVD (Rossellini 1997); unmarked references in parenthesis represent the minutes of this 1997 DVD. Though the film has dubbed rather than direct sound, the German characters always speak in German among themselves.

7. Marina herself is doubled in Pina's sister Laretta, another actress/whore, distinguished from Marina in that she enjoys the company, or at least the protection, of "Fritz."

8. Manfredi's birth name is Luigi Ferrari, as revealed by the diligent work of Rome's Fascist police commissioner (Rossellini 1985, 72); Manfredi will be executed under the heavily symbolic name of Giovanni Episcopo, "John Bishop."

9. It could be argued that one is committing some version of the intentional fallacy in interpreting aspects of Rome Open City in the light of Rossellini's subsequent films, even including Paisà. For my purposes here it is enough to say that we are following the directions indicated by his subsequent films in approaching Rome Open City. Since I aim at a political, that is to say, rhetorical, understanding of Rome Open City, the intentional fallacy is in any case no fallacy, and we should not be surprised that the film's intentions are clarified, like the intentions of other political or rhetorical projects, by subsequent rhetorical projects and subsequent political events.

10. Rossellini 1985, 69-70, translation slightly modified. My attention was drawn to this passage by James Farrell (1947, 111, 122). Farrell correctly points out that while Manfredi "is supposed to be the bearer of the ideas and the program" for a better world, "he never states these ideals in the film, and the audience is left in the same state concerning them as are Francesco and Pina." Farrell infers from this that the message of the film is therefore "trust the Party and its enlightened cadres"; I would argue that this message is undercut by Manfredi's personal failings and even his manifest incompetence as a Resistance leader; the true causes of his capture and death.

11. There is a further enigma about the reception of the film: why anyone in the PCI ever thought the film or Rossellini were sympathetic to their movement. They seem to have been taken in by Manfredi's noble death, ignoring its futility.

12. "Those who see the film today," wrote Michael Rogin shortly before his death in 2001, "are more likely to wonder why Rossellini ... lined up Nazis with the homosexual decadence

that was one of their targets"; Rogin 2004, 131-2; in this vein see also Ginsberg 1990. It is worth noting that Feist, who plays Bergmann, was a gay Austrian Jew who had lived in Italy since 1926 (Gallagher 1998, 135).

13. Rossellini 1997, minute 18; 1985, 58-9.

14. Don Pietro is mirrored by the young priest who attends him to the killing ground, but he is elevated so far above the young priest by his Passion that there is really no doubling. The young priest is played by Alberto Tavazzi, who had previously played the chaplain-martyr in Rossellini's violently anti-Bolshevik L'uomo della croce (Bondanella 2004, 56-58).

15. Rossellini 1985, 128, 130. Manfredi, for his part refuses to revive the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, and betray to the Gestapo the Badoglio-led monarchist reactionaries in the Resistance (Rossellini 1997, minute 91; this passage appears to be missing from the transcription in Rossellini 1985).

16. Rossellini 1985, 128. On the military history behind the plot of the film see Forgacs 2004. Rome was declared an "Open City" by the Badoglio government, but this declaration was honored in the breach by the German occupiers, and hence not respected by the Allies either.

17. Translation modified from Rossellini 1985, 109-110.

18. Millicent Marcus notes correctly that the dialogue between Marina and Manfredi "quickly degenerates into accusations and counteraccusations of the bitterest and most vindictive sort, ending in a stalemate of rigid, mutually defensive positions that admit of no compromise or progress" (Marcus 1986, 39). Marcus, however, thinks that the sterility of the conversation somehow serves to characterize only Marina, and does not reflect on Manfredi as well.

19. Thanks to the students in my Fall 2006 course on "Revolutionary Cinema" for their thoughts and patience. An earlier version of this paper was presented on a panel on "New World Orders in Literature and Film: Europe, Africa, Asia" at the 2007 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, and I would like to thank my respondent, John R. Bokina, and my wife, Anna Kochin, for their comments.