

Italian Neorealism
and
GLOBAL CINEMA

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Chapter I

On the Ruins of Masculinity: The Figure of the Child in Italian Neorealism and the German Rubble-Film

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Italian and German Cinema after World War II

In a 1947 article titled “Quo Vadis Italia” in the German film journal *Neue Filmwelt*, K. H. Bergmann praises postwar Italian cinema’s turn to “realism” and concludes that the “Italian film has reached its leading position in today’s cinema by boldly breaking the bridges to the past and daring to venture to a cinematic new world.—They have dared to do it and won, and we—we should learn from them.”¹ Though Bergmann’s claim of a complete cinematic break is dubious—it is now well established that many of neorealism’s “radical” innovations had been evolving throughout the Fascist period²—the comment is noteworthy for its desire to link early postwar cinema in Italy to that of Germany. Although critics worldwide had praised the Italian films, such a direct call to adopt neorealist approaches had a special resonance in Germany, where the film industry faced, like the rest of the country, widespread physical destruction, defeat at the hands of the Allies, and subsequent social and economic chaos. Furthermore, for an industry recently dominated by Goebbels’s propaganda ministry, this call for a clean break would have rung with a particularly piercing urgency.

Since the late 1940s, critics and scholars have compared Germany’s rubble-films—films made between 1945 and 1951 that were about contemporary issues and often shot in the postwar rubble—to Italian neorealist films, not least because Roberto Rossellini’s *Germany, Year Zero* was shot in the Berlin rubble (as well as in Roman studios) in 1947.³ Though there were certain obvious similarities between the films—



Germany, Year Zero (Roberto Rossellini, 1947)

engagement with the contemporary context, shooting on location, and generally avoiding film stars—most scholars conclude that rubble-films fell miserably short of neorealist works. Most critics merely contrast the two genres via the differences in the political interests of the films' auteurs and ostensibly the filmic content.⁴ A second group of scholars admits that rubble-films have some of the same tendencies as neorealist films, but then argues (usually without much documentation) that rubble-films violate them in their lack of social commitment and in their refusal to engage directly with the protagonists' participation in Fascism.⁵ Both groups claim to make a comparison but then rely on neorealism's traditional political content to distinguish the films.

Although such political differences may be important in distinguishing between the genres, it has become common practice to question whether the conspicuous political content of the plot or even "realistic" film techniques constitute the core of Italian neorealism.⁶ Symptomatic of this trend, Marcia Landy, in her book *Italian Film*, avoids these recurring questions about neorealist films' political content or commitment by adopting a largely Deleuzian model to explain the transformation undertaken by neorealist films. In his dense and rich *Cinema* volumes,

Gilles Deleuze emphasizes not so much neorealist political content or film technique but rather a new "cinematic image," that is, the "time-image" that had been evolving throughout the history of cinema up until that point, most prominently (and, one must admit, quite apolitically) in early Hitchcock films.⁶ Previously, in the historically (and commercially still) dominant action-image, the part and the whole, of both movement and perception, were "organically" related in an easily comprehensible unity. In the action-image, the characters can absorb the situation, synthesize understanding, and act effectively, for example, in the conventional action film, in which the protagonist faces a series of challenges, quickly understands the obstacles, and acts effectively to overcome or circumvent them in both part and whole. In the time-image, however, these links between part and whole become "serial" rather than organic; they grow dispersive and are difficult to comprehend. In this newly uncertain and unpredictable cinematic situation, the characters are left struggling to read and comprehend the image rather than merely absorbing it and reacting to it.

Like Landy, I find Deleuze's analysis of Italian neorealism convincing, in large part because it successfully circumnavigates the dead-end questions about neorealist films' overt political content or their deployment of specific techniques. But in shifting the terms of the debate about what constitutes the core innovation of neorealist films, it is also important not to adopt Deleuze's account wholesale. In another context, I have taken explicit issue with Deleuze's analysis of neorealism and tried to demonstrate how sensitivity to the gendered aspects of these films can augment his analysis of the emergent time-image.⁷ By considering how neorealist films dismantle the traditional masculine protagonist of feature films, one opens up neorealism to a different type of politics, one more fundamental to the cinematic image than the putative political commitments of the neorealist plot or filmmakers.

If one understands that a gendered social crisis contributed to the emergence of what Deleuze calls the time-image, then one has uncovered another common ground between the early postwar cinemas in Italy and Germany that likewise circumvents conventional questions about their overt political content. By revising Deleuze's description of a postwar cinematic crisis, I hope to introduce a nuanced comparative study of canonical Italian neorealism and a marginalized genre. In many neorealist as well as rubble-films, the male child plays a central role in representing the humiliated males, whose presence and fate refigure the traditional masculine action-image. Both cinemas were concerned with

what Kaja Silverman has termed marginal males, men who were compelled—in the wake of the war and the social crises surrounding it—to embrace lack and inadequacy.¹⁰ Italian and German postwar films reveal that one of the most effective ways to represent this lack was via the male child. They deploy such children in very specific ways to rework some of the constitutive elements of the Deleuzian action-image, including the system of masculine specularity, the relation between character and space, and the filmic duel that grounds the conflict-centered narrative. In the innocent figure of the male child, the two cinemas show markedly similar narrative and technical strategies: the child solves specific representational problems that arise from the surrender of the heroic male protagonist.

Partisans, Workers, and the *Heimkehrer*: Masculine Trauma after the War

In describing the emergence of the time-image in postwar Italy, Deleuze resorts—uncharacteristically for his *Cinema* books—to historical context. Generally, his very auteurist history of cinema focuses on filmmakers and films that he regards as advancing the development from movement-image to time-image, which for him seems to be primarily a development internal to the history of cinema, so it is indeed unusual that he explains one of the most important developments in his book with the historical crisis of World War II. However, the crisis central to Deleuze's cinema history was both wider and deeper than his study suggests. Even if the pure optical and sound situation manifested itself most importantly in the Italian films, the widespread social crisis produced similar images in Germany around the same time. Though it is difficult to establish that one cinema adopted themes or techniques from the other, they manifest remarkably similar approaches—thematically as well as technically—to the representational challenges they shared in the postwar period. The similarities in cinematic images that I shall be investigating arise because of something widespread in the postwar experiences of Italy and Germany: what Silverman has described as masculine trauma. The postwar cinematic crisis Deleuze elaborates unfolds not only in a cinematic register (as his philosophy and history of cinema implies), but also in a gendered fashion that I want to underscore as fundamental to the politics of these films, both Italian and German.

In times of historical crisis, Silverman theorizes, marginal males lose their faith in the dominant fictions of society. In normal, or at least so-

cially stable, times—that is, when rapid social upheaval does not threaten or alter social roles as they are passed on from generation to generation—subjects are, à la Althusser, interpellated to their positions and live out their lives in ways that more or less align with preordained roles. For this system to function, these subjects must believe in society and their roles, and thus in the “dominant fiction” of a given society. One key dominant fiction in western European and U.S. society is the denial of, lack, or inadequacy of the masculine subject, whose privilege and relative authority generally seem certain. At moments of historical crisis, when the male subject becomes overwhelmed or “ideologically fatigued,” this dominant fiction grows labile, and the disavowal of lack starts to fail. Silverman suggests that the trauma of the wartime experience made it difficult for men to reintegrate into the dominant fictions of the family, community, and nation that, as George Mosse observes, the family underpins.¹¹ In postwar Germany, for instance, historians have documented how the domestic/familial sphere became uncannily alien for the returning man,¹² and rubble-films depict how marginal males fail to reassume the roles allotted to them by the dominant fiction. In certain historical moments, then, the discourse of masculinity can operate differently; it can expose male lack, introduce it as alterity, and invert the normal specular relations that underpin it.¹³

Postwar Italian and German films feature just such marginal males in place of the traditional protagonist. In canonical films like *Rome, Open City* (1945) and *Paisan* (1946), the traditional masculine heroes are overpowered or even killed by pacifying forces, often the occupying Germans. Not only are they killed, but their deaths are conspicuously humiliating.¹⁴ Even when Italian neorealist films are not explicitly concerned with wartime and postwar issues, their male heroes demonstrate the kind of lack rampant during the occupation and the postwar period. For example, in other canonical films like *Bicycle Thief* (1948) and *Umberto D* (1952), the humiliation of the male protagonist rests in his precarious socioeconomic status, which invariably prevents him from fulfilling the role of economic provider and protector ascribed to men by the dominant fiction. Whether or not they are conspicuously concerned with wartime or postwar issues, all of these films chart how male characters—especially the male protagonist— forfeit their position of social authority and privilege. The similar figure that German rubble-films invariably follow across the desolate postwar landscape is the Heimkehrer, or “soldier returning home.”¹⁵ The Heimkehrer likewise does not correspond to the desiring male usually postulated in fiction films or

psychoanalytic film theories.¹⁶ Much like his Italian counterparts, the Heimkehrer constitutes a passive, marginal male who is neither active nor central, and who ends up complicating—often inverting—differences that traditionally serve the male's privileged social status.¹⁷ The films are infused with the sense that the Heimkehrer is now superfluous to the society whose center he once occupied—and without this traditional center, the films depict a kind of dephalliation, a weakening of traditional social relations that generally privilege the male.¹⁸ Such a sociocinematic shift requires a rethinking of key differences regarding the male protagonist, which should include both generational and gender differences.

Twilight of the Masculine Action-Image in the Early Postwar Period

A sensitivity to this interruption of conventional masculinity yields a fundamental rereading of Deleuze's radical transformation in the cinematic image. Though some of the terms of Deleuze's analysis might be familiar from either his own work or recent applications of it like Landy's *Italian Cinema*, I would like to recast certain aspects of his ungendered model in light of the postwar crisis of masculinity, especially how his rich analysis might yield a more nuanced reading of the male child and its role in the postwar crisis in masculinity. The role of the male gaze in the conventional specular system, the relation of character to setting and space, and the duel form in his theory help lay the foundation for a differentiated approach to the child in both Italian neorealist and German rubble-films.

In Deleuze's film theory, the war and its aftermath galvanize a break from the action-image that underpins the movement-image to the pure optical-sound situation that soon yields the time-image. At the core of the traditional (and commercially still dominant) action-image, Deleuze posits the "sensory-motor link," a relation co-constitutive with ideal masculine agency. The sensory-motor link asserts how a character senses the situation or setting, synthesizes some kind of understanding from this perception, and then acts on it, such that the action follows consequentially from this synthesizing understanding. Stimuli and the perception of them become in this model merely instruments of getting to the action. The sensory-motor schema corresponds to masculine agency and its gaze because the sensory-motor link suggests a coordinated, instrumental, or reified perception, a kind of perception that helps

constitute the privileged specular position of the male. Once the male subject sees something, he can act against and dominate it, the core of the male position in the dominant system of specularity.

According to Deleuze, however, this cinematic system—which is also a general social system for perceiving and synthesizing stimuli into understanding and action—undergoes a fundamental transformation in the 1930s and 1940s. At the end of *Cinema 1*, Deleuze explains how, in Hitchcock and even more fully in neorealism, the action-image starts to disintegrate because confusingly dispersive situations emerge and subvert the clear teleological logic of the sensory-motor link. For example, in Hitchcock's films, the protagonists are often left not only struggling to understand (as in conventional detective or crime films) but also staring at an image trying to comprehend it (as in *Rear Window* [1954]), such that spectatorship and the struggle to perceive and comprehend in an uncertain and unpredictable situation come to the fore. Narratively speaking, I would submit that this dispersive situation corresponds to the postwar meltdown of masculine agency and its replacement by a confusing manifold of gender, familial, and socioeconomic relations.¹⁹ At the beginning of *Cinema 2*, Deleuze offers that which initially arises from the ruins of the action-image, the "pure optical-sound situation" that replaces the action-image and sensory-motor link.²⁰ In this emergent cinematic image, the situation completely outstrips the protagonist and his attempts to synthesize perceptions of stimuli into action. The protagonist's gaze no longer leads teleologically to understanding, action, and mastery: there is instead passive searching, sometimes confused observation of the character's surroundings. Such a development undermines the core of the action-image and subverts the male's privileged position of specularity: the male protagonists become spectacles while women and/or children, the formerly observed, now watch, synthesize, and act.

The transformation of the viewer modifies the inanimately viewed as well, in a complementary inversion of a formerly stable specularity. After Luchino Visconti's *Obsession* (1943), "objects and settings take on an autonomous, material reality which gives them an importance in themselves" (*Cinema 2* 9). The protagonist often finds him- or herself on a meandering voyage in which the character records space and objects but is unable to synthesize them into understanding or to act upon them.²¹ Landscapes in neorealism and the rubble in the rubble-film, for example, take on meanings of their own and begin to symbolize something autonomous from, even resistant to, the dominant fiction—in fact,

when stared at passively by a male subject who has been dislodged from the action-image, the landscapes and rubble begin to expose his hitherto hidden lack and inadequacy.²²

Central to the traditional action-image and the sensory-motor link model is a duel at some point, in which the action-image arranges a clear and logical conflict between its protagonist and some force outside himself.²³ In the duel, the protagonist is able to reify, in understanding and in action, his animate and inanimate surroundings, thereby enacting the traditional subject/object duality constitutive of conventional knowledge and mastery. As this sensory-motor link becomes unglued, however, the duel form starts to grow dispersive, such that the subject/object split and conventional identification with the protagonist become less certain.²⁴ This mode of the oblique or dissolving duel leads the pure optical-sound image out of the conventional dialectic of visual domination: formerly, when the spectator's identifications were firmly with the male subject, what was seen by him was soon conquered by him and, vicariously, by the spectator. Now the dispersive situation destroys that hierarchy and introduces the male to his lack and inadequacy. This formerly perceiving, synthesizing, and acting figure now becomes a mere observer, a recorder of that which surrounds it. The alterity of what ought to be familiar develops because once the viewer is displaced from the formerly monolithic presence of the male subject, that subject can become other. Unveiling male lack and alterity, Deleuze's antidualism of the cinematic image subverts the relations of specularly, reification, and conflict underpinning conventional masculinity.

The Child in the Disintegration of the Action-Image

In the transition from the action-image to the pure optical-sound situation, Deleuze suggests that the child suddenly appears as a central figure. This child figures prominently in Deleuze's theorized transformation of the relation between protagonist and setting because the child acts differently vis-à-vis setting: the child is marked by a certain "motor helplessness . . . one that makes him all the more capable of seeing and hearing" (*Cinema 2* 3). The child feels less at home in the world than the traditional protagonist who, in the action-image sketched above, more often arranges and dominates it. When the child looks at the setting, the spectator is often left uncertain as to what the child understands and, subsequently, has fewer expectations as to the child's ability to act on its spatial or cinematic situation. The child thus serves the trans-

formed specular and spatial relations perfectly: it becomes an indispensable means for the film to depict a powerlessness reflecting the wider wartime and postwar social crisis while still offering a site for spectator identification.

This passive child, however, is only part of the story: Deleuze's concept of the child as a naturally weak observer reeks of an imaginary discourse about youth, particularly because children, even in Italian neorealism, are anything but simply weak or passive. Both Italian neorealist and German rubble-films depict a revealing oscillation of the child between active agency and passive observation: at times, the child is inscrutably and passively observant, manifesting the acquiescent behavior suggestive of the current meek state of the male. At other times, however, the child acts in a manner markedly more effective than that of the male protagonist, such that its activity elucidates male lack and even threatens the central male figure. In both cases, the presence of the child highlights the limits of the male, the horizons of his effective agency, and the twilight of his conventional role in the masculine action-image. The fact that neorealist and rubble-films offer overwhelmingly male children confirms the film's concern with the link between the child and masculinity in particular.

As the duel of the action-image grows oblique and traditional confrontations fade, the male protagonists begin to encounter the male child as the enemy. In one of their most important narrative innovations, both neorealist and rubble-films deliberately disperse the duel form in which the protagonist would conceive of, confront, and conquer the enemy (with the spectator identifying with the character throughout these teleological thoughts and linkages). Now a third element, the child, enters the dualistic form of filmic confrontation and diverts the film's formerly goal-directed movement. As neither simple subject nor object, neither clear ally nor enemy, the child dilutes the purer dualism of the action-image duel, effectively rendering its form opaque.

These films dismantle the formerly clearly drawn duel, in large part because they set out to stage the somewhat nebulous struggles within their protagonists or other key figures, including films like *Rome, Open City*, *Bicycle Thief*, and *Paisan*, which I shall analyze in more detail later.²¹ These internal struggles—to synthesize stimuli into understanding and then to act on it—are co-constitutive with the postwar crises in the masculine action-image suggested above. For Italian neorealist films, the main characters repeatedly struggle with heroism, often with reconstructing effective agency after the German and Allied occupation;²²

in German rubble-films they struggle with the past and reconstructing decimated psyches as well as cities. In order to stage such internal struggles, the films consistently confront their protagonists with a male child who is at once parallel (in its passivity) to the masculine protagonist as well as mocking (in its activity) that figure. Generational nexuses now predominate where duels formerly reigned.

The Duality of the Child in Italian Neorealism

To demonstrate how male children can function in these crises of masculinity, I would like to offer a few short examples from some master texts of Italian neorealism before moving on, in more detail, to lesser-known German rubble-films and their representations of the decimated postwar male. In *Rome, Open City*, *Bicycle Thief*, and the famous second episode of *Paisan*, the male protagonist finds himself in a crisis of effective agency that is conveyed by the oscillation of male children between passivity and overactivity. In *Germany, Year Zero*, a similar oscillation of the child structures the narrative, though I shall not be focusing on that film because it concentrates on young Edmund, rather than rendering the child a key complement to the adult male protagonist. As a constitutive aspect of the shift from action-image to pure optical-sound situation, this oscillation of the male child galvanizes a shift in the film's specular system, the characters' relations to the setting and space, and the duel form that rests at the core of traditional narrative conflict.

Rome, Open City

Many analyses of Rossellini's renowned film focus on the duality of the masculine hero in Manfredi and Don Pietro or on the strong emotional force emitted by Pina. Part of the film's remarkable cinematic innovation, one that foreshadows the more radical revision of narrative form in *Paisan*, rests in the multiplicity of centers that replace the conventional concentration on a single protagonist. Both Don Pietro and Pina diminish the masculine action-image by offering strong figures beyond the film's ostensible protagonist, Manfredi, with whom the spectator can identify. I would argue, however, that another key aspect of the decentering of the male protagonist in *Rome, Open City* is the presence of and parody provided by male children. Much of *Rome, Open City*'s dismantling of the "heroic" masculine center rests in the oscillation between the radical activity and passivity of the child that communicates, perhaps more than anything, the transformation of the cinematic image.

Manfredi serves as a marginal male in part because of the ineffectual agency he represents throughout the film. Over the course of the film, from the first to the penultimate scenes, the ostensible hero Manfredi is hunted down and killed, and he seems almost incapable of any positive agency. The very few moments of effective resistance to the Germans seem calculated to shift activity away from Manfredi: either through the passive handoff of the priest Don Pietro; the nameless partisans who liberate Manfredi and Francesco; or the surprise bombing by Romoletto and his gang of children. If the film can be said to afford only three effective anti-German actions, then one of them is conspicuously organized and executed by children. As in many neorealist and rubble-films, this scene of child-generated action is immediately followed by a sequence that emphasizes their tenuous agency, their oscillation between active and passive: they return home from the bombing only to be castigated by their parents for returning so late. Ultimately, however, their moment of activity proves central to the negative trajectory of the plot: their attack leads Bergmann to their apartment building and yields the roundup that kills Pina. When the male children provide the motor for activity in a cinematic environment where the main male figures become increasingly marginal, their overactivity simultaneously threatens the film's masculine figures.

The children likewise disrupt the conventional specular system of the masculine movement-image. Like the narrative system, the specular system in *Rome, Open City* seems to function in a decentered fashion that is more radically realized in later neorealist films. If a constitutive aspect of the masculine action-image is the ability to synthesize stimuli into understanding and action, then Don Pietro certainly represents a mockery of this masculine gaze and embodies a conspicuous kind of male alterity. As a celibate, he interrupts the normative desiring male gaze, for instance, when he turns the statue of the saint away from the nude female figure. In the final incarceration and torture sequence, *Rome, Open City* focuses on Don Pietro's compromised gaze, first in his glasses that break when he is thrown into the cell and then in his witnessing the torture and death of Manfredi. This coincidence of gaze and humiliation—of not only violence to comrades but also being compelled to watch the violence—is actually prefigured by the child Marcello, who has to watch the Germans gun down his mother in the film's celebrated roundup sequence. Marcello's burying his head in his mother's dead body provides one of the film's most memorable images and enforces the oscillation between the children's extreme activity (in the gang's suc-

cessful bombing shortly before) and passivity (in their helplessness amid adult violence). In the last sequence, the film makes the link between the passive gazes of priest and children explicit: in a stark parallel to Don Pietro's watching the torture of Manfredi, the children must watch Don Pietro's execution. Don Pietro's marginal male gaze is effectively handed off to the children who have surrounded Don Pietro since the beginning.

The film's final sequence also establishes the confluence between Don Pietro's relation to space and that of the children. As they slowly wind their way back down to the city with St. Peter's Basilica looming in the background, the deep focus shot of diminutive characters disappearing into an overwhelming urban maze revisits Don Pietro's celebrated voyage through the city. This sequence, in which Don Pietro slowly walks to an appointed meeting with an unnamed partisan, is remarkable for its lack of action and its passivity. As Deleuze has described, a protagonist becomes a mere observer, a recorder for stimuli, rather than a synthesizing and transacting agent. But it is important to observe how this image of the voyager, of the meanderer, is likewise linked, even handed off, to the male children at the end. After Don Pietro's death, the children become the voyagers, those who meander—without the guidance of father, mother, or priest—down into an uncertain future.²⁷ The children likewise fulfill this passive image of the duel and dismantling of heroism: in the final sequence, they watch the German officer shoot Don Pietro but are helpless to do anything about it. The only heroes surviving at the end of the film are those left to watch the action.

Bicycle Thief

Even more than *Rome, Open City*, Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thief* deliberately deploys the alternative gaze of the child to subvert the masculine antihero. The film's basic strategy confirms the link between masculine humiliation and the child's impact on the conventional specular system. Though Landy has productively emphasized the importance of precocious Bruno's looking in the film, I would emphasize above all how Bruno's gaze refigures the masculine gaze at the heart of traditional cinema.²⁸ By introducing the gaze of the son upon the father, De Sica foregrounds the transformation of the traditional male *subject* of the gaze into a humiliated *object* of the gaze. The film signals that this revision of the specular system is deliberate and self-reflective in early sequences when Antonio is working: while still in possession of his bicycle and job, Antonio expertly navigates the maze of the city to hang posters of the

voluptuously larger-than-life Rita Hayworth. In these early sequences, with their conventional relation of male protagonist to setting and to cinematic objects of desires, Antonio embodies the masculine action-image and its constitutive gaze.

Once his bike is stolen and his son starts to track him, however, Antonio is slowly objectified by the gaze of the male child. Bruno's recurring point-of-view shots subjugate the male point of view and open the way for others in the cinematic situation to watch, and thereby subdue, Antonio. In conventional cinema the spectator identifies with the travails of the protagonist, with the obstacles he faces, and with his subsequent, usually successful, goal-oriented action. Here, however, the viewer's identifications are now routed through the child, a third element inserted between the protagonist and the cinematic environment. Bruno triangulates the relationship of protagonist to his environment and, in occupying this position of the third term, marks Antonio's transformation into the object of contemplation.²⁷ In part because the child implies a certain normative social role for the male subject—as provider and protector—the gaze of the child becomes a cipher for the social order to judge the actions of the male: a vigilant agent of the social order (a representative reminiscent of Lacan's big Other) is imposed between the spectator and masculine hero.²⁸ In this way, a powerful new regulative force is introduced directly into the film's specular system in which the male is now the object of the socially disciplining gaze.

The two climactic duels in the film are figured precisely through the impact of this rerouted gaze on the would-be masculine hero. When Antonio finally confronts the thief who has stolen his bicycle—sporting a German army cap, symbolic of the failed duel with the German occupiers²⁹—he becomes overwhelmed and overpowered by others' observing and judging of him. Throughout the sequence, the film undercuts Antonio's agency as male protagonist by subjecting him to the gaze of strangers, especially women and children: he chases the thief into a brothel full of women who look at him aggressively, and then ends up in a lengthy, unwinnable argument with the mother of the thief. While seeking the stolen bicycle in her apartment, Antonio is framed next to a window through which a neighboring woman and child—in strikingly clear deep focus—watch his hopeless search. The long-awaited confrontation degenerates as Antonio is shot as the object, rather than subject, of the point-of-view as well as deep focus shots.

In the climactic end of the film, Antonio has one more duel to fight, that with a lonely bike beckoning to him like any traditional object of

desire. But this duel also degenerates because of his inability to control the gaze of the child upon himself. When Antonio decides to steal the bike, he tries to send Bruno away so that the child does not witness the crime of the father—and so that the gaze of the social order that Bruno embodies does not once again regulate his behavior. But Bruno, in his motor helplessness, misses the tram, goes looking for his father, and then watches his father commit the crime. As in the confrontation with the thief, Bruno's witnessing of Antonio's crime anticipates the rest of society's seeing him do it as well: soon the newly minted bicycle thief is apprehended by the crowd and the bike's rightful owner, effectively rendering Antonio the passive object rather than subject of the gaze. In the end, it is only the action—literally, the lachrymose eyes—of Bruno that saves his father, an utter inversion of both the specular and authoritative systems of the film.

Paisan

In *Paisan*, the famous second episode—the encounter between the African American G.I. Joe and the Neapolitan boy Pasquale—deploys a similar oscillation between the active and passive youth while revealing another representational facet of the child: that of the gamin at the margins of society who can be deployed to reinscribe that society. The alterity of the child functions in *Paisan* as a social other, an outsider to remake the boundaries of the familiar. Pasquale leads the drunk Joe through the hostile and often unfathomable maze of a city—this time Naples—and mediates the relationship of the adult male to this intrusive setting. Pasquale takes Joe first to a puppet show that the adult misunderstands, then to a symbolic pile of rubble, and finally to a series of caves and shantytowns whose poverty shocks the American soldier. Like Romoletto or Marcello in *Rome, Open City*, Pasquale introduces Joe to a hostile context that threatens to overwhelm him. Pasquale does not personify, as Deleuze claims, a motor helplessness; rather, he serves as a kind of caricature of putative masculine agency that foregrounds the precariousness of that agency. The potential of children to cross borders, to navigate spaces both familiar and foreign, plays an important role in a context in which the cinematic situation and setting intrude upon and overwhelm protagonists. In light of their conflict, the spectator might expect a showdown between Joe and the boy who stole his boots, or at least between Joe and Pasquale's parents, but the duel form is dissolved in the haunting space of the caves. In his border-crossing abilities, Pasquale introduces Joe to a space at which Joe can only gape: the child-

galvanized dawning of understanding replaces the planned confrontation. The child, oscillating between overactivity and passivity, teaches his generational superior Joe, who sees, observes, and then understands that he should not act. In *Paisan*, as in *Rome, Open City* and *Bicycle Thief*, the male child subverts the film's climactic duel, recasting the masculine action-image as passive observer.

Coming to Terms with the Past and Reconstruction in *Somewhere in Berlin*

As only the second German feature film of the postwar era, Gerhard Lamprecht's *Somewhere in Berlin* (*Irgendwo in Berlin*; 1946, Soviet licensed) enjoyed enormous publicity and was praised by film critics. They often compared it to the first postwar feature film, *The Murderers Are among Us* (*Die Mörder sind unter uns*; Wolfgang Staudte, 1946, Soviet licensed), and approvingly underscored *Somewhere's* shared realism, its similar attention to the contemporary social context, and its likewise lack of any film stars.³⁷ Critics, however, also indicated how *Somewhere* improved on *The Murderers*, even if they avoided judging which was better. One critic contrasted *The Murderers* to *Somewhere* precisely because the latter engaged a "collective" problem, "the lives of our young ones."³⁸ These critics recognized *Somewhere in Berlin's* basic strategy: the key conflicts are not confrontations with the past or the challenges of reconstruction, though they pervade the cinematic environment; they rest rather in generational duels staged at decisive moments of the narrative.

Somewhere in Berlin follows a friendship between two (initially) fatherless boys, Gustav Iller and Willi. Gustav's father has yet to return from a POW camp, while Willi has lost both of his parents in the war. For the first twenty minutes of the film, the boys engage in delinquent behavior that symptomatizes the dispersive postwar crisis. But the boys' familial fates are ultimately split: Gustav's father, Iller, returns and then—traumatized by the war—struggles to reassume the masculine role in the family and film, while Willi's situation under a depraved adoptive father, Birke, degenerates into open antagonism. In order to make a welcome-home gift for Iller—who is constantly, literally and metaphorically, hungry—Willi steals some food from Birke, who then throws Willi out. Orphaned again and taunted by other boys, Willi decides to climb a ruined building, from which he falls and is killed. With the abrupt loss of his friend, Gustav reconciles with his father and turns his energies, along with his father, to reconstruction.

The first part of the film depicts the kind of dephalliated social crisis just described. As in *Rome, Open City* or *Paisan*, the fathers are missing, and in their place reign a series of decentered, marginal figures: shady black market dealers, ineffective mothers, and, above all, overactive children. In the absence of a strong, benevolent masculine force, the first quarter of the film is dominated, thematically and visually, by Willi and Gustav, who prove, as in Italian neorealism, the motor for the film's action-image. Most important in this regard is a long sequence in which the children play war games. The scene commences with their break from the film's adult world, as Gustav runs from his mother and a policeman to join the company of other kids. The scene is set on a huge field of rubble, where the children hide, shoot rockets, and march around in formation. The film cuts unpredictably among the different groups of kids, such that the anarchical games mock the absurdity of adult wars. Like the image of Pasquale and Joe in *Paisan* or Edmund in *Germany, Year Zero*, the sequence links children to rubble as a central image of social degeneration and masculine crisis.

When the masculine protagonist does appear, Iller the Heimkehrer cannot exert himself in the vacuum of effective male agency—his entrance only emphasizes the prevailing lack of any conventional social role for the masculine protagonist. When he walks into the frenetic war games, he is confused and disturbed by the make-believe violence, and his own son fails to recognize him. He sits down, dejected, on a pile of rubble, overcome by generational overthrow and dispersion. His look around the rubble and at his son is devoid of authority over the boy and of any real understanding of what he sees. He seems fascinated by the rubble, on a Deleuzian voyage where he is more prey than predator to the cinematic context. The passivity of his gaze contrasts with the determined looks and subsequent action of the children as they gleefully destroy what is left of the enrubbled neighborhood, including carrying out a rocket attack on a shell-shocked veteran whose eye was, literally and symbolically, mutilated in the war.

This alternative gaze of the war veterans reflects the transformed relation to the cinematic situation and especially the setting. The next day, Iller and Gustav set out to return a lost wallet to its rightful owner, the manager of a local bar and revue show. When father and son appear at the bar, the wallet's streetwise owner realizes he can accuse this haggard figure of stealing and slyly rejects giving Iller any reward. Befuddled, Iller stares dumbly at the rehearsal of the revue show while the son looks on, confused about the fact that his longed-for father has proven utterly

ineffective. The spectator's view of the inadequate father is routed, as in *Bicycle Thief*, through the male child. The acquiescent submission to the atmosphere of a bar, a kind of passive absorption in one's surroundings, is a recurring image in the rubble-film (as well as in *Bicycle Thief*): everything has become alienating and therefore fascinating.⁴ The bar invites the complete surrender to an environment that breeds self-forgetting, the utter abrogation of the formerly privileged masculine position.

The recurring images of Iller blankly staring and contemplating his surroundings remind the spectator of the internal struggle of the defeated postwar male. Since his own past is that which haunts and weighs upon him, the film cannot simply arrange a duel with the enemy. At a historical moment when traditional cinematic confrontation has become oblique—which enemies could a traumatized German soldier fight after Nazism and the unconditional surrender?—the narrative shifts its constitutive duels to generational conflict. In the first generational encounter above, the masculine hero cannot even command recognition from his feral son, whose threatening action-image parodies traditional masculinity. But the film then deliberately stages another confrontation, between the passive patriarch and the most overactive of the children, in part to jump-start the stuttering adult male.

Willi performs the role of the overactive, threatening youth not only because he is a central figure in the frenetic war games but also because he links Gustav, who has a family, to the social crisis of orphaned children. A figure originating like *Paisan's* Pasquale in the margins of society, Willi might pull Gustav from the domesticated family into the belligerent and overactive youth gang. He threatens to rewrite the traditional boundaries of the family, a metaphor for the boundaries of postwar society. He is the most powerful figure of masculine lack because he represents, in contrast to Iller, active and effective agency but remains undisciplined and unhoused. His parody of the patriarch is even more pronounced when he seeks to play the provider to the moping Iller: he steals food from his own adoptive father for the always hungry but ineffective Iller.

After being banished from Birke's house for his theft, Willi wanders around the rubble and eventually scales a ruined building to demonstrate his courage to some boys who are taunting him. In an image parallel to Pasquale in *Paisan* or Edmund in *Germany, Year Zero*, Willi the orphan looks at the rubble in one of the film's starkest symbols of the general social crisis that has jettisoned the boy from the shattered domestic sphere. But in contrast to the men's passive rubble-gaze, Willi

is all too determined to conquer the rubble to prove himself to the youth mob. As in *Germany, Year Zero*, a kind of vulnerable agency—orphaned but overactive—highlights the social dispersion underpinning the film. Because his youthful action-image parodies the (absent) active male, the traditional social and generational order, the film deems Willi a threat against that which it must defend: Willi falls from the rubble and dies soon thereafter.

In the film's climactic generational confrontation, Iller goes to Willi on his deathbed. Here, the despairing and inadequate father learns from the overactive child, recalling the generational lessons of *Paisan* and *Bicycle Thief*. Visually, the image of the now caring father attending to the child revisits and revises Iller's earlier appearance in the film, when his own son did not recognize him and the father could only look inward to his traumas. Iller tells the dying Willi he appreciates what he did and that now "we'll build it back up again," an announcement toward which the film has been driving since its beginning. In this second generational duel, Iller inherits faith in the dominant fiction from the dying Willi in another world-upside-down generational inversion: the man of lack learns from the child of the action-image.

German Children, East and West: *And Someday We Will See Each Other Again* and *In Front of Us, There Is Life*

Somewhere in Berlin deploys its male children, their gazes, and their alternative relationship to cinematic space and conflict to represent and resolve the postwar crisis of the masculine hero. For Germany, foremost among these crises were coming to terms with the past and reconstruction. *Somewhere's* children embody both challenges: their war games symbolically convey a battle at a moment when German audiences had grown tired of war, and Willi's and then Gustav's faith in the father help him "build it back up again." In this way, the film's children mediate two of the most important postwar German themes, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past) and *Wiederaufbau* (reconstruction), preoccupations that have dominated German culture since the end of the war. While *Somewhere in Berlin* was made in the Soviet-occupied sector, films in what would become West Germany also resorted to male children to negotiate the burdensome past and reconstruction. I would like to offer an overview of two similarly concerned films made in the western sectors, one that utilizes children to come to terms with the problematic past and another that deploys them to navigate the challenges of reconstruction.

And Someday We Will See Each Other Again (*Und finden dereinst wir uns wieder*; Hans Müller, 1947, British licensed) attempts to confront what must have been one of the most difficult postwar cultural tasks: disavowing, almost immediately, carefully conditioned dedication to the Nazi movement. While many rubble-films put forth an image of odious Nazis, understandably few offered convincing Nazis with whom the audience might identify: likable protagonists who also had Nazi leanings were as difficult and problematic to script as they were necessary. The representational solution to this dilemma was to offer children or young people who were dedicated Nazis but who also seemed passive enough to be "reeducated" by the end of the film. The consistent oscillation between overactivity and passivity could thus serve to represent one of the central challenges of the postwar period, both the fanatical dedication that Nazism inspired as well as the potential for rapidly forgetting it. Some of the most compelling films of the period, including Wolfgang Staudte's *Rotation* (original title, 1949, Soviet licensed) and Josef von Baky and Fritz Kortner's *Der ruf* (released as *The Last Illusion* [literally, "The Appointment"]; 1949, U.S. licensed), relied on precisely this device, a young Nazi with whom, in his innocence, the audience could nevertheless identify. The figure of the young Nazi offered the films a locus of fanatical overactivity that threatens the male protagonist while also presenting a threat that was ultimately manageable. The convinced Nazi as young person provides these films with a form of ferocious yet surmountable fanaticism.

In *And Someday We Will See Each Other Again*, a group of pupils has been sent in the last few months of the war to the countryside for safety. They learn, however, of the battle of Berlin and demand to help defend the tattered remnant of the thousand-year Reich. While the children devote themselves to their rapidly anachronistic ideals, their humanist teachers try to prevent their flight to Berlin. Throughout the film, most of the adult characters are either avowed anti-Nazis or highly skeptical about the Nazi movement. In the generational logic of the film, the fanatic followers of Hitler are invariably young people. While it is certainly true that Nazis effectively rode the enthusiasm of the young until the last days of the Reich, it is also of course ridiculous that only young people were convinced Nazis (teachers, in fact, were among the most notoriously coordinated professional groups of Nazis).

Like Italian films in this period, *And Someday We Will See Each Other Again* utilizes its male children to represent the transformed cinematic situation in which the characters have different relations to the specular system and the setting. Over the course of their determined trip back to

Berlin, the film offers a series of pure optical and sound situations from which the pupil is to learn. In one particularly telling scene, the pupils disembark from their train only to see the rubble of what was a station, and a voice-over asks Wolfgang, the fanatical leader of the group, "Why don't you look around, Wolfgang? These images belong [to the Reich], too. What do you see? Do you think they still believe?" The film cuts from a close-up of a gaping Wolfgang to a long pan around the ruined room and over huddling refugees and soldiers delighted to have escaped the front. The voice-over continues, "Do you not want to see what you see? . . . Open your eyes, my boy!" The film thereby wrests visual control from the most convinced Nazi in the film, whom the camera compels to observe the situation and to relinquish his fanatical fervor.

The narrative follows a journey not only from Germany's outskirts to its geographical capital but also from extreme dedication to Nazi ideals to core truths about Hitler and his "movement." The film likewise dismantles the possibility of a climatic conflict at its core: as they draw closer to the front, the boys grow less and less zealous about fighting. As in many neorealist films and in *Somewhere in Berlin*, a meandering journey to understanding replaces the climactic duel. The duel that the film does offer is, typically, a generational confrontation: the boys eventually encounter a benevolent soldier who is delighted to have escaped the fighting and helps the boys find their way back to their families instead of to the führer. Reminiscent of both *Bicycle Thief* and *Somewhere in Berlin*, long shots of this soldier with the smallest of the boys reinforce the overwhelming setting. In such a milieu, even Wolfgang eventually abandons his dedication to the Nazis and returns to his mother.

Like *Somewhere in Berlin* and *And Someday We Will See Each Other Again*, many rubble-films avoid the past altogether in favor of an over-determined focus on the problems of the present and future reconstruction. But even in these more optimistic films, male children serve as an indispensable means for depicting the subversion of the masculine action-image. For example, in the U.S.-licensed *In Front of Us, There Is Life* (*Vor uns liegt das Leben*; Gerhard Rittau, 1948), a harbor town suffers under traumatized and ineffectual males: an opening collage associates the literal ruins of a ship with the metaphorical rubble of the former sailors, who now mope around local bars bored and drunk. In this realm of dephalliation and masculine lack, as in *Rome, Open City, Germany, Year Zero*, and *Somewhere in Berlin*, the marginal social figures play the role of economic providers. When their family needs a new goat to provide adequate milk and cheese for their son, Jürgen the father cannot



Germany, Year Zero
(Roberto Rossellini,
1947)

scrape together the required funds, so his wife, Renata, like Antonio's wife in *Bicycle Thief*, has to sell some fabric she was saving. Humiliated by his wife as provider, Jürgen meanders into the bar where he, in another explicit echo of Antonio in *Bicycle Thief*, morosely reviews the prices of various items that now overwhelm him in the changed cinematic environment ("10DM for a small Schnapps, 20DM for a large, 100DM for the coat fabric" needed to trade for the goat). In this world remade against the traditional paternal provider, the children again generate most of the film's effective agency: they are the ones, while their fathers sit around in the bar, who set sail, fish, and sell their catch on the black market to obtain other coveted foodstuffs. One son even supports his father's addiction to cigarettes, Germany's postwar currency and a clear symbol of the phallus that has floated away from the patriarch to the overactive children.³⁵

Jürgen's abrogation of his paternal responsibilities culminates in a parental nightmare: after fleeing to the bar again, this time in the wake of an argument with his wife, Jürgen broods alone, shot in expressionistic shadows reflecting his tumultuous struggles to come to terms with his new landlocked life. At the same moment as the marginal male Jürgen looks inward—abandoning the formerly commanding gaze upon objects of desire or supervision—his son and his young friends sail too far out to sea in the midst of a storm, another journey into a hostile setting

resulting from the overactivity of the children. The film intercuts the moping male protagonist who has to forfeit the supervisory gaze of the father with the children's determined voyage to another figurative phallus, a lighthouse promising a rich bed of mussels and crabs. As the only determined sailors in the film, the male children are the purveyors of the action-image in the vacuum created by the masculine hero's inadequacy. *In Front of Us, There Is Life* offers not only rubble but also the tumultuous sea as the changed cinematic environment.

As in many neorealist and rubble-films, the crisis of the male protagonist does not ultimately yield a duel that activates the defunct action-image. Rather, the traumatized male learns to come to terms with his diminished status: the man has to learn to embrace the lack conveyed by the changed cinematic environment and its children. In *In Front of Us, There Is Life*, Jürgen comes to accept his life on land because, as his son ventures out with his young friends, the father admits that he has discovered how awful it can be to wait for loved ones who are out to sea. The overactive children of the film locate Jürgen in the traditionally landlocked feminine position of waiting for her sea-tossed man. As in *Somewhere* or *Paisan*, the adults learn an important postwar lesson about lack and loss from children. In *In Front of Us, There Is Life* as in other films, children serve as the perfect social reeducators for adults: they enlighten the adults while only mildly threatening them in a context that was certainly already overwhelming enough.

Children of an Immanent Critique

Somewhere in Berlin, *And Someday We Will See Each Other Again*, and *In Front of Us, There Is Life* provide only a few of the many rubble-film examples in which male children contribute to the altered cinematic environment. Sometimes the children manifest open rebellion against and hostility toward the traditional male authority, as they do in *Wege im zwielicht* (*Ways in the Twilight*; Gustav Froelich, 1948, British licensed), *Zugvögel* (*Birds of Passage*; Rolf Meyer, 1947, British licensed), or *Der ruf* (*The Last Illusion*; Josef von Baky, 1949, U.S. licensed). Sometimes children are oblivious to the role that such traditional authority formerly played, as in *1-2-3 Corona* (Hans Müller, 1948, Soviet licensed) or in . . . *Und über uns der Himmel* (*And the Heavens Above*; Josef von Baky, 1947, U.S. licensed). In all these cases, the rubble-film deploys the child to represent the cinematic crisis of the now marginal male.

It is not clear, and perhaps not even ascertainable, whether this deployment of the child was adapted from Italian neorealist films, as Berg-

mann implored. Many of the most famous Italian neorealist films were difficult to see in Germany in these years: *Rome, Open City*, for example, did not go into general distribution in Germany until the mid-1950s. In any case, neorealist films were probably too pessimistic for German filmmakers charged with reconstructing their devastated nation. Many rubble-films subsequently tacked on a happily reconstructive ending, in which children were often reconciled to the lacking patriarch. However, irrespective of their manifest political content, the Italian and German films shared remarkably similar strategies for representing the postwar social and cinematic crisis. They depict the co-constitutive breakdown of the conventional Deleuzian action-image and masculinity, in large part by deploying male children to transform the dominant specular system of the male gaze, the traditional relation to space and setting, and the narrative duel with which narrative films conventionally conclude. Though rubble-films do “reconstruct”—with all its postwar connotations—the male subject by rewriting it back into the patriarchal family, they also (and here the rubble-film is at its most radical) complicate, even dismantle, traditional masculinity. They end up privileging male subjects like Iller or Jürgen who have embraced lack over those who simply ignore it, that is, over the male heroes of the conventional action-image. Even if one cannot establish that these narrative and technical approaches were adapted from Italian neorealism, these shared images reflect parallel sociocinematic situations and filmic strategies for representing and resolving them.

Perhaps most important in this regard was the deliberate staging—real or not—of a break from the cinematic past of the Fascist film industries. The early postwar films in both Italy and Germany sought to go against the grain of what had gone before and demonstrate at least the appearance of a new kind of cinema. Many scholars have theorized what was innovative in the neorealist films, and I hope that this analysis of similarities in the postwar cinemas in Italy and Germany demonstrates an important element in both cinemas: the role of the child in refiguring the masculine action-image. The child functions for both as an “internal enemy,” as Ashis Nandy has termed it, that could take the place of the conventional enemy against whom the duel was traditionally arranged.²⁰ An enemy that was internal afforded an ultimately controllable threat: it offered the grounds for a social critique that at the same time could be managed without fundamental upheaval. Neorealist and rubble-films exposed the contradictions within the dictates of heroic masculinity and the traditional patriarchal family, and deployed these contradictions to critique, dismantle, and reassemble the male subject that serves the fam-

ily as a cornerstone. Though they inscribe lack into the man, they do not fundamentally recast the family or film form. Even neorealist films execute this kind of immanent critique: they are precisely not revolutionary. They lodge instead a critique from within their prevailing systems, for example, Rossellini's interest in the contradictions within the norms of heroism. And in these social- and filmic-critical, but ultimately not revolutionary, inclinations, the two cinemas shared a great deal.

Notes

1. K. H. Bergmann, "Quo Vadis Italia," *Neue Filmwelt* 3.1 (1947): 5–6. Though *Neue Filmwelt* was published in the Soviet occupational zone—the part of Germany that would become socialist East Germany in 1949—journals from the West similarly called for "realism" at this point. For an example from the English-controlled zone, see Beiermann-Ratjen.
2. For a detailed study of such continuities, see Ruth Ben-Ghiat, "The Fascist War Trilogy" (in Forgacs, Lutton, and Nowell-Smith 30–35), which analyzes Roberto Rossellini's films made during the Fascist regime and argues that Rossellini was, in that period, already experimenting with techniques that came to be described as "realist" in his postwar films.
3. Kaes 12; Elsaesser 250, 252; Fehrenbach 211; Glaser 279; Brandlmeier 34.
4. Brandlmeier 34; Kaes 13; Kreimeier 13. Shandley's recent monograph on the rubble-film—the first one to appear in English—resorts once again to the issue of politics and technique in distinguishing between neorealist and rubble-films. See Shandley 48–49.
5. For critical postures vis-à-vis the rubble-film in this regard, see Brandlmeier 34; Kaes 13. Despite these critiques, it is not true that these films never took up the question of Nazism—in fact, the films engaged with Nazism by self-servingly depicting it in young people.
6. For instance, Geoffrey Nowell-Smith traces Rossellini's elusive politics in his essay "North and South, East and West: Rossellini and Politics," in Forgacs Lutton, and Nowell-Smith 7–19.
7. "Rethinking neorealism from a mechanical formalism to changes in the cultural milieu involves a more flexible understanding of media effects that inhere in the cinematic medium from its inception to the present" (Landy, *Italian Film* 15). Millicent Marcus makes a similar argument when she asserts that neorealism should be considered beyond its technical aspects (23).

8. Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 200–205. Neorealism rests right on the cusp of *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*, affording it a uniquely privileged position in his history. See also Deleuze, *Cinema 2*.
9. Fisher.
10. Silverman 2, 47. Much recent film theory has deliberately incorporated masculinity, especially the humiliated and lacking male, into canonical feminist film theory. See Studlar and Shavero, both of whom foreground “alternative” masculinities in theories of gender in cinema.
11. “The family gave support from below to that respectability which the nation attempted to enforce from above. . . . The family was supposed to mirror state and society. . . . Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, the founder of the Gymnasts and the fraternity movement, had called the family the foundation of the national spirit” (Mosse 19–20).
12. Both Robert Moeller and Hermann Glaser describe in great detail the difficulties men had reintegrating into their civilian lives, especially back into the domestic house and family. Moeller cites a number of testimonies from oral histories in which wives considered the return of their husbands “superfluous” (28). Even when there was not such apathy toward the return of the once heralded patriarch, there would often be an inversion in the old provider/provided for relation: “[My returning husband] thought that when he came home, he’d be able to care for us. And instead he had to let me take care of him. He didn’t really feel like a man. He suffered because I did everything alone and because he couldn’t help me much” (Moeller 29). Women’s labor subverted men’s provider status; often women’s knowledge of the bureaucracy of rationing made men seem ignorant. Another witness testifies even more pointedly to the intersection of sexual difference and work: “[My husband] was afraid to go out, he didn’t scrounge, he didn’t do anything. I did the work that I had to do as a housewife and mother, but my husband didn’t want to do his job, namely getting wood. . . . I’d rather be alone. I got divorced.” The breakdown of the gendered division of labor in the domestic sphere could split that formerly sacred sphere both metaphorically and literally (Glaser 63).
13. Parallel to Silverman’s “ideological fatigue” vis à-vis the dominant fiction, Peter Brunette senses a prevailing “lascivious exhaustion” in *Rome, Open City*, especially in the person of Marina, “that will become generalized onto the whole German people in *Germany, Year Zero*” (Roberto Rossellini 46).
14. There was a good deal of debate about how much to show of Manfredi’s torture and death, but eventually the voices supporting showing more won out: the torture and death of the film’s “hero” became more of a spectacle than was standard in such films. See Gallagher

139 for details of this disagreement between Rossellini and the main writer of *Rome, Open City*, Sergio Amidei. In *Paisan*, there is a similar spectacularization of the male protagonist's death. In the first episode, the sudden sniper attack on "Joe from Jersey" is shot in slow motion so that the moment of death is augmented. In the final episode of *Paisan*, not only are the partisans killed but they are labeled with large signs declaring them partisans, providing one of the film's most memorable images.

15. For a contemporary critic's negative evaluation of the recurring and often redundant theme of the Heimkehrer, see E. R.
16. For these theories, the male, though (as all subjects) lacking and castrated, remains the constructed site of wholeness and plenty through his denial of lack, his compensation for it via his controlling and desiring position vis-à-vis gender difference. See Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, ed. Gerald Mast, Marshall Cohen, and Leo Braudy, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 1992) 751. She and other theorists tend to concentrate on the way in which women are voyeuristically or fetishistically objectified to firm up the juggernaut of male subjectivity.
17. Most influential feminist psychoanalytic film theory emphasizes gender difference as the fundamental difference for language and society and subsequently feature film. See Mulvey 751. Though I do not dispute the superlative nature of these claims, other differences seem pivotal in the construction of patriarchal hierarchies, among them generational difference.
18. A revealing image of dephalliation occurs in *Germany, Year Zero* when Edmund plays a recording of a Hitler speech while the camera pans wildly over the ruins. The voice of the former national-paternal figure drones over an image of utter destruction. The cut to an old man with a boy confused by the disembodied but familiar voice confirms the dismantling of the male subject that ends in generational chaos.
19. Many postwar sociological studies and oral histories document the widespread inversions of traditional gender and parent-child relations: discussions of "half families," "incomplete families," "mother families," and women's "forced emancipation" appear in postwar women's magazines as well as in the studies of leading postwar German sociologists. Moeller 33; Glaser 63.
20. The cinema of the pure optical-sound situation is fundamentally different: "This is a cinema of the seer and no longer of the agent" (Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 2).
21. Rossellini's comments on his technical approach to shooting a scene confirm this deliberate confusion of space: "Usually, in the traditional

- film, a scene is composed as follows: a long shot, we see the milieu, the character, we approach it; then a medium shot, a three-quarter view, a close-up; and then the story of the character is told. I proceed in the opposite way: a person moves and his movements make us discover his surroundings. I begin always with a close-up; then the movements of the camera, as it follows the actor, reveal the milieu. The actor must never be left alone; he must move in a complex and comprehensive way" (in Eduardo Bruno, ed., *Teorie e prassi del cinema in Italia, 1950–1970* [Milan: Gabriele Mazzotta, 1972] 42; also in Liehm 69).
22. Marcia Landy has a very useful chapter, "The Landscape and Neorealism, Before and After," on the function of landscape in the narrative in her *Italian Film*, and takes a Deleuzian approach to the refigured relation of character and its cinematic environment (121–48, esp. 133–38).
 23. Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 3.
 24. Though not writing in a Deleuzian framework, Peter Brunette confirms this altered system of identification in *Germany, Year Zero*: "One is emotionally involved in this film, but the relation seems to occur not so much between the spectator and the characters as between the spectator and the film's formal elements, thus enhancing the sense of stylization" (Roberto Rossellini 84).
 25. See, for instance, Landy's perceptive remarks on *Rome, Open City*: "Though the wanton torture and killing of the priest and the engineer can easily be read as an affirmation of the Italian resistance to political oppression, and though the Nazi behavior can be identified with the unmitigated evil of the Germans, there are many ambiguities and unresolved issues that provide another level of interaction with the film beyond the familiar narrative trajectory. This involves the complexity of Rossellini's style, which makes less determinate and transparent any understanding of motive and action" ("The Landscape and Neorealism" 134). Though she senses that the duel form has been dismantled in the film, she does not link it to the duel form in Deleuze's model.
 26. As many critics note, heroism is a recurring theme of Rossellini's war trilogy: Manfredi dispels the concept of the hero in *Rome, Open City*; *Paisan* problematizes the concept of the hero in the liberating American forces; and in *Germany, Year Zero*, Rossellini said that he wanted to pose a particular question: "The Germans were human beings like everybody else. What could have led them to this disaster? ... the abandoning of humility for the cult of heroism, the exaltation of strength rather than weakness, pride against simplicity." Robert Rossellini, "Dix ans de cinema," part 2, *Cahiers du Cinéma* 52 (Nov. 1955): 5; also in Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini* 76.

27. The film likewise deliberately associates the movement of the children with that of the priest in one of the film's recurring visual gags, the constant genuflecting before the altar in Don Pietro's church. A zone of immobility in a war zone that generally warrants running, the altar constantly interrupts both Don Pietro and the children's movement. It becomes therein a recurring symbol of their compromised agency, literally and figuratively prostrate before the setting.
28. Landy, *Italian Film* 252–53.
29. Peter Brunette is very perceptive on this issue of neorealism's altered system of spectatorial identification, though he does not address the aspect of male humiliation or the child in this system of refigured identification. In his analyses of both *Paisan* and *Germany, Year Zero*, he emphasizes how the films narratively and technically interrupt standard identification. See Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini* 71, 84.
30. For an analysis of the big Other and its role as a third term in the system of specularly, see Žižek 72–77. For Žižek, the gaze is never direct and is always mediated by a third figure. Though I am not convinced of the universality of this model, I would submit that these films deploy the child as this third term in the system of the gaze.
31. The missed or lost duel with the Germans is likewise implied when Antonio and Bruno seek refuge from rain under an overhang they share with a group of German-speaking priests. Both Antonio and Bruno look confused, presumably for different but parallel reasons.
32. L. M.
33. Lenning.
34. Bar scenes in which characters abrogate their positions in the dominant fiction abound in both Italian neorealist and rubble-films; such scenes play key roles in *Bicycle Thief*, *Obsession*, and *Rome, Open City*. Besides *Somewhere in Berlin* and *Before Us, Life* (1948), Germany's first postwar film, *The Murderers Are among Us*, opens with and returns to a bar in which its protagonist, Mertens, drinks away the painful past.
35. The importance that cigarettes assume in many rubble-films also reflects the dual social and cinematic crisis. What were once the most casual, manipulatable symbols of phallic power—as Richard Klein has explained—now elude the male protagonist. As conduits of power away from the male subject, they become one of the most important postwar units of currency and exchange. While children deal in them—for example, Edmund in *Germany, Year Zero*—adult males often end up staring at them, passively and pensively.
36. Ashis Nandy's seminal study, *The Internal Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, describes a symbolic code that was developed

in the colonies but amounted to a symbolic negotiation between ruler and ruled. Nandy examines not only the well-known racial but also the gendered and generational aspects of the colonial narrative, in which the colonized were both feminized and infantilized. Nandy spends a good half of his groundbreaking essay on the colonial mechanisms of generation and age, and describes how the child functions as just such an “internal enemy” (15–16, 33).