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A Companion to Federico Fellini

Edited by
Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva

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A Companion to Federico Fellini

Wiley Blackwell Companions to Film Directors

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This edition first published 2020
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Registered Office(s)
John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, USA
John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Burke, Frank, editor of compilation. | Waller, Marguerite R., 1948– editor of compilation. | Gubareva, Marita, editor of compilation.
Title: A companion to Federico Fellini / Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller & Marita Gubareva.
Other titles: Companion to Federico Fellini
Description: Hoboken : Wiley-Blackwell [2020] | Series: Wiley Blackwell companions to film directors | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2019042675 (print) | LCCN 2019042676 (ebook) | ISBN 9781119431534 (hardback) | ISBN 9781119431510 (adobe pdf) | ISBN 9781119431541 (epub)
Subjects: LCSH: Fellini, Federico–Criticism and interpretation.
Classification: LCC PN1998.3.F45 W373 2020 (print) | LCC PN1998.3.F45 (ebook) | DDC 791.4302/33092–dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019042675
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019042676

Cover Design: Wiley
Cover Image: © Photo Elisabetta Catalano

Set in 10/12pt Dante by SPi Global, Pondicherry, India

Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

To Bianca, Gabe, Lea, Tyler, and Wylie

Comune di **Rimini**

GuaraldiLAB

The Comune di Rimini and Mario Guaraldi contributed significantly to the preparation of this volume (see Acknowledgments).

In Memoriam: Peter Bondanella (1943–2017)

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Adriano Aprà has been publishing since the early 1960s. In the mid-1960s, he founded and edited *Cinema & Film*, contributing essays to the journal, and in the 1970s he codirected Filmstudio 70 (Rome). He has published, among many other things, *Per non morire hollywoodiani*; *Stelle e strisce. Viaggi nel cinema Usa dal muto agli anni '60*; *In viaggio con Rossellini*; and *Breve ma veridica storia del documentario. Dal cinema del reale alla nonfiction*. He directed the festival at Salsomaggiore (1977–1989) and at Pesaro (1990–1998). From 1998 to 2002, he was the director of the Cineteca Nazionale in Rome; and, from 2002 to 2009, he taught the history of cinema at the University of Rome, Tor Vergata. He has made a fiction film, *Olimpia agli amici*, and a documentary, *Rossellini visto da Rossellini*. He codirected *Rosso cenere* with Augusto Contento.

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Goffredo Fofi has been an elementary school teacher, a citizen of numerous cities, and an engaged intellectual, committed to supporting the marginalized and creating networks alternative

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Vincenzo Mollica has for decades been one of the leading television journalists in Italy, impassioned by comics, cinema, and Italian popular music "d'autore." He met Federico Fellini in the mid-1970s. He was a cartoonist, as was Fellini in his early days, and their love for comics became the basis of a long and close friendship. Mollica has hosted numerous important television programs—both specials and series—in the history of the RAI. He has edited, authored, and coauthored approximately 60 books on numerous popular-culture topics and figures, including *Il fumetto e il cinema di Fellini*; *Viaggio a Tulum; Fellini sognatore. Omaggio all'arte di Federico Fellini*; *Il viaggio di G. Mastorna detto Fernet*; *Fellini: Parole e disegni*; and *Fellini sognato*. His book of personal observations, *Scritto a mano pensato a piedi. Aforismi per la vita di ogni giorno*, was published in 2018. In 2018 as well, he was granted the honor of Commendatore Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana. At the 2019 Venice International Film Festival, he was awarded the 2019 Premio Bianchi by the Italian union of film journalists.

Giuseppe Natale is a professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he teaches Italian studies, classical studies, and translation studies. He has published on Italian literature, translation theory and pedagogy, and cinema. He has translated several major American novels into Italian, such as Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, and Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*. He has also edited the English translation of Gianfranco Angelucci's *Federico F.*

Marina Nicoli has authored *The Rise and Fall of the Italian Film Industry* and published essays in national and international journals on the economic history of Italian cinema, international coproductions, and distribution practices. She teaches economic history at the Università Bocconi (Milan), and is currently a research fellow on the British AHRC-funded project, Producers and Production Practices in the History of Italian Cinema 1949–1975, coordinated by Prof. Stephen Gundle (Warwick University).

Mark Nicholls is senior lecturer in cinema studies at the University of Melbourne. He is the author of *Lost Objects of Desire: The Performances of Jeremy Irons* and *Scorsese's Men: Melancholia and the Mob*, and he has published articles on Italian cinema, art cinema, and creative practice histories of *The Archers* and *The Ballets Russes*. Mark is a radio and print film journalist and has an extensive list of stage credits as a playwright, performer, producer, and director.

Áine O'Healy is professor of modern languages and literatures at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. Her research interests lie in transnational cinema; contemporary Italian film; and discourses of race, gender, and postcolonial studies. She has published over 70 articles on Italian cinema and is the author of *Migrant Anxieties: Italian Cinema in a Transnational Frame*. With Katarzyna Marciniak and Aniko Imre, she is one of the coeditors of *Transnational Feminism in Film and Media*. She has also coedited special issues of *Feminist Media Studies* and *California Italian Studies*.

Federico Pacchioni is Sebastian Paul and Marybelle Musco Chair in Italian Studies at Chapman University, California. His books include *Inspiring Fellini: Literary Collaborations Behind the Scenes*; *Pier Paolo Pasolini. Prospettive Americane* (with Fulvio Orsitto); and the second edition of *A History of Italian Cinema* (with Peter Bondanella). He has published numerous articles on Italian cultural history at the intersection of literature, film, and theater.

Stefania Parigi teaches at the Università Roma Tre. Her scholarship concentrates principally on Italian cinema, combining historical research with theoretical reflection, archival investigation with film interpretation. She has worked on silent cinema, 1930s cinema, and contemporary cinema, but has dedicated major attention to post–Second World War cinema. She has written and curated books on Roberto Rossellini, Cesare Zavattini, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Marco Ferreri, Francesco Maselli, and Roberto Benigni. Her most recent volumes include *Cinema - Italy*, published in Great Britain, and *Neorealismo. Il nuovo cinema del dopoguerra*.

Elena M. Past is associate professor of Italian at Wayne State University. Her research includes work on the toxic waste crisis in Naples, Mediterranean cinema and ecocinema, animal studies, and Italian crime fiction and film. She has written *Italian Ecocinema Beyond the Human* and coedited *Italy and the Environmental Humanities: Landscapes, Natures, Ecologies* with Serenella Iovino and Enrico Cesaretti.

Kriss Ravetto-Biagioli is professor of Film, Television and Digital Media at UCLA. She has worked on the question of nation building, ethnocentrism, and sexual violence in the Balkans and Eastern Europe; Nazism, Fascism, and the Holocaust; surveillance and social media; digital art and experimental cinema and the uncanny; and the emergence of new forms of politics through social media. She is the author of *The Unmaking of Fascist Aesthetics*; *Mythopoetic Cinema: On the Ruins of European Identity*; and *Digital Uncanny*.

John Paul Russo is professor of English and Classics and chair of the Department of Classics, University of Miami. His fields of study are critical theory, history of culture, and Italian and Italian–American cultures. He has received three Fulbright Awards to Italy. He is book review editor of *Italian Americana* and a former coeditor of *RSA*. His most recent books are *The Future without a Past: The Humanities in a Technological Society*; *The Italian in Modernity*, cowritten with Robert Casillo; and *Luoghi di un'Italia ritrovata* (forthcoming).

Albert Sbragia is associate professor of French and Italian Studies and Comparative Literature, Cinema and Media at the University of Washington. He is the author of *Carlo Emilio Gadda and the Modern Macaronic*, and his previous studies on Fellini discuss the oneiric element in his filmmaking and his place in the rise of French and American auteurism. His current research examines the reterritorialization of Italian spaces under globalization in recent Italian cinema.

Antonella Sisto teaches Italian at Providence College and Rhode Island College. She received her PhD in Italian studies from Brown University and has been the recipient of two postdoctoral fellowships. As a Mellon postdoctoral fellow at the Five Colleges, she taught and collaborated with the Italian and Interdepartmental Film Studies Program and the Massachusetts Multicultural Film Festival. As a fellow at Brown, she collaborated with the Italian Department and the Cineteca di Bologna's Rediscovered Cinema Festival on Tour. She has published and presented her work internationally. Her first book is *Film Sound in Italy: Listening to the Screen*, and she is currently working on a transdisciplinary project on sound and modernity, using film, visual and sound art, and everyday sonic interaction to explore how sound, in its specific cross-cultural significance, can work as an aesthetic, ethical, and ecocritical acoustic proposition to better understand and relate to the world around us.

Erika Suderburg is a filmmaker and writer. Her books include *Resolutions: Contemporary Video Practices*; *Resolution 3: Global Networks of Video*; and *Space Site Intervention: Situating Installation Art*. She is currently a faculty member at the University of California, Riverside, located in the Department of Media and Cultural Studies.

Victoria Surliuga is associate professor of Italian at Texas Tech University. She is a scholar of modern and contemporary Italian poetry and Italian cinema, a poet, and a translator. She has written on the relationship between poetry and painting in Giambattista Marino; Federico Fellini; the poetry of Franco Loi, Giancarlo Majorino, Giampiero Neri, and Andrea Zanzotto; and in the work of Italian artist Ezio Gribaudo. Recent book publications include *Ezio Gribaudo: My Pinocchio* and *Ezio Gribaudo: The Man in the Middle of Modernism*.

Caroline Thompson is a novelist, screenwriter, and film director. She adapted her first novel, *First Born*, with Penelope Spheeris, and though the movie was never made, it proved the start of a long screenwriting career that has included *Edward Scissorhands*; *The Addams Family*; *Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey*; *The Secret Garden*; *The Nightmare Before Christmas*; *Black Beauty*; *Corpse Bride*; *City of Ember*; and *Welcome to Marwen*. She also directed *Black Beauty* and wrote and directed *Buddy* and *Snow White: The Fairest of Them All*. She is the 2011 recipient of the Austin Film Festival's Distinguished Screenwriter Award, the first woman to be so honored.

Marco Vanelli teaches language and literature in public school, as well as cinema and theology in university, in Tuscany. He is the editor of and frequent contributor to *Cabiria - Studi di Cinema*, a quarterly journal that specializes in historical research, especially amidst the forgotten pages of Italian cinema. He rediscovered and supervised the restoration of the short *Chi è Dio?* (1945) of Mario Soldati, one of the first instances of Italian neorealism. His interests include animated cinema and the spiritual aspects of the *cinema d'autore*. With Marco Bellano and Giovanni Ricci, he authored *Animazione in cento film*.

Carlo Verdone is a major contemporary Italian filmmaker whose films have enjoyed great commercial and critical success. He worked in cabaret and in television before making his first film, *Un sacco bello*, under the mentorship of Sergio Leone. He has gone on to make over 25 movies, linked to the tradition of *commedia all'italiana* in terms of both comedy and social commentary. Acting in many of his films, at times in multiple roles, he has been considered the heir of Alberto Sordi. He has also performed in the films of other directors, such as Paolo Sorrentino's *La grande bellezza*, and won numerous nominations and awards for his acting. He is the brother of filmmaker Luca Verdone and the son of Mario Verdone, noted film scholar and critic.

Luca Verdone is an internationally renowned, award-winning director of documentary and fiction films, focusing often on art–historical themes. Among his documentaries: *Le memorie di Giorgio Vasari*, *Alberto il grande*, *La meravigliosa avventura di Antonio Franconi*, *Sergio Leone*; among his fiction films: *7 chili in 7 giorni*, *La bocca*, and *Il piacere di piacere*. He is the brother of filmmaker and actor Carlo Verdone, and the son of Mario Verdone, noted film scholar and critic.

Cristina Villa is a lecturer at the University of California—Accent Florence. She holds a PhD from UCLA. Her research and published articles focus on history, memory, trauma, genocide, and the Shoah in cinema and literature. Other research interests include food history and a human-rights-based approach to food. She recently coauthored a chapter about Italian food history in the book *Alla tavola della longevità* by renowned bio-gerontologist Valter Longo.

Marguerite Waller is emerita professor of comparative literature and gender and sexuality studies at the University of California, Riverside. Her scholarly publications include essays on medieval and Renaissance literature, film and visual culture, transnational feminisms, feminist epistemologies, sustainability, and decolonial aesthetics. She is the author of *Petrarch's Poetics and Literary History*, and has coedited five books—*Federico Fellini: Contemporary Perspectives* (with Frank Burke); *Frontline Feminisms: Women, War, and Resistance* (with Jennifer Rycenga); *Dialogue and Difference: Feminisms Challenge Globalization* (with Sylvia Marcos); *The Wages of Empire: Neoliberal Policies, Repression, and Women's Poverty* (with Amalia Cabezas and Ellen Reese); and *Postcolonial Cinema Studies* (with Sandra Ponzanesi).

Lina Wertmüller was the first woman nominated for an Academy Award for Best Director (*Pasqualino Settebellezze/Seven Beauties* 1976). She has been named a recipient of a 2019 Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Governors Award—an honorary Oscar for lifetime achievement. She was assistant director on Fellini's *8½* and has often acknowledged the importance of her relationship with the director. She became an internationally renowned auteur on the basis of her distinctive oeuvre, including films such as *Mimì metallurgico ferito nell'onore* (*The Seduction of Mimi* 1972), *Film d'amore e d'anarchia, ovvero "Stamattina alle 10 in via dei Fiori nella nota casa di tolleranza…"* (*Love and Anarchy* 1973), *Travolti da un insolito destino nell'azzurro mare d'agosto* (*Swept Away* 1974), and *Pasqualino Settebellezze*. She continued to make films into the new millennium, and her career has been particularly remarkable in the context of an Italian film industry that made little room for woman directors at the time she was most active.

Rebecca West is the William R. Kenan, Jr. Distinguished Service Professor Emerita at the University of Chicago. She has published over 100 articles in modern and contemporary Italian literature and culture, cinema studies, and feminist studies. Her authored or edited volumes are *Eugenio Montale, Poet on the Edge*; *Gianni Celati: The Craft of Everyday Storytelling*; *Pagina, pellicola, pratica. Studi sul cinema italiano* (ed.); *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Italian Culture* (coedited with Zygmunt Barański); *Italian Feminist Theory and Practice: Equality and Sexual Difference* (coedited with Graziella Parati); and *Scrittori inconvenienti. Essays on and by Pier Paolo Pasolini and Gianni Celati* (coedited with Armando Maggi).

Vito Zagarrio is a professor of cinema and television and director of the Audiovisual Production Center at the Università Roma Tre. He has taught in several American and British universities and is the founder and artistic director of the Roma Tre Film Festival and the Costaiblea Film Festival. He has published numerous books on American and Italian directors, and on issues related to film and television, film production, and Italian cinema. He has directed documentaries on film

history, various Italian directors, the new Italian documentary, and the new Italian cinema. He has directed TV programs and three feature films: *La donna della luna*, *Bonus malus*, and *Tre giorni di anarchia*.

Alberto Zambenedetti is assistant professor in the Department of Italian Studies and the Cinema Studies Institute at the University of Toronto. He is the editor of *World Film Locations: Florence* and *World Film Locations: Cleveland*, and a coeditor of *Federico Fellini. Riprese, riletture, (re)visioni*. His scholarship has appeared in journals such as *Annali D'Italianistica*, *Studies in European Cinema*, *Journal of Adaptation in Film & Performance*, *Short Film Studies*, *The Italianist*, *Quaderni d'Italianistica*, and *Space and Culture*.

Editors' Notes

To avoid cluttering the text with explanatory endnotes for terms such as the EUR, *commedia all'italiana*, and the *anni di piombo* ("the leaden years"), which recur with some frequency in the volume, we have gathered them in a glossary early in the book. We encourage readers who are not greatly familiar with Fellini or Italian history and cinema to consult this guide to terms and issues.

It is the practice in this volume to use Italian film titles as our default and provide English film titles, normally in parentheses and always in italics, when films have formally acquired such titles, for purposes of exhibition, distribution, and so on. In cases where there is no English title, but the Italian title requires translation, we provide the translation in parentheses and in quotation marks.

Several titles of Fellini films are the same in English as in Italian, except for initial capitalization (e.g., *La strada* in Italian vs. *La Strada* in English), the presence or absence of a hyphen (*Fellini - Satyricon* in Italian, *Fellini Satyricon* in English), or a minimal change in articles (*I clowns* in Italian, *The Clowns* in English). Providing both forms for the initial appearance of the title in each essay seemed to be belaboring the trivial, and the Italian title can easily be employed via Google or IMDb to find the English equivalent—so, in these cases, we have provided just the Italian titles.

For English titles, we follow recent Criterion Collection releases when their film titles represent an improvement over previous versions. For example, Vittorio de Sica's *Ladri di biciclette* (1948) had usually been translated into English in the singular—*The Bicycle Thief*—despite the significantly plural Italian. Criterion has chosen the more appropriate *Bicycle Thieves*. Similarly, though less significantly, Roberto Rossellini's *Roma città aperta* (1945) has been referred to as just *Open City* or as *Rome, Open City*. Criterion has kept "Rome" and deleted the unnecessary comma: *Rome Open City*.

Translations, if not otherwise noted, are the authors' with the following exceptions.

The texts by or involving Francesca Fabbri Fellini, Valeria Ciangottini, Goffredo Fofi, Naum Kleiman, Amara Lakhous, Vincenzo Mollica, Carlo and Luca Verdone, and Lina Wertmüller, as well as any brief testimonials appearing throughout the volume and originally in Italian, were translated by the editors. The contributions of Gianluca Lo Vetro, Gianfranco Angelucci, and Vito Zagarrio were translated by Amy Hough-Dugdale, who also provided assistance with the interview with Mollica. The chapters contributed by Paolo Bertetto and Marco Vanelli were translated by Sarah Atkinson. Adriano Aprà and co-authors Barbara Corsi and Marina Nicoli were translated by Sergei Tsvetkov, and Nicola Bassano by Julia Heim. Clare Tame provided initial input into the translations of Zagarrio and Stefania Parigi. They were finalized by Hough-Dugdale and the editors, respectively. "Fellini in the Cuban Context" was translated by Jennifer Ruth Hosek; the interview with Tanvir Mokammel was translated by Esha De.

Marita Gubareva supervised translations from Italian and often intervened with her editorial expertise.

Foreword

Francesca Fabbri Fellini

> … now I realize I have something to confess. When I became a successful director, I wanted to tell my mother, very clearly, how aware I was of the influence she had on my existence. She was the director of my entire life.
>
> Federico Fellini

I, Francesca Fabbri Fellini, am the daughter of Maria Maddalena Fellini, younger sister of Federico. A geneticist once told me that when my grandmother was expecting her daughter Maddalena, in her fetus the future eggs of Maddalena were already forming. Among those thousands of ova, one would account for the birth of her female grandchild. Dreamer that I am, I love to think that I began my life in the body of my *nonna*. In fact, there has existed from the moment of my birth, 24 May 1965, a special affective tie between me and nonna Ida Barbiani, the mother of Federico, Riccardo, and Maria Maddalena. This Foreword is in large part dedicated to her.

Writing the Foreword for this volume, which will remain over time a precious point of reference for all impassioned Fellini scholars, I decided, as the last genetically linear heir of the Fellini family, to climb up for a moment onto our genealogical branches and seek to tell you where the road began for a little genius born in Romagna, son of a housewife and a traveling salesman.

In Rimini, 20 January 1920, at 9 o'clock in a tempestuous evening of thunder and lightning, of downpours and gale-force winds, and of a sea in tumult, in the apartment of the Fellinis in viale Dardanelli 10, thanks to a local doctor and precisely at the moment in which a clap of thunder shook the house, a fine young *maschietto* was born. His name would be "Federico."

While Federico is being born, the young actor Annibale Ninchi, who many years later will play the role of the father of Marcello and Guido in Fellini's semi-autobiographical films *La dolce vita* (1960) and *8½* (1963), is performing at the Politeama Riminese theater in *Glauco* by Ercole Luigi Morselli. Destiny places two fathers in close proximity to the crib of a future master of world cinema: Urbano (biological) and Annibale (imagined).

The marriage of my grandparents is a story my nonna Ida would tell me when I was small, as though it were a fairy tale, to make me fall asleep. Nonno Urbano was born in 1894, son of the proprietors of a small farm in Gambettola, a town near Cesena. Before turning twenty, realizing that there was little work in his birthplace, he decided to emigrate to Belgium, and with the outbreak of the First World War, he was sent, as a German prisoner, to work in the coal mines, which caused heart problems and contributed to an early death.

Having returned from Belgium, he settled in Rome, where he found employment as a baker's assistant in the Pastificio Pantanella, in via Casilina. In the capital, he fell in love, which was reciprocated by the beautiful Ida. From the beginning, they did not have a lot in common: he from the

Figure G.1 Federico Fellini and his mother, "nonna Ida." 1963. Photograph by Davide Minghini. Courtesy of Francesca Fabbri Fellini.

country, she from the city; he constrained to work for a living, she well off. They had contrasting characters, and it would remain that way for life: *nonno* was extroverted, witty, convivial; *nonna* somewhat closed and austere. Despite some hesitation, nonna, swayed by the charm and good looks of Urbano, let herself be drawn into a romantic escape to Urbano's paternal home at Gambettola, where marriage ensued.

The relationship between Ida and her family of origin became, as a result, irreparably compromised. It was difficult for her to erase the bitterness of having severed her affective roots, but no one of the Barbiani family was willing to make a gesture of peace toward a young woman considered, given the times, dissolute and thus deserving of disinheritance.

Toward the end of 1919, my grandparents moved from Gambettola to Rimini, where Urbano began his career as a traveling salesman of food products. With his jovial demeanor, which inspired trust, he was baptized "the Prince of Salesmen." He could not understand why Federico did not aspire to follow in his footsteps. *Zio* [Uncle] *Chicco*, as I called Federico, once told me, "You know Franceschina, one day when I found myself with two salesmen who were wearing gold chains and pinkie rings and smelled of aftershave, I realized that, after all, and against my will, I was following in the footsteps of your nonno. Life had compelled me to be a vendor of rounds of parmesan like him, only I called them films, and the producers to whom I wanted to sell these films didn't greet what I considered to be my potential masterpieces with the same receptiveness that the clients of nonno displayed for his oil and prosciutto."

As successful farmers, Federico's grandparents, Luigi and Francesca, had animals in the stalls, a farm cart, a horse-drawn carriage. One day, serious misfortune was barely avoided. Luigi was in the carriage with Ida, who was pregnant with her firstborn. The horse was trotting, and Luigi, to amuse his son's young wife, decided to make it gallop. The carriage overturned and the expectant mother leaped and fell from the buggy; but, fortunately, no harm was done. Needless to say, my family tree seriously risked not being enriched by the birth of Federico.

Federico said of his experience in farm country:

> We would go to Gambettola, in the interior of Romagna, in summers. My grandmother Francesca always kept a rush in her hands, with which she made the men react with moves right out of an animated cartoon. To begin with, she had the men who had been chosen for the day's fieldwork line up. In the mornings, you could hear rough laughter and a great hum of voices. Then, as soon as she would appear, these rough-and-tumble men would become as respectful as though they were in church. Nonna would then distribute caffe latte and check everything out. She would smell Gnichéla's breath, to see if he had been drinking grappa—and he would laugh, elbowing the man next to him, becoming a little child in his sudden bashfulness.
>
> Nonna was like the other Romagnolo women. One of these, every evening, would go to the osteria, pick up her drunk husband, and load him onto a cart to take him home (a scene we see in *I clowns* [1970]). On one occasion, amid general derision and humiliation as he was dragged off by his wife—legs dangling from the cart—from under his misshapen hat, his eyes met mine.

Nonna Ida always told me that uncle Federico dreamed of becoming a puppeteer. When he was eight, she bought him a toy theater, and thus he imagined for himself an endless supply of stories, animating the puppets. And he also invented the costumes for the characters.

One of the greatest sorrows for my mother Maddalena and for uncle Federico was the death of their father; nonno Urbano died of a heart attack when he was only 62 years old. If you asked Federico about his father, he would say that the first thing that came to mind was the train station: his father boarding; the railway man, with his visored hat, closing the train doors one by one; and Urbano staying at the window to say goodbye, while the train, with the great jolting of its unleashed cars, lurched into motion. The stations, the remembered trips, the departures, the goodbyes, the returns, the nostalgia—all this was part of Federico, thanks to a traveling salesman father, restless and festive, who would reappear full of gifts able to excite the fantasy of a small child.

My mother would tell me that Urbano was a father *molto simpatico*, who would make coins disappear with little conjuring tricks, tell little stories, and always have his pockets full of candy to give to all the children. He was easily moved; it was enough for the children to get a good grade at school for his eyes to glisten. At home, he would stay in shirtsleeves, with a vest and a long cigarette holder and cigarette, seated at his typewriter, responding to mail. When he returned from his trips to hear about the shenanigans of Federico and Riccardo, he would threaten terrifying measures in order to satisfy Ida. For example, "I am going to eat the typewriter, eat the table, eat the umbrella." Uncle Federico captured this beautifully in *Amarcord*, bequeathing some of Urbano's theatrics to Titta's father.

As many people know, Federico and Giulietta had a son, Pier Federico, born 22 March 1945, who lived for only 11 days. The pain of that tragedy, as one could see looking carefully in the eyes of Federico, did not disappear for all his life. But 20 years later, his imposing sister, "the Sequoia" as he called her, gave birth to an equally imposing baby who weighed four and a half kilos. My mother told me what zio Chicco exclaimed when he saw me and my titian hair for the first time: "What a beauty this *bamboccia*. She was born rusty because she stayed inside there for 12 years."

I was immediately a favorite "daughter" of Federico, my godfather at baptism along with my aunt Giulietta. My titian hair, green eyes, and hale and hearty cheeks could not but elicit his spirit as a great caricaturist, who could forge from the reality of things the intense harmony that governs dreams. And so I, his "good giant," inspired his pictorial imagination, which portrayed me as a figure from cartoons.

He liked to draw me with a cape that he had gifted me, and that resembled the kind worn by the carabinieri: blue with red stripes on the shoulders. When he came to Rimini, he would

take me to Scacci, the oldest toy store in the city. Among his many gifts, I remember a toy theater with a box of three-finger puppets. We played together creating funny stories and fantastic characters.

For me, zio Chicco was a man of dreams: great and magical. Without a doubt, he inspired me to be creative. The first time I stuck my nose in the world of celluloid was when I was eight, in the famous Studio 5 of Cinecittà, the largest in Europe and one that became synonymous with Federico's filmmaking. I remember it well: Federico was directing *Amarcord*, a film that has entered so profoundly into Italian culture that its title has become a neologism.

Amarcord is the film I have always loved the most. It was the moment that I began to understand that zio Chicco was not only a great playmate but a true lord of the movie set. He directed his cast and crew with confidence, he explained to the actors the expressions he wanted, and he showed the extras how to move. Very much as he had as a child with his puppet theater, living the role of director in a very particular way.

I spent a lot of mealtimes with him. He was a gourmet of food just as he was of life. Aunt Giulietta was also a great gourmet, and for her *Federicone* she would cook industrial quantities of minestrone, tagliatelle al ragù, and chicken alla diavola. Above all, she was fabulous for performing the multiplication of loaves and fishes after the usual telephone call around nine in the evening: "Giuliettina, we aren't going to be just four this evening, but 15." I am so frustrated that I don't have even one of the napkins on which zio Federico drew at restaurants between one dish and the next, seized by his inexhaustible creativity—only to leave them behind as gifts for his lunch and dinner companions.

I never asked him for anything except some advice, in Rome, when I was 19 and had finished high school. Which path should I follow in my life? Because of my innate and uncontainable curiosity, he counseled me to major in foreign languages and literatures, to learn how to use computers well, and to become a journalist. I followed his advice; I graduated, and I became a professional journalist.

When I was born, zio Chicco was 45 years old, had already won three Oscars, and was considered by many to be the king of world cinema. I am happy to say that in the year of my birth, Fellini arrived "in color," making *Giulietta degli spiriti*, his first feature film not shot in black and white.

For Federico, 1965 is a year pervaded by magic and mystery:

—he meets the writer Dino Buzzati, collaborator on "ll viaggio di G. Mastorna" ("The Journey of G. Mastorna"), a story of the afterlife that, though never finished, occupied Fellini on and off for much of the latter part of his life and had a significant impact on many of his films.
—he writes the screenplay of "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna."
—he meets the paranormally extraordinary Gustavo Rol. Fellini called him "the most disconcerting man I have ever met. His powers are such that they surpass even the ability of others to imagine themselves astounded."[1] Rol said of Federico, "To describe Fellini, I would entrust myself to three words: genius, intelligence, goodness. But I will limit myself to only one: 'Immense.'"[2]
—he suffers the death of his German Jungian psychoanalyst Ernst Bernhard, who motivated him to transcribe his dreams and words in such a way as to produce what became published posthumously as *Il libro dei sogni*.[3] Federico said, "I liked everything about Bernhard: the street where he lived, the elevator that seemed a room unto itself and rose slowly like a hot-air balloon, the vast office full of

1 Quoted on Dionidream 2019.

2 Quoted in Quaranta 1993.

3 See Fellini 2007, 2008

books, with the windows wide open overlooking the roofs of Piazza di Spagna. He listened to my unhinged confessions, dreams, lies, with a kind smile, charged with affectionate irony."[4]
—he meets in New York the creator of Spiderman, the Hulk, and other Marvel heroes, the great American cartoonist Stan Lee, and a great friendship is born.

One of the fables that I liked the most was "Sleeping Beauty in the Woods," with its fairies bestowing gifts on the little princess. I like to think that when I was born in Bologna, my "fairy godmother" Federico sprinkled over my crib his gift of fairy dust that inspired in me a passion for mystery.

Unfortunately, I never met Gustavo Rol, though zio Federico spoke of him often. I only communicated with him once by telephone, a few days before Federico died. He called my house in Rimini saying that he had been seeing Federico while he was in a coma in his intensive care room at the Policlinico Umberto I in Rome, suspended like a balloon tied to a string. He asked me why Federico and Giulietta had to go so soon. He said he would have given his life in exchange for those two creatures whom he loved so much. "I can't do anything for them," he lamented.

And then he told me: "Francesca, something very concrete has happened to your uncle Federico that has shortened his life. Very concrete." Without explaining what. "I was convinced that Federico would have lived for several years more. I am unhappy for them."

Federico passed from a coma to his death a few days after, and his beloved Giulietta, the one woman worthy of being his lifelong companion, followed after five months, in March 1994. Rol died six months later.

One day, Federico told me of a séance with Rol at Treviso. The medium, in a soft, breathy voice, began to recount stories from Federico's infancy that only his father Urbano could have known. Then he invited Federico to ask a question, in effect to his father. He asked, "What could resemble the condition of life ending?" The answer was suggestive: "It is as though in a train at night, far from home, I was thinking of you in a kind of opaque state of drowsiness, of semiconsciousness, with the train carrying me ever farther away."

What did I envy about zio Chicco? A friend so special such as Rol, a beautiful soul, who time and time again ferried him into other, higher dimensions.

What have I inherited from my zio Chicco? A passion for the hidden side of things, subtle worlds, the Beyond.

When he was 70 (in 1990), he went to Japan with aunt Giulietta and received the epitome of international honors in the world of art, the Praemium Imperiale that acknowledged his "decisive contribution to the progress of cinematic art, already unanimously recognized." On that occasion, he met two emperors: the political leader Akihito, who welcomed him into his official residence at Palazzo Akasaka, and Akira Kurosawa, his colleague, nicknamed the emperor of Japanese cinema, who invited him to eat sushi at the famous restaurant Ten Masa, seated shoeless on a tatami mat.

The emperor Akihito told him, "This prize that I consign to you is in the name of an invisible multitude." And Fellini commented, "for sure, as the son of a traveling salesman of Gambettola origin, I can have no complaints about the road I have travelled."

To be the final heir of a family whose name has been so elevated by its most notable bearer is an honor and a responsibility. Now as we travel toward the centenary of Federico's birth, I can only applaud a publication such as this.

4 Quoted in Benemeglio 2018.

Figure G.2 From left to right: Maddalena Fellini, sister of Federico; Francesca Fabbri Fellini; Federico; and Fellini's mother, Ida. 1973. Photograph by Davide Minghini. Courtesy of Francesca Fabbri Fellini.

I would like to conclude by citing the famous postulate of Lavoisier: "nothing is created, nothing is lost, everything changes," which zio Chicco revised as "nothing is known, everything is imagined." And, I would like to exclaim, in the name of the entire Fellini family, "grazie nonna Ida."

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Preface
Felliniesque. A Glimpse Behind the Curtain

Gianfranco Angelucci

I remember hearing, around the middle of December on the verge of the year 2000, that the BBC had compiled a list of a hundred names, chosen from among the most eminent figures of every nation of the world, to commit to the memory of the new millennium. From Italy, only Federico Fellini made the list. Not a scientist, Enrico Fermi or Guglielmo Marconi, for example, but an artist of the cinema who more than anyone else had left an impression on the imaginary of the century.

At that time, in those mid-December days, I was in New York consulting a prestigious law firm that specialized in international law, hoping to establish a Fellini Foundation in America analogous to the one I directed in Italy. As it was the period right before Christmas, the bookstores were brimming with gift books, and they had whimsical offerings dedicated to the passing of the baton between the two millennia. At the Coliseum bookstore, I found an illustrated volume on "the two hundred people of the century who made a difference": among them, again, was Fellini. I bought the book for $195, thinking that it might be useful for the negotiations in progress.

Federico was well-loved in the Anglophone world, the only director on earth who has won five Oscars! Four for his films, like John Ford, and the fifth, the Academy Lifetime Achievement Award, given to him in 1993, the same year that he died.

When I was visiting some American universities, one of which was the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, I happened to hear film historian friends of mine say that, with respect to the Seventh Art, the twentieth century could be divided equally in half: the first part belonging to Charlie Chaplin and the second to Federico Fellini. I got the impression that, in the United States, Federico was considered virtually a "local" artist, even if he had never agreed to direct a film there. Not even when an important major film company offered a multimillion-dollar contract for a screen adaptation of Dante's *Inferno*. It was such a massive amount of money that Federico decided he needed to get on a plane and go justify his refusal in person. At the film company's headquarters, in front of those gathered around "a table more gigantic than the one in the Oval Office at the White House," he tried to illustrate his vision of the film: "A barren, uncomfortable, narrow, oblique, dreary, little inferno." An impenetrable place in which the air doesn't circulate, asphyxiating, unbreathable: "To be reconstructed as usual at Cinecittà, with reference to the perspectives, depth, and scenery of Renaissance painter Luca Signorelli." The president of the company, who in the caricatural emphasis of Federico "smoked a cigar as enormous as a mortadella," paused thoughtfully, and after having quietly exchanged some words with an assistant, concluded: "Mr. Fellini, don't worry, we will make Luca Signorelli an offer he can't refuse!"

I don't know if this is exactly how things went, but the fable has its moral implication, and explains, in a way, why the film wasn't made. It also shines a significant light on the metamorphoses

the project underwent, having taken a decidedly personal direction in the director's imagination: becoming an explanation on film of the impossibility of reducing the *Divine Comedy* to a cinematic spectacle. At the center of the whole affair, dedicated to the persona of the producer, there would have been Fellini himself, seated in a director's chair with his scarf and Borsalino, but dressed in puppet's clothes. The narrative model would have closely followed *Bloc-notes di un regista* (*Fellini: A Director's Notebook*, 1969), an easy, flexible, colloquial formula that had already been happily experimented with by the director to recount on screen his abandonment of the prophetic "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna" in favor of Petronius's *Satyricon*—also a journey, and not such a different one, into the realm of the unknown.

This synopsis, which we did not have time to develop into a screenplay due to the premature death of the director, was to have included a sequence that had evolved in conjunction with his reading of *The Doors of Perception* (1954). Aldous Huxley refers to experiments in psychic alteration brought about through the use of mescaline. An uncontrollable curiosity had provoked Fellini to try, under medical control, a similar experiment with lysergic acid, a synthetic hallucinogen better known by the name of LSD 25.

The distressing idea the director came up with was that hell could manifest itself as the spontaneous collapse of all the cerebral synapses, thought reduced to mush, the individual submerged in the primordial magma anterior to the advent of Word and Light. This shipwreck of the intellect in a chaotic ebb, both preconceptual and presensorial, in a universe without time and without names, completely devoid of handholds, would have been realized through a shocking psychedelic sequence, a bombardment of light and distorted, blinding colors.

It occurred to me later on that the intuition of the director was nothing other than a horrible premonition, a paranormal anticipation of that which was about to occur in his mind. A year later, in fact, Federico had a stroke that proved fatal. And for two weeks, in a comatose state at Umberto I Hospital in Rome, he continued to talk without emitting sounds, moving his lips incessantly, babbling inarticulate words, in a condition unfortunately similar to the infernal disconnection he had lucidly foretold.

I refer to this disquieting episode only with the intent to clarify the visionary inclination of the artist "who sees beyond," to where others are not able to see. In speaking about Fellini, often with the goal of making myself understood to disoriented listeners, I find myself calling him a martyr, in the original meaning of the Greek term μάρτυς, μάρτυρος, that is, the witness who comes to the defense of the accused, and by extension, the witness to the truth itself. I believe that Fellini, in his own way, took on this role, became a saint, not so much in the conventionally religious sense but rather in the esoteric one; he was enlightened. He was endowed with that overabundance of energy that in saints manifests as miracles of faith; in artists it is transformed into works of art. Both cases refer to ascetic phenomena that transcend the common capacities of the individual, phenomena perceptible in sages, in magicians, in fakirs, in the ancient priest-kings.

Having had the privilege of entering the wizard's lair at the top of the tower, having had contact with the alchemist's instruments, I can say that Federico possessed extraordinary faculties that he did not keep secret. He alluded to episodes of "levitation" (an explicit reference can be found at the beginning of *Intervista*—1987) and other extrasensory happenings to which I refer in my books only in part.

His films, like the works of every other great artist, can be considered authentic texts of wisdom capable of expanding the consciousness of those who attend to them. Reading Shakespeare or Tolstoy, contemplating the Sistine Chapel or the sculptures of Michelangelo, admiring Brunelleschi's dome, and Giotto's bell tower, and listening to the music of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, changes our perception of reality, and shapes our own lives. It is unnecessary to generate hierarchies of value for the works of extremely talented artists in as much as these

works offer us, together or separately, a complete universe in which to immerse ourselves so that we can enter into contact with the deepest layers of reality. Indeed, if individuals dream for their own sake, true artists dream for the sake of humanity.

In little more than a hundred years of cinema, numerous auteurs have produced excellent films, even undisputed masterpieces. However, Federico, while expressing appreciation for many of his colleagues in many of his interviews, recognized in only two filmmakers the heraldic nobility of the artist. Or rather three, including Charlie Chaplin, whom he considered Father Adam, the Homer of the screen, the origin of storytelling. The other two were Akira Kurosawa and Stanley Kubrick. It is no coincidence that in their films the substance of dreams hovers, transfigured.

After having met Jungian psychoanalyst Ernst Bernhard, Federico, over the course of 30 years until his death, annotated, illustrated, and commented on every nocturnal "message" in his famous *Il libro dei sogni* (*The Book of Dreams*, Fellini, 2007/2008). It was a vein of gold that he confidently tapped when developing his films. In some cases, the dreams became the originary nucleus of the films—as with the never completed "Mastorna" and even the commercials shot in 1992 for a bank's promotional launch. These latter little stories contain his entire poetics! Miniature masterpieces to which the audience certainly did not pay due attention, and to be honest, maybe not even the clients. But those handfuls of images are declarations of freedom, existential defenses, and they possess the delicate transparency of a watermark, or of ancient palimpsests that have resurfaced from the depths of time, reemerging from the darkness of a buried casket. Remember the frescoes in the excavated patrician house, which in the film *Roma* (1972) disappear at first contact with air? Fleeting, elusive visions.

Between us and the unknown world, Federico believed, there is just a tissue paper wall, on the other side of which a parallel life pulsates. This veil to which we press our ears is so thin that at times from that impalpable world come murmurs, words dispersed in the air, mirages, acoustic illusions, undecipherable signs—or snags can appear that allow us to catch a glimpse of something. Inexplicable and obscure phenomena, tantamount to the "voices from the well" that Fellini invites us to listen to in his final film-testament *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon*, 1990): "And yet I believe if there was a little more silence, if we all quieted down a little, maybe we could understand something…."

The painter, the poet, the artist who keeps an ear glued to that wall of tissue paper is capable of perceiving the unknown, and sometimes makes reference to it, not as a void or an absence, but as a multitude of presences, of shadows, which come to light via powerful visionary writers, those of Virgil's and Kafka's stature. Or thanks to gifted psychics such as Gustavo Rol, a friend of Federico's until the very end, through whom he was allowed to "knock on the door of the unconscious." And if someone happened to criticize him, or disapprove of this ingenuousness and credulity, he responded calmly: "I prefer to believe in everything than not to believe in anything."

In *8½* (1963), when during the telepathy show at the Hotel delle Terme, Guido asks Maurice to reveal the tricks of the transmission of thought, what does his magician friend respond? "Well, there are some tricks, but there is also some truth. I don't know how it happens, but it happens…." Never close a door, a possibility, never immure yourself inside your own certainties. Federico had adopted Lao Tsu's adage with enthusiasm: "As soon as you conceive a thought, laugh at it." That is why he kept repeating to journalists and scholars eager to inquire into his life: "Don't ask me questions, watch my films. It's all in there; I have always made the same film."

Nothing could be truer—to the point where we can explore his work as a single, uninterrupted tale. Fellini never put the word *Fine* at the end of his films, confirming that each one continued on into the next. Each time, the skillful composer reorchestrated the same themes for a concert both ever-new and ever the same. From *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik*, 1952) to *La voce della*

luna, Federico was only ever speaking about himself, not about his day-to-day life, and not even about his life story, but about his soul. *ASA NISI MASA*—the famous enigmatic phrase from *8½* that reduces to *anima*—the Italian word for "soul"—when "sa," "si," and "sa" are removed).[5]

As is well known, Fellini's films proceed by way of associations, just as in the language of dreams. Each sequence generates the next in a paratactic structure; there are no subordinate clauses, which are indispensable in the construction of plot. We are talking about a technique poetically comparable to the "objective correlative" theorized by T. S. Eliot, which is the transposition of abstract conceptual meaning into the image of a concrete object with no apparent connection but nonetheless capable of evoking concepts emotionally. Fellini, in addition to foregrounding dreams, psychoanalysis, and the narrating self in his cinema, also created an analogy with modernist, or symbolist, poetry, in which images, themes, fragments prevail over the traditional exposition of story. The "poetics of the object," which in Italy was very much present in the lyrics of Giovanni Pascoli and avowedly reinforced in Eugenio Montale's *Ossa di sepia* (*Cuttlefish Bones*, 1925), finds a fascinating correspondence at the end of *La dolce vita* (1960) in that gigantic ray rotting on the beach of Fregene and around which the lingering participants from the nocturnal orgy gather.

Similar to the "objective correlative," James Joyce's "stream of consciousness" is germane to the structure of Fellini's visual narrative. For example, near the end of *8½*, seated at the steering wheel of his car as the critic Daumier dismisses his film as a squalid catalogue of mistakes, Guido is seized by a sudden burst of happiness and begins talking to himself. Alone in the foreground, he appears to be speaking with "the voice of thought," but as the field widens, we see that he is addressing his wife Luisa who has appeared out of nowhere. Interior monologue instantaneously becomes dialogue. At that point, Maurice, the telepath of ASA NISI MASA, the voice of the soul, appears (from where?), and he performs the magic of reanimating the film that seemed dead and abandoned. He succeeds thanks to the music of Nino Rota, which draws all of the characters, real and invented, down from the scaffolding.

Federico asserted that only when he listened to Rota's music did he fully understand the meaning of the film he had created. The indefinably arcane themes, sweet and sorrowful, were the hidden soul of his creations in which, Federico maintained, Nino Rota had always dwelled. The composer, to whom he attributed an "angelic" nature, lived in Rome in an apartment in Piazza delle Coppelle (another name for the crucible used in alchemy) and he owned, though not many are aware, the largest library of esoteric texts in Italy or maybe even in Europe.

"The cinema is a divine way to tell the story of life, to compete with the Eternal Father," claimed Fellini, the great illusionist who, with "paper, scissors, and glue," as he loved to say, evoked unforgettable emotions. Remember the passage of the ocean liner Rex in *Amarcord* (1973)? Nothing other than a cardboard silhouette propped up on the Cinecittà pool, an offscreen siren wailing in the night, a banner of lights, a puff of black smoke from the smokestacks, and a simple trolley to simulate the movement of the ship that glides out of the scene: "The *Rex*! The *Rex*!" shout the inhabitants of the town, joyfully, excitedly, from boats that float on a sea of plastic. The same sheets of glossy plastic, waved by stagehands offscreen, resurface hypervisibly in the Venetian lagoon of *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova*, 1976) and the Aegean Sea of *E la nave va* (*And the Ship Sails On*, 1983). Illusion, trickery, sleight of hand: because in art everything is symbolic, and only the absolute, perfect, insatiable search for invention is capable of restoring the truth.

When Joseph Losey, enthusiastic about having seen *La dolce vita* again on TV, wrote to him from England and gave him words of encouragement and overwhelming admiration, Fellini responded: "Dear Joseph, I never re-watch my films, and when a friend speaks to me about them

5 Editors' note: it is also the Jungian term for the female part of the male psyche.

because he saw one recently, I am always startled, as if they had suddenly discovered that I didn't pay my taxes, or as if someone told me that the husband of a beautiful woman had figured everything out and is looking for me." One of the most inspired film directors, and also the most vulnerable, he put himself on the same level as an imposter who is afraid to be found out. The inevitable fragility of the artist.

Fellini never told stories created at the drawing board; he never used contrived narratives that, however ingenious and skilled, remain weak pretexts, naive toys. He preferred to tell the story of existence exactly as it presented itself to him, because human nature is the same under every sky, and life belongs to everyone. His fables, his frescoes use a singular and inimitable language: a few frames are enough to recognize his hand, his eye, his style. "Artistic originality has only its own self to copy," asserted Vladimir Nabokov, a writer he much appreciated.

Felliniesque! "I have always aspired to be an adjective," laughed Fellini, adding: "Even if I don't understand what it means." It is the style that identifies the artist, the stamp that distinguishes him from anyone else, becoming the mirror into which those who gaze can recognize themselves. In cinema Fellini has fully unfolded his own universe, which, miraculously, often seems to be our own: many recognize themselves there, and in so doing they feel absolved, less alone, less guilty. Few have been as open as Fellini in speaking about themselves without restraint and modesty, without self-censorship, without hiding—on the contrary, unmasking every myth, every abuse of power, every form of authoritarianism. Heedless of any "excommunication," he ripped off the suffocating gag of the Church; he ridiculed Fascism and Fascists; and he stood up to media dictatorship. The last is alluded to in *La voce della luna*, as Silvio Berlusconi—the television mogul who chopped Fellini's films into pieces on television with commercials—takes it in the *culo*, when a waiter kicks the backside of a swinging door on the front of which Berlusconi's image is painted. "You don't interrupt an emotion," Fellini shouted at the wind, having lost the case against commercial interruptions in court. He was always risking it alone, without any solidarity on the part of the trade associations who were dominated by politically motivated filmmakers.

He did not accept an honorary degree from the University of Bologna because, he explained in his refusal, "I feel like Pinocchio decorated by the headmaster and by policemen for having had fun in the Land of Toys.... There's a certain upending of the rules in play that leaves me disoriented and unhappy. It's stronger than me. I would feel as if I had to force myself into a role, a demeanor, a mental attitude that doesn't belong to me and I would end up living with real malaise." He wanted to remain free as he was when, as an adolescent, he would sit at his high school desks and draw caricatures of the teachers, demanding, furthermore, to be rewarded for his impertinence.

Fellini was above all an anarchist who loved order. His cinema, with its poetry alone, has always remained loyal to that same spirit, and it never bowed to compromises. Averse to the crutch of ideologies, far from the noise of rallies, from the inauthenticity of trends and buzzwords, from false prophets, from the mindset of the masses, a most individualist and apolitical of directors—the most unrestrained, lighthearted, and unpredictable—expressed himself by disclosing the door to mystery and trusting in the voice of art, the only voice that can never be manipulated and distorted, whose strength is destined to endure clear and incorruptible in time.

"The visionary is the only true realist," Federico repeated with the absolute conviction that the imagination is the most noble function of the human mind. Clearly, he shared the view of Saint Gregory of Nyssa, who said: "Concepts create idols. Only wonder comprehends."

In the momentum of writing, I might have forgotten something close to my heart along the way: in everyday life, Federico was the most brilliant, the most fun, the most irreverent, the most salacious, the most exhilarating person that I have ever met. He was a prism of the clearest

crystal, whose faces, rotating, made the colors of the spectrum dance and gave every aspect, every detail of existence, an unexpected light. He was the celebration of life.

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Acknowledgments

First of all, we would like to thank all our contributors, whose enthusiasm for the project confirmed our belief that it was time for fresh takes on Fellini. Contributors also offered invaluable support in the form of connections, and contacts. We particularly thank Francesca Fellini for introducing us to Aldo Ponis, director of his wife's—the late Elisabetta Catalano's— Archivio, from which we were able to choose our cover photograph. Thanks as well to Signor Ponis for his generosity in making the photograph available within the constraints of our budget. Mario Guaraldi, storied publisher of numerous significant and beautiful volumes on Fellini (among other things), introduced us to Marco Leonetti and to Nicola Bassano (also one of our contributors), both of the Cineteca di Rimini, who, in turn, provided invaluable access to archival and other materials. Mario Sesti provided us with numerous contacts and support at the outset of the project.

UCLA Professor Massimo Ciavolella, distinguished scholar of early modern literature in North America and Europe and a treasured citizen of Rimini, introduced us to Andrea Gnassi, mayor of Rimini. Mayor Gnassi has enthusiastically supported *A Companion to Federico Fellini* and arranged a financial subvention from the Comune of Rimini that has enabled us to include several significant images of and by Fellini. We are immensely grateful to the rights holders of Fellini's *Il libro dei sogni*—the Cineteca Comunale of Rimini, Francesca Fabbri Fellini, and Mario Guaraldi—for granting us permission to reproduce, gratis, images from that remarkable volume. Francesca also granted us the rights to reproduce family photographs, and generously shared details of her warm relationship with her uncle. Milo Manara granted us the right to use two of his images gratis; Lia Furxhi has given us permission, gratis, to quote material from *Federico Fellini. L'arte della visione*; and the Fondazione Micol Fontana provided us with a photograph of the Ava Gardner *pretino* dress at an affordable cost.

We owe special thanks to Vincenzo Mollica, a boundless source of information and support, whose generous spirit has infused the entire editorial project.

Tyler Clark Burke has provided highly expert and greatly appreciated assistance in the preparation of the visuals.

At John Wiley & Sons, Rebecca Harkin shepherded our proposal through the acceptance and contract process. Catriona King then became our supportive editor, seeking to adapt the restrictions of the *Companion* format to the exceptional demands of a book on Federico Fellini, particularly at the moment of his centennial. Juliet Booker has been a consistent "companion" throughout the editorial process, and Richard Samson and Jake Opie have provided valuable assistance.

Each of us is also indebted to supportive colleagues, friends, institutions, and opportunities. Frank would like to thank Tony Mollica, uncle of Fellini's close friend and associate Vincenzo

Mollica, who provided materials and advice, and introduced him to Vincenzo. Frank owes abiding thanks to his Lucchesi friends, Romano Giammattei and Marco Vanelli, who have greatly enriched his Italian experience and vocabulary. Although retired, he owes a continuing debt of gratitude to the Department of Film and Media, Queen's University, which supported his work and enabled him to spend significant time in Italy while also fulfilling his university responsibilities.

Marguerite would like to acknowledge the stimulation and support of her colleagues at the University of California, Riverside, especially those in Gender and Sexuality Studies, Media and Cultural Studies, and Comparative Literature. Erika Suderburg, Chair of Media and Cultural Studies, has been a source of particular inspiration. A residency at McGill University's Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies and its director Alana Thane provided the perfect context for conceptualizing a transnational Fellini whose fusions and diffusions call upon all the disciplinary and cognitive faculties one can muster. She warmly thanks her decolonial feminist reading group for their provocative explorations of how relational thinking and activism work in many diverse contexts. A sabbatical quarter from UC Riverside that followed the semester in Montreal supported the immensely enjoyable process of envisioning and organizing the volume with her coeditors.

Marita would like to thank Eleonora Mancini for facilitating access to Valeria Ciangiottini, and Mariangela Barbanente and Valerio Ruiz for linking us to Lina Wertmüller. Valerio, director of *Dietro gli occhiali bianchi*, a documentary on Wertmüller, offered invaluable assistance with our interview. Marita remembers with warmth and gratitude the years she spent as a researcher at the European University Institute, where she first started her work on Fellini.

Our thanks go to our translators, who are named in the Editors' Notes—with a special thanks to Amy Hough-Dugdale who helped us out enormously in the late stages of the project.

Two conferences in spring of 2017—the annual meeting of the American Association of Italian Studies, organized at Ohio State University and a celebration of the fifth anniversary of the *Journal of Italian Cultural and Media Studies* (JICMS) in Rome—came at just the right time to put our editorial team in contact with an international community of Italian film scholars whose interest and support have buoyed the project at every step. We would particularly like to thank Dana Renga and Flavia Laviosa, organizers of these conferences, for facilitating our work.

Glossary

The following are terms that recur throughout the volume and that, while familiar to those working in Italian film studies and more specifically on Fellini, might not be to the general reader. They are sometimes contextualized within the body of the chapters in which they occur, but we have glossed the terms to avoid the repeated use of explanatory endnotes when they are not. The explications remain brief when the full significance of the terms becomes clear in the essays that reference them. Many terms specific to Fellini and Italian film are fully contextualized whenever they appear in the volume, and, thus, do not appear here.

anni di piombo. The translation of the title of Margarethe Von Trotta's film *Die bleierne Zeit* (*Marianne and Juliane* 1981), and rendered somewhat awkwardly in English as "the leaden years," "the years of lead," or "the years of the bullet" (bullets being colloquially associated with "lead"). The phrase refers to a period of violence and tension in Italy from the late 1960s to the beginning of the 1980s. The most notable originating event of the *anni di piombo* was the bombing in Piazza Fontana, Milan, 12 December 1969, by neofascists. It is a period marked by left-wing terrorism but also by a "strategy of tension" in which right-wing violence sought to disguise itself as left-wing terrorism in the interests of promoting an authoritarian mood and reaction in Italy. The Piazza Fontana bombing was a major instance.

Il Boom. See *miracolo economico*.

commedia all'italiana. A genre of sophisticated and often quite serious "comedies," normally considered to originate with *I soliti ignoti* (*Big Deal on Madonna Street*, Mario Monicelli, 1958). It paralleled the success of the Italian art film, though with less international exposure, into the 1970s. Known for its critical view of the effects of the Economic Miracle and of "the Italian character," but also criticized for being complicit in the creation of a rogue gallery of figures who were too entertaining and even charming to be the vehicle for bona fide social critique.

Economic Miracle. See *miracolo economico*.

EUR. The initials stand for Esposizione Universale Roma. It was an area of Rome intended for the site of the 1942 world's fair and to celebrate 20 years of Fascism. Because of the war, it did not serve its original purpose, but construction resumed in the 1950s and 1960s, and major sites were completed for the 1960 Rome Olympics. Cinematic imagery of the EUR district often

conveys a sense of sterile Fascist modernity, though the history of the area's postwar development has given it a significant post-Fascist identity as well.

fotoromanzo/fotoromanzi. Comics illustrated with photographs rather than drawings, shot on a set, with actors who became known and "fan"tasized by the public. A kind of static film. The content was principally romantic, and the intended audience was primarily female.

fumetto/fumetti. Italian term for comic book and comics. The term refers to the speech balloons in comics drawings. What are "balloons" in English comics are "puffs of smoke" in their Italian incarnation: little clouds ("nuvolette") in which the words of the characters appear.

Hollywood on the Tiber. A term first employed by the American press, in conjunction with the production of *Quo Vadis* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1951), to describe the arrival of Hollywood filmmaking in Rome and at Cinecittà. *Quo Vadis* was the first of the numerous major Hollywood film productions made in Italy in the 1950s and 1960s to be considered part of this phenomenon.

le leggi razziali/Racial laws. Discriminatory legislation, passed by the Fascist government between 1938 and 1943, and aimed principally at Italian Jews and the inhabitants of the Italian colonies: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Libya.

miracolo economico/Economic Miracle/*Il boom*. A period of strong economic and technological development, centered in the years 1958–1963, that transformed Italian society largely along the lines of American capitalism and consumerism, in ways often critiqued in films of the late 1950s and 1960s—and beyond.

Aldo Moro. A member of the Christian Democracy party and Italian Prime Minister in both the 1960s and the 1970s. He was a key figure in helping bring the left into power in the 1970s. On 16 March 1978, during the *anni di piombo*, he was kidnapped and killed after 55 days of captivity.

RAI (RAI1, RAI2, RAI3). Radiotelevisione Italiana—the national Italian broadcaster.

varietà. Variety shows that had certain similarities to music-hall entertainment (Great Britain) or vaudeville (North America), though with great regional variations, dependent on local traditions, in Italy.

Part I
Fellini and Friends

Catherine Breillat

Fellini was and will always be one of the greatest and most alive *directors in the world.*

In France, probably because of [the 10th anniversary of his death], there was a very interesting television program on Fellini […]. Fellini was talking about disponibilità *(willingness or receptiveness), in the sense that as he said, he never knew what he was going to do. Obviously, he did know, because everything is so precise, but at the same time he was also* someone else *when he was making a film. He didn't belong to himself, he belonged to the film. He felt like someone else and he called this sensation disponibilità. Art, he said, is simple, but it does require immense* disponibilità. *You can never create anything if you know what you are going to do beforehand. And that is difficult. You have to accept a certain dose of emptiness, a certain dose of fear. (34)*

Fellini's style is like nobody else's. The art of his movement and framing is a signature in itself. This is why he has never created a school. Very few directors attempt to follow in Fellini's footsteps, not because he isn't the greatest, but because at the end of the day it's impossible. It's as if a painter tried to imitate Cranach, or a writer, Shakespeare […]. It would be unwise and decidedly risky to be inspired by Fellini. (36)

I think that Fellini surprises us so much because he practises this incredible art of taking fantasy very seriously. He manipulates irony, his sense that all the world is a stage, his [commitment to] observation and detail, but at the same time he delights in visual delirium, composition, colour, exuberance and creative profusion. There is also a marked degree of truculence. And it is this that fixes this delirious invention in a sort of humanism. In Fellini you can find all the great visionary Dutch and Flemish masters. He is Brueghel and Jerome Bosch rolled into one. He is a painter, a great painter of animated, living canvasses. Watching a film by Fellini is like watching a volcano erupt. You feel a sensation of power, of life's mystery and a phenomenal incandescent eruption. It takes hold of us, it amazes us, and it gives us an immense feeling of joy. (38)

From 8½ *to* E la nave va*: The Birth and the Death of Art. In:* La memoria di Federico Fellini sullo schermo del cinema mondiale *(Rimini: Fondazione Federico Fellini), 34-38.*

1

Introduction

Marguerite Waller and Frank Burke

The 100th anniversary in 2020 of Federico Fellini's birth, 20 January 1920, is the momentous occasion that prompted the creation of this *Companion*, though there are many reasons other than the centennial to justify a volume of this scope on the Italian director. With this anniversary in mind, one is tempted to assert the "importance" of Fellini. Yet, many of our authors take issue with the assumptions and strategies that underlie normative notions of importance in Western culture. Numerous contributors note that Fellini was in frequent conflict with accepted notions of importance—and that this conflict provided much of the energy for his best work. Accordingly, we have reconfigured what is generally considered important, focusing instead on the profound dispersiveness and relationality of Fellini's work: its extraordinary ability to affect people with its emotional, spiritual, and sensual openness, and its consequent engagement with viewers in cultures far and wide.

Two conventional markers of Fellini's "importance" are the many awards won by his films and his ranking in the British Film Institute magazine *Sight & Sound*. He has won more Academy Awards than any other director in the history of cinema: Best Foreign Film for *La strada* (1954), *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957), *8½* (1963), and *Amarcord* (1974), and an honorary Oscar for lifetime achievement in 1993.[1] More than a mere index of success, Fellini's Oscars bespeak a powerful connection between Fellini's work and its audience in the US, reflected as well in the 1980 comment by Harry Reasoner, a prominent CBS and ABC anchor and founder of the show *60 Minutes*, that Fellini "[may be] the premier filmmaker of the age." The 2012 *Sight & Sound* directors' poll ranked four of Fellini's films among the top 40 best films ever made,[2] with *8½* taking fourth place. The fact that all Fellini's films have been available recently in English language versions in North America and the UK is perhaps even more indicative of Fellini's importance within Anglo-American film culture. In Italy, throughout continental Europe, and elsewhere, the stories of powerful connection are similar. At the film festivals of Venice, Cannes, Moscow, among many others, Fellini's work was recognized by a steady stream of prizes, and in 1990 Fellini was invited to Japan to receive the Praemium Imperiale, the equivalent of the Nobel Prize in the visual arts, awarded annually by the Japan Art Association.

We were also intrigued, in preparing this volume, by the personal testimonies that people offered of Fellini's impact on their lives and work (Francesca Fabbri Fellini, Gianfranco Angelucci, Vincenzo Mollica, Goffredo Fofi, Lina Wertmüller, Valeria Ciangottini, Carlo and

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke,
Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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Luca Verdone, and others whose comments are interspersed throughout the text), and by its intersections with directors and cultures other than European and North American. We intended, from the start, to demonstrate Fellini's geographical and cultural reach, but we had no idea how extensive it was or how enthusiastically scholars, artists, and archivists (Esha De, Tanvir Mokammel, Amara Lakhous, Cihan Gündoğdu, Earl Jackson, Naum Kleiman, Luciano Castillo et al., and Rebecca Bauman) would respond to our inquiries. Only the limits of space have prevented us from providing even more compelling evidence of Fellini's transnational currency.

In addition to providing insight into both a more personal and a more global Fellini, our contributors address Fellini's precinematic and early cinematic experience (Marco Bellano, Stefania Parigi), the recurrent patterns and motifs that make the films so distinctive (Adriano Aprà, John Agnew, Alessandro Carrera), and his interactions with extracinematic forms and influences (Bellano again, Erika Suderburg, Federico Pacchioni, Gianluca Lo Vetro, along with coeditor Marita Gubareva). They also address Fellini's rich, lengthy, and sometimes troubled collaborations (Giaime Alonge, Barbara Corsi and Marina Nicoli, Victoria Surliuga), his innovative film language (Marco Vanelli, Antonella Sisto), and the original means of expression Fellini brought to the film screen (Hava Aldouby, Paolo Bertetto, Amy Hough-Dugdale, Vito Zagarrio). Contributors have been impressed by the pertinence of his work to contemporary dialogues concerning politics, gender, race, sexual orientation, and the environment (Kriss Ravetto-Biagioli, Shelleen Greene, Suderburg, Lo Vetro, Elena Past, along with coeditor Marguerite Waller). New understandings of Fellini's impact on European and Anglo-American cultures are complemented by essays that deepen and complicate our appreciation of Fellini's significance within these frameworks (Nicola Bassano, Albert Sbragia, Bauman again, and Russell Kilbourn, along with coeditor Frank Burke).

Our interest in new, expansive, dispersive perspectives on Fellini, along with our page limit, predisposed us to forego full-length essays on individual films, in lieu of which we asked filmmakers, scholars, and others involved in and with creative work to contribute "short takes" on selected films that had a particular, perhaps personal, significance for them (Dom Holdaway, Giuseppe Natale, Áine O'Healy, Mark Nicholls, Caroline Thompson, Suderburg, Cristina Villa, Rebecca West, Alberto Zambenedetti, John Paul Russo, Elan Mastai). We encouraged these authors to approach the films as idiosyncratically as they wished, further contributing to the diversity of perspectives included in the volume.

Throughout, the editors have aspired not to monumentalize Fellini and his work but to emphasize its continuing, shape-shifting relevance, to introduce different generations and different communities of viewers to one another, to offer new theoretical frameworks, to foster new encounters and interactions, even new disagreements and critiques (Alonge, Corsi and Nicoli, West, Thompson, Zagarrio, and Richard Dyer are among those who see notable problems in Fellini's work and cinematic career).

We felt it useful to conclude the volume with an appendix that notes major, accessible archival resources for further research on, exhibition of, and thinking through of Fellini's work. We hope that the many events, including this volume, marking the centennial will strengthen these existing archives and encourage the emergence of new ones.

We wish the volume included everything we had in mind at the start. Entries on Fellini's global reach could have gone on indefinitely, and no doubt some readers will find their favorite Fellini film unaddressed in the "Short Takes" section. There is much more to be explored in Fellini's relations with other figures in Italian and non-Italian cultural and aesthetic history. Dante, whose *Commedia* is a felt presence in most of the films, directly catalyzed Fellini's never produced "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna." Fellini's voluminous reading,

hinted at by the contents of his library and belying the image of the filmmaker as non- or anti-intellectual, also offers many avenues to be explored. Circumstances prevented the inclusion of a chapter specifically addressing "queer" Fellini, though Lo Vetro's and Suderburg's incisive comments provide an excellent point of departure.

However challenging our choices, we have aspired to provide a volume that conforms to the highest academic standards of Wiley Blackwell *Companions*, while remaining accessible to non-academic film viewers. Throughout, we have trusted that matters of genuine interest and importance are shared across academic and general readerships.

Fellinian Wonder

In his short take on *Intervista* (1987), Elan Mastai writes that Fellini's filmmaking taught him that "There are no rules." Perhaps this is why Fellini's work is, as Lina Wertmüller comments, "inimitable," offering "a certain freedom in filmmaking" rather than a model to be copied. At the same time, Fellini's directing was uncompromisingly precise. As Vincenzo Mollica demonstrates, often amusingly, even the most spontaneous and casual-seeming project entailed detailed preproduction, staging, and postproduction correction. Fellini's exquisite craft, his facility with and affection for the technologies of cinema, Marco Vanelli demonstrates, allowed him to push them beyond their accustomed uses. Vanelli proposes that this paradoxical combination of freedom and precision might be thought of as "liturgical," an analogy with which Gianfranco Angelucci implicitly concurs when he identifies "wonder" rather than comprehension as a dominant response to Fellini's filmmaking.

Wonder, a technical term in ancient and medieval theories of vision, as Angelucci elaborates, evokes a very different understanding of relations between seer and seen than that embodied in Renaissance perspective painting, notorious for encouraging the viewer to experience a sense of ownership and mastery (Berger 1977, 83–104). Much late twentieth-century English-language film theory and criticism, particularly when it focused on celluloid women,[3] assumed that the visual habits rooted in early modern European painting were necessarily perpetuated in live-action cinema (though not, interestingly, in animation). This assumption has done a particular disservice to Fellini, whose work did not, in fact, receive the attention one might have expected in US and UK film departments given its centrality in Italian and French debates over the nature and purposes of cinema (chronicled in this volume by Nicola Bassano and Albert Sbragia). Perhaps this avoidance is related to a certain strain of Anglo-Saxon pragmatism and empiricism that breeds distrust of wonder.

The convergence of Angelucci's and Vanelli's discussions on the metaphor of the liturgical suggests a certain likeness between Fellini's aesthetic resourcefulness and that of the creators of the protocinematic visual programs of early Roman churches, and their interrelations with church liturgy. Theological historian Margaret Miles explains that previous to the ascendancy of perspective oil painting, in the visual programs of fourth- through twelfth-century Roman churches, "a stunning array of colors, textures, and materials met the eye everywhere" (1985, 53). Glowing with the illumination provided by strategically placed windows by day and by hundreds of candles at night, richly tactile, vividly colored images invited the viewer to engage in an unbounded and unceasing movement among and between them. This montage effect was further enhanced by its interactive engagement with a sound track of rituals and prayers, a peripatetic liturgy "full of processions and of reading, praying, and celebrating from different pulpits" (52). Divinity, the ultimate reality, was beyond human comprehension, so images were valued,

not only for their meanings but for their power to animate and be animated by the embodied human faculties to which they were attuned. The still vibrant mosaics of these Roman churches anticipate what contributor Hava Aldouby calls Fellini's multisensory visuality, which involves both the way tactile or "haptic" surfaces contribute to a "presence event" and the intense interaction between viewer and image that this presence enables. Aldouby, combining recent breakthroughs in neuroscience with close phenomenological analysis of Fellini's visual styles, finds that bodily processing is central to Fellini's films, precluding their reduction to merely intellectual "meaning effects."

Wonder in this neurophysiological sense is, however, in no way opposed to conceptual rigor, political analysis, or historical awareness. On the contrary, Sisto, who corroborates Aldouby's sense of the importance of the nonmimetic, nondenotative visual elements of the films in her exploration of Fellini's use of sound, notes that history and ideology are "fossilized" (a term she draws from Laura U. Marks's [2000] work on cinematic hapticity) in music and other forms of entertainment. When put into play with one another, they activate a process of mutual illumination and reconfiguration analogous to the relationship between image and liturgy described by Miles. Fellinian wonder, eluding clichés of Western visuality and spectatorship, powerfully draws spectators toward a level of perception characterized by constantly shifting relations and interconnections. This "liquid perception," as Hough-Dugdale elaborates, offers access to dimensions of being and ways of understanding obscured by the apparent realities and priorities of the sociopolitical, economic, aesthetic, and intellectual regimes in which viewers and filmmaker alike are enmeshed.

Reimagining the Political

As this project evolved, we editors observed the emergence of a Fellini who could be called upon for insight into the troubling complexities of the new century as well as into the histories in which the twenty-first century's challenges are entangled. Fellini's work seems to have matured rather than dated, as it questions the compulsions of Western technological, social, and political culture. Why, it prompts us to investigate, in an increasingly interconnected world, are divisive and oppressive formations of xenophobia, fascism, dictatorship, and neocoloniality metastasizing? How do Fellini's refractions of racial, regional, class, gender, and sexual difference subvert the seeming self-evidence of commonly assumed "realities"?

Kriss Ravetto-Biagioli finds that Fellini greatly expands the terms "political" and "ideological" in his use of parody and caricature to loosen the grip of stereotypes, programmatic discourses, and mass media—including cinema—on viewers' imaginaries. In a similar vein, John Agnew explains how Fellini's use of place provides counter-histories to "monumental history," suggesting "alternative pasts that are camouflaged by present-day experiences." When Shelleen Greene brings racial difference and postcolonialism to bear on our reading of Fellini's oeuvre, she discovers rigorous parsings of the frameworks of Italian identity construction in relation to Italy's colonial legacy. Marguerite Waller finds a similar rigor in Fellini's parsings of Western gender and sexuality, also deeply implicated in the economics and power politics of coloniality. Through Elena Past's twenty-first-century ecocritical lens, Fellini's cinema becomes presciently sensitive to "petromelancholia," "a condition manifested in the lingering dissatisfaction of many lives fragmented by petromodernity." Related to the spatial challenges to "experience" discussed by Agnew, Past's stories of cinema's role in co-constructing petroculture and of Fellini's prophetic attention to the disruption of human and other-than-human ecologies by fossil fuel technologies work to undo "modern narratives in which nature remains off limits."

Some viewers have not been prepared to appreciate the critical edge of Fellini's anti-"realist" realism, due to conventional associations of political art with realist aesthetics. Italian Marxist critics of the 1950s and 1960s, as Bassano and Sbragia document, harshly criticized what they saw as Fellini's abandonment of the neorealist filmmaking in which he got his start. It seems easier today to appreciate, as a number of our contributors do, that Fellini's tendency toward exaggeration and caricature involves an "exceptional understanding of culture" (Ciangottini)—of the need for different stories and different ways of presenting them when engaging the cultural imaginary on a fundamental level. As Waller argues in her discussion of *La città delle donne*, Fellini felt and saw himself implicated in the problematic nature of counter movements and revolutions insofar as they can change the look of power relations while reproducing, even intensifying, their structure. Parody and caricature—what Ravetto-Biagioli refers to as a strategy of the weak—is one way to minimize the baggage of a patriarchal culture that traffics in "truth," domination, and control, limiting one's capacity to imagine alternatives. Marco Bellano, describing Fellini's extensive output as a cartoonist before and during his filmmaking career, comments that, for Fellini, caricature was the most apt approach to political criticism. Stefania Parigi coins the evocative terms "neorealism masked" and "caricatural realism" for Fellini's use of caricature "to breach the canons of realism and verisimilitude."

Caricature, Cartooning, and Queering

Fellini's study of anti-Freudian psychoanalyst Carl Jung, Erika Suderburg notes, brought him into contact with Jung's blanket condemnation of what he called "the Judeo Christian path" which, according to Jung, we need to abandon "unless we want to lose our souls and our connection with nature" (Jung 1964). (The South Asian filmmakers discussed by Esha De have more readily picked up on Fellini's rejection of these European legacies than Europeans generally have.) What Fellini (1976, 147) particularly appreciated, though, was that the Jungian rejection led not to nihilism but to an explosion of discoveries: "It was like the sight of unknown landscapes, like the discovery of a new way of looking at life, a chance of making use of its experiences in a braver and bigger way, of recovering all kinds of energies, all kinds of things, buried under the rubble of fears, lack of awareness, neglected wounds." Fellini's films, with their richly haptic sets, mesmerizing cinematography, and fascinating faces point in both these directions, deprivileging a deadening "real" while exploring the landscapes and energies that emerge from the ruins. One of the most powerful experiences a Fellini film can offer is the falling away of mimetic reading habits that inaugurates a new, sensually and emotionally immersive interaction with the images on screen.

For Fellini, this nonmimetic aesthetic had deep roots in his early years as a satirical cartoonist and caricaturist. Many contributors (Francesca Fabbri Fellini, Mollica, Bellano, Carrera, Pacchioni, Ravetto-Biagioli, Parigi, Suderburg, Waller) call attention to the centrality of Fellini's lifelong habit of sketching, recording his dreams and conceptualizing his films in a highly personal drawing style that has begun to be studied in its own right. Given the centrality of comics and cartooning to Fellini's creative process, and particularly to his politics of parody, we take this opportunity to offer some further comment on the difference between the cartoon or comic and the photorealistic image.

For sequential artist and comics theoretician Scott McCloud (1993, 31), "cartooning is not just a way of drawing, it's a way of seeing"—also a way of thinking, adds Hillary Chute (2019, 629–635). McCloud explains that within each panel in a comic, everything in the frame works in relation to everything else. Everything in the panel "pulses with life" (41), whether an object or a human

figure, whether situated in the foreground, middle ground, or background. (Interestingly, medieval scholars have said the same about the early church art discussed earlier.) This aliveness has to do with the reduction of detail to just a few evocative lines, often involving the interaction of words that work much like images with images that work much like words. This process of "amplification through simplification" (30) intensifies the viewer's involvement in fleshing out the images in his/her own imagination. A dynamic co-creative process takes shape in which observer and observed share the same status. "We don't observe the cartoon, we become it," McCloud summarizes. By contrast, he argues, a realistic drawing or a photo of a face is distanced and objectified, perceived "as the face of another" (36). Because the cartoon image operates by becoming "just a little piece of you" (37), and, because it makes no claim to reality or truth and is exempt from the laws of logic and physics, it incorporates "you" into a quintessentially rhizomatic realm, free, as cartoon images are, to relate any element with any element, unsettling the Aristotelian logic of binary categories, which segregate insides and outsides, selves and others, truth and fiction, inhibiting transformative interaction in the interest of maintaining stable, hierarchical positions. The graphic novels of Art Spiegelman, author of *Maus* (2003), and Marjane Satrapi, author of *Persepolis* (2011), exemplify the kind of political critique, challenging Western textual and pictorial codes, that Fellini develops in his filmmaking, at least in part because of his sensibility as a cartoon and sketch artist.

Though never produced as a film, due to both his producer's skepticism and the warnings of his psychic advisor, Gustavo Rol, "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna," Alessandro Carrera suggests, would have taken the stories of Marcello and Guido in *La dolce vita* and *8½* deeper into this territory. (The first part of the story was, appropriately, published as a graphic novel by Milo Manara near the end of Fellini's life and with his enthusiastic collaboration.) The unrepresentable transition from mimetic representation to relational signification is outlined in a letter to Dino de Laurentiis, depicting what would apparently have played out as a mix of keystone cop comedy, horror film, cartoon, and roller coaster ride (Zanelli 1995).[4] Mastorna, a concert-level cello player who has apparently been involved in a plane crash on his way from Germany to Florence, does not understand for the first half of the story that he is dead. After a disorienting time spent stumbling through a familiar-seeming yet alien urban landscape, he has an inkling that he is somewhere other than the world he has known. At this point, he discerns a tiny airplane, constructed of sticks lashed together with twine, "like a plane made for a children's game," hovering over him, offering him a small rope ladder. Reaching the cockpit at the top of the ladder, he discovers that there are no controls; the pilot, an elderly Chinese man is asleep; and the plane is somehow being flown by a laughing Chinese girl of four or five. The "bimbetta cinese" takes the plane through several cartwheels, thoroughly bashing the terrified Mastorna, particularly his head. The moment he gives up any attempt to master the situation, the little girl announces that they have arrived.

This scenario, not at all like the beautiful transcendence Guido yearns for in *8½*, images intellectual, spiritual, and emotional paradigm change as inelegant, undignified, ad hoc, and particularly painful to Mastorna's cultured European intellect. The Chinese figures are not developed as characters and by no means embody an alternative to the Eurocentric universe, but, like other self-consciously Orientalized figures in Fellini's films (as Gündoğdu and Greene propose), they condense the desire for and fear of—the dependence upon and marginalization of—a certain construction of otherness, here being parodied as cultural, racial, sexual, and generational all at once.

Fellini's association of Mastorna with European high culture, coupled with Mastorna's initial, almost willed, obliviousness to the dramatic change he has undergone, seems to express a certain mindset rooted in homogeneity, stasis, impermeability, hierarchy, and the illusions of clarity and mastery. An unruly Chinese bimbetta, in this sense, is the precise obverse of Mastorna's subject position. Recognizing the dependence of his persona on the condensed figure of all that he has been defined against seems to be a crucial step in Mastorna's radical

psychological transformation en route to a fully relational universe. One might say that if he is to discover the liveliness beyond the death of his quotidian deadness, Mastorna must first become aware of his own status as constructed, as a kind of cartoon![5] Fellini's tendency to draw first and find faces that fit his sketches later, as well as his many self-caricatures, suggest the depth of his commitment to making precisely this kind of tricky move.

Fellini's office was strewn with editions of Dante's *Commedia,* and he had already begun playing with the idea of making a film set in the afterlife while still in school (Zanelli 1995, 14). The many parallels between Fellini's politics of parody and Dante's hundreds of briefly but indelibly sketched characters in the *Commedia*, and the intertextuality of Mastorna's and Dante's journeys evidence a certain congruence between Fellini's and Dante's exposés of the devastation wreaked by remaining on what Dante referred to as "la diritta via" (the straight path; *Inf.* I, 3). We regret that exploring this congruence in depth lies beyond this volume's scope (and are grateful that Angelucci broaches it), but we would signal its connection with wonder and cartooning here.[6] The straight path is the road that needs to be strayed from if any meaningful transformation is to occur. The last leg of Dante's journey, like that of Fellini's Mastorna, is guided by a youthful female figure—the young Florentine Beatrice, who, in her own historical time and place was also disempowered, silenced, and subordinated—in a society that, according to Dante, was destroying communities and fomenting violence throughout the Italian peninsula (Ferrante 1992). Dante's Beatrice, on whom Fellini's bimbetta cinese—one of the more unusual of several Beatrice figures in Mastorna—pricelessly riffs, is likened to an intimidating admiral, commanding an entire fleet rather than piloting a single vessel (*Purg*. XXX, 58).[7] When Dante finally faces this transgender figure, he undergoes a parallel transgendering into "liquified snow" (*neve…liquifata*, *Purg*. XXX, 85, 88), a feminine-gendered, fluid substance. By contrast, Marcello's white-attired, misogynistic, decadent male, evocative, as Gubareva suggests, of the decadent masculinity elaborated in late nineteenth-century Europe, remains impervious to Paola's invitation at the end of *La dolce vita* (1960) to recognize his position as relational to hers and to what Past calls the "more than human" all around him.

Perhaps, then, we should not too quickly characterize Fellini's projects as "new." As noted earlier, we editors hoped to include a chapter on the ways in which Fellini's sensibility intersects with contemporary queer theory. We invite our readers to pursue this line of inquiry, and propose that Fellini's entire filmography, his *Il libro dei sogni,* and his many drawings be thought of as queering white, Western, heteronormative patriarchy—including notions of queer themselves. Carla Freccero's Felliniesque proposition in *Queer/Early/Modern* is that to "queer" does not involve using queer as a category or an identity, but as a verb or an adjective, a way of seeing an oddness, a strangeness, in the order of things (2006, 1–9).[8]

Digital Fellini

Fellini's antipathy to the new mass medium of his own day, television, makes one wonder what he would have made of today's proliferation of small screens, flat screens, and gaming platforms. In considering the relevance of Fellini in the new century, one is challenged to consider how differently audio-visual media are constructed, disseminated, and received in the digital age. Making the delivery of Fellini's work easier than ever is the proliferation of streaming venues that include, in North America: The Criterion Channel, which makes a large number of Fellini films available to the public; Kanopy, to which many universities subscribe; and YouTube. At the same time, however, commercial film production and viewing have become dominated by blockbusters and franchises—the very opposite of what Fellini has to offer. Meanwhile, cell phones, iPads, social media applications (such as Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook), and digital games have rendered the

viewing (and communicative) experience more immersive and interactive but also more fragmented. Theoretically, they exemplify the intensity to which we point in Fellini's work: its own fragmentation, its kinetic expressiveness, and the force of individual episodes (the traffic jam, the ecclesiastical fashion show, and the motorcycle ballet, just to cite three from *Roma* alone). In fact, Fellini's most innovative work has been in many ways prophetic of new sensibilities.

We hope that new generations of viewers attracted by Fellinian fragments on YouTube or caught up by a cable television transmission of an entire film will make their way back to the Fellini oeuvre. As the popularity of various serial television programs and the length of many recent franchise movies attest, contemporary viewers have not completely abandoned long-form audiovisual production. We also hope that the vitality, intensity, and originality of Fellini's work in conjunction with the availability of digital video cameras (including cell phones) will embolden more audiovisual artists and performers (like those discussed by Burke in this volume) not to imitate Fellini but to operate as he found the means to do at Cinecittà, as if "there were no rules."

Digital games hold particular promise as an area in which much of what Fellini uses cinema aesthetics and technology to convey comes into its own. The avatars that mediate player participation are, or started out as, nonrealistic cartoons, and the concept art, music, iconography, and interactivity of these immersive environments offer seemingly limitless canvases. The multiple prize-winning, best-selling (and aptly named) game *Journey* (2012), often called one of the greatest video games to date, is just one example of how Fellini's cinematic quest might migrate to new media. Deliberately designed to evoke "wonder," its game elements, musical score (there are no words, and the players interact through music), and graphics have been widely acknowledged for their exactingly worked-out beauty and effectiveness. Playing the game has been compared to a transformative religious experience.[9]

To summarize, altered viewing conditions and habits create both challenges and opportunities. The older and more stable media of archives, film retrospectives, and museum exhibitions remain invaluable, but Fellini's work also lends itself well to the dispersiveness and interactivity of digital media: online installations of his work, for example, allow spectators to create their own Fellini—something Fellini always assumed viewers were and should be doing anyway. To this we might add online venues that would support creative responses to Fellini's work: not just films and videos but video games, cartoons, and graphic novels. There could be no better way to bring a new Fellini to new contexts than to disseminate not just a body of work but the creative spirit behind it.

Postscript

The comments on Fellini that readers will find interspersed throughout the volume, on pages that would normally be blank or largely blank, are meant to comprise a portrait consisting of little known or underappreciated aspects of the director. We have included observations that we find uniquely illuminating, poignant, and/or amusing.

Notes

1 In his own country, as might be expected, Fellini and his films have been the winner of numerous David di Donatello awards (the "Italian Oscars").

2 *La dolce vita* (1960) was tied with several others at 37, so, to be precise, it falls within a range of 37–44.

3 Laura Mulvey's article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," which made this argument, became

widely influential across many disciplines, applied in ways she did not anticipate. Mulvey herself has called it her "Frankenstein's monster," and generously shared with Waller at a conference that she was not familiar with the films of Fellini when she wrote it.

4 It corresponds in this and other regards to an episode in Dante's *Inferno* where Dante and his guide, Vergil, mount a flying hybrid creature—part serpent, part furred animal, with the poisonous tail of a scorpion and the face of a just man—in order to make the transition from the circles of the violent to the circles of the fraudulent. The leap into the void on the back of this creature, painted on both sides with beautiful colors and intricate designs compared by the poet to oriental textiles, is terrifying to Dante but the only way to continue his journey. By implication, he cannot begin the process of healing in *Purgatorio* until he has learned to forego solid ground and entrust himself to the kinds of flight enabled by hybridity and cultural difference.

5 Italian filmmaker Maurizio Nichetti, who pays parodic homage to Italian neorealist cinema in *Ladri di saponette* (*The Icicle Thief* 1989), follows out this trajectory in his film *Volere volare* (*To Want to Fly* 1991), in which the protagonist does, in fact, turn into an animated cartoon figure in a brilliant miscegenation of live action and animated film (Waller 2003).

6 For excellent beginnings in this direction, see Iannucci 2004, Achilli 2016, and Zanelli 1995.

7 Citations of Dante's *Commedia* are quoted from Dante Alighieri, 1996 and 2003.

8 In a review of 42 Fellini caricatures of penises, exhibited in association with a series of Picasso drawings in Rimini's Castel Sismondo in June 2018, journalist Annamaria Gradara notes that all the sketches call attention to the ways in which a heteronormative "mr. Prick," has been "capitalized." These caricatures, sketched while Fellini was working on *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1979)—a film, like *Fellini - Satyricon*, that wrestles with the invention of the modern heterosexual regime—seem very clearly to lambaste the cooptation of male, no less than female, sexuality as guarantor of a single, monolithic "real."

9 Whether by coincidence or design, the game's iconography is uncannily Felliniesque. The player's avatar wears a mystical scarf (Lo Vetro comments on the significance of scarves for Fellini), which allows the player briefly to fly. New lengths of scarf are activated by music to turn a vibrant red (the color of the scarf Fellini often wore and asked to be buried in). Like Mastorna, the player is associated with the cello. Composer Austin Wintory compares the music of the game to "a big cello concerto where you are the soloist and all the rest of the instruments represent the world around you"—*Journey* (a video game, 2012), *Wikipedia*—succinctly recapitulating in musical terms the relational composition of the cartoon frame in which every element pulses with life.

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2

Fellini, the Artist and the Man: An Interview with Vincenzo Mollica

Frank Burke (with Marita Gubareva)

FB: You and Fellini had a great and lasting friendship. How would you describe your relationship with him and some of the qualities that attracted you to him?

VM: Fellini was one of the people I cared about most in my life; he was my university. What I really knew about life I knew thanks to him, just watching him move, speak, listening to him, watching the ironic eyes he made when he met someone who deserved his irony. Or observing his affection and generosity, when someone deserved it. Federico was a very generous person, fundamentally good, a person with a volcano inside himself that was always open, always active, in continual eruption.

I have always been a positive person, and I'm also one for getting things done. If I like a story, an adventure, an idea, a utopia, I'd rather live it and then deal with the doubts later. He would do the same thing.

He was a person of superior intelligence; yet he had the humility that only the greats have. He conducted himself in a way that was simple and clear; you always understood what he was saying. He didn't need to talk in circles; he was always direct, exciting, lively, and concrete.

FB: You mention being a positive person. I see that as a link between you and Fellini—an underlying optimism even if at times he could be quite ironic.

VM: I was born in 1953, the year in which Federico Fellini was shooting *La strada*. And I have been a great admirer of his ever since I first saw this film. From the beginning, I have always been drawn to true artists, and, if I can, I work on things that I like. But if I don't like something, instead of arming myself with harsh criticism, I try to filter my thoughts through irony. Criticism is an act of narcissism; irony, on the other hand, is a thought to share, helping you to understand, to think.

Besides, I have never thought of myself as having certainty of judgment, and in fact, I have never claimed to be a film critic, but rather a commentator, a narrator of that which I have had the fortune to experience. For me, news is always a story to tell, not a fact to judge. Perhaps I learned a lot of this from Fellini. Of course, I also say what I do not like, but I say it with respect for the artist, if it is a true artist. If it is an imitator, I don't even bother.

FB: When did you first meet Fellini?

VM: We met in 1976. At the time I had not yet joined RAI (the Italian national broadcasting network) and was working for a private TV channel. It was when the first independent TV

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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channels were just beginning to appear. We met in Chianciano, where he often spent part of the summer taking the thermal waters. I asked him for an interview. He looked at me and said: "Wait here for a minute, I need to say goodbye to a friend who is leaving." It was the great Italian actor, Gigi Proietti, who was about to leave in his big car. Having seen him off, he turned to me: "Did you notice what a beautiful horse face he has?"

Then there was this wonderful scene, for I showed up with a book published a few days earlier by the Ottaviano publishers with the title *Contro* ("Against") *Federico Fellini*. (The only two directors who have had a book written "against" them were Federico Fellini and Charlie Chaplin.) "*Maestro*, have you seen this book that has just been published on you?" "Ah, I have heard about it. Can I take a look?"

He studied the book carefully for about 10 minutes. Every now and then he read out a phrase, then continued reading, until he finally finished and said: "You may keep it." "But if you need it, Maestro, I can leave it with you." "No, keep it. Anyway, I already know what it has to say; that is, nothing." The whole thing did not seem to bother him at all. Then, in the course of the thirty-minute interview, we discovered our mutual passion for comics. I knew about his passion, so I asked him some specific questions about his work as a cartoonist. That was the beginning of our friendship. About two or three months later, his assistant Fiammetta Profili called me to say that he wanted to meet me. I went to see him. He asked me if I wanted to help him write the introduction to a book by a Spanish cartoonist called Segrelles. In the end, of course, he wrote it himself, but this complicity around comics laid the basis for our relationship. I then started working for RAI in Tuscany and came back to Rome only in 1980, but we remained friends until the end of his life. We often worked together and must have dined together about a hundred times. It was a true friendship.

He and Giulietta knew my wife Rosamaria and daughter Caterina. When we went out for lunch, Rosamaria had to tell fairytales to Caterina, who was not much of an eater. It greatly amused Federico and Giulietta to watch this girl who would not eat without a fairy tale. So, what would Fellini do? While Rosamaria told my daughter her usual fairy story, Fellini illustrated it in real time on a tablecloth or on napkins. So that Caterina had a sort of animated cartoon unfolding before her eyes, much to Giulietta's amusement. I have kept some of these napkins. To make Caterina happy, he would also draw her as a fairy fighting some funny monsters. It was all great fun (see Figure 2.1). For Caterina's First Communion (these are actually very private things that I am telling you), Giulietta came to our house with a beautiful Russian icon that she had bought during her trip to Russia. My daughter still keeps it over her bed.

Apart from that, we did a lot of things with Fellini. I interviewed him many times for RAI, we worked along with Milo Manara on two comic strips, *Viaggio a Tulum* (*Trip to Tulum*) and *Il viaggio di G. Mastorna, detto Fernet* (*The Journey of G. Mastorna, called Fernet*), and we traveled a lot together. It was exciting, a special emotion. He sometimes came with me to the RAI studios while I was doing specials, saying that he enjoyed watching me work.

FB: And what did he do on these visits?

VM: About 18:40 he would arrive at my office. You can imagine what happened when Fellini popped up in the newsroom. It is not something that you see happening every day. On entering, he usually seated himself on a little chair. "Vincenzino, do you mind if I make some phone calls?" "Go ahead, Federico."

I prepared the material and told him that I was going up to the editing room.

"Do you mind if I come with you?"

"Of course, come along." "Though I must say, Federico, when you are there, the editors feel a little embarrassed, because after all you are Fellini, you know; you represent something, while here we are just doing a minute-long story for the news."

Figure 2.1 One of Fellini's sketches to entertain Vincenzo Mollica's daughter Caterina and entice her to eat lunch. Federico Fellini, Vincenzo Mollica collection. © Estate of Federico Fellini/SOCAN (2019).

"Oh, don't worry, I will just sit there and make my phone calls."

I proceeded working with the editor, and we usually had the piece ready by around 19:45. I was generally behind schedule because I always tried to squeeze as much material as I could into the video. "Let's watch the whole piece," I would say to the editor.

"Vincenzino, do you mind if I watch it with you?" "Well of course, Federico, why not." So we watched it together.

"Look, Vincenzino, it's good, I really liked it, there is just one thing…" "Go ahead, what is it, Federico? It is already 19.50, you know" (the news program was broadcast/aired at 20.00). "Well, don't you feel that this little phrase here repeats what you already said in the previous sequence?" Or: "Here you repeated the same word twice, don't you see? It is not necessary, you know." Or even: "Did you notice this unnecessary breath/pause/puff"?

He taught me the most important thing in my profession: essentiality. He taught me that a journalistic text, accompanied by images, required an essential grammar of its own, that it had to speak straight to the heart of the viewers to be understood instantly. It should not be redundant or baroque but rather smooth and essential. It was then that I understood how he edited his films. If you think about it, there is never a phrase or a breath in them that is not strictly necessary. Only what is essential for the scene. Nothing more and nothing less. The essence of the scene.

In the end I always had to reedit the video in great haste, for of course I saw he was right. And one or two minutes before the broadcast, the piece was finally ready.

FB: So, despite the mythology of Fellini creating everything off the top of his head, he was someone who prepared carefully and valued precision.

VM: The precision with which Fellini did everything is incredible. He wasn't someone who would arrive casually at a meeting or an interview. He always prepared himself, in particular for interviews, because he knew that what was said would remain, would be frozen in time, and shouldn't consist of empty words. Several times Fellini showed up with notes in his pocket, which he reviewed before doing the interview. We got to the point where, in the final interviews, I didn't even ask him any questions.

One story in particular reflects his precision—as well as his love for Walt Disney and, obviously, cartoons. It was the 50th anniversary of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Walt Disney's first animated feature film, and one day at dinner we started speaking of Walt Disney. It turned out that Fellini was really fascinated by him. In fact, the only special that Fellini ever did on another filmmaker was the one he did with me, called *Walt Disney: Due chiacchiere con Federico Fellini* ("Walt Disney: A Chat with Federico Fellini" 1987); the title was his.

"Federico," I said. "Why don't we do a special for the anniversary, where you would speak about your passion for the world of animation and for Walt Disney?" He agreed. I thought that the whole thing would be very simple: that we would just go and shoot the special at the LunEur amusement park,[1] as he suggested. "I really like that place," he said. "We'll figure out the rest later. Let's start tomorrow morning." "Shall we meet there?" "No, come to my office."

So I went there the following morning. Since I did not bring along my recorder, we went out to buy one (just to give you some tangible details). "Go ahead, put your questions and I will answer them." It was like composing a treatment for a small film! Once we had recorded the questions and answers, he worked on them as if on a film script. In fact, the result was a proper script in which it appeared that he was working on the introduction to an American book on clowns, which required some photographs of the LunEur park. This is why he was there in the company of a photographer (naturally, a very beautiful one, an acquaintance of ours). Having worked for two weeks on the script of this one-hour special, we finally went to shoot at EUR, where he acted as if he were surprised to see me!

FB: I have seen this special; it all looks very spontaneous.

VM: Whereas in reality it was all calculated, up to the millimeter! Before we began shooting the interview, he said: "Make sure you ask me the same questions as in the script."

It turned out that he had memorized all the answers! He told me he wanted this special to remain for future reference. It was extraordinary. But I'll tell you something else. He came to the editing (these are details you wouldn't know) and said: "Look, there is something missing here." The following morning, he came with a piece of wrapping paper in his pocket: you know, the kind of paper you'd find in a butcher's shop. I still have it. On it he had written the whole finale of the special. In this finale, Fellini speaks offscreen of his wish to see Donald Duck meet Picasso, so that Picasso could creatively "decompose" him. And all this tied together what had been previously said in the special. He was extremely meticulous.

"But Federico, what images shall we use to cover these words?" "Try to get the permission from Disney to use *Fantasia*, the moment when the music takes shape almost in an abstract way, remember?" And, of course Disney, which had never given anyone the permission to use either *Snow White* or *Fantasia*, granted it to Fellini. A copy of the special is now kept at Burbank, in the famous Disney archives.

FB: Was Disney still alive at the time?

VM: Walt Disney was no longer alive by then. Fellini had met him—when he went to receive the Oscar for *La strada*. It's then that there was this scene which he first described in the special—when Walt Disney played a joke on him. He met him with an orchestra playing Gelsomina's

theme song from *La strada*. "Let us go to the saloon and get ourselves a drink," he said to Federico and Giulietta. Then, all of a sudden, he threw himself to the ground, shouting: "Watch out, watch out!" (Federico was wonderful at imitating him). To amuse his guests, Walt Disney had prepared a staged attack of Indians with cowboys shooting.

FB: Just as in *Intervista*!

VM: Yes, only in this case it is something he really experienced with Walt Disney.

FB: This discussion of Walt Disney is a nice point of entry for your more general thoughts on Fellini and *fumetti*, and on the relationship between his cinema and comic book form.

VM: It's all very homogeneous and has to do with the fact that cinema unified his greatest passions: painting, literature, and drawing. Fellini begins his career as an illustrator; if he hadn't been a filmmaker, he probably would have been a painter. He had a graphic facility that was extraordinary, and it wasn't by chance that he was a great lover of painting and well versed in art history. He loved Picasso; Dalì amused him. Caravaggio was another of his great passions, as were the Renaissance greats, such as Michelangelo. Fellini said that his drawing style was caricatural, but, in reality, it was cultured. On the surface they seem like caricatures, but there is strong expressionism as well.

Fellini conceived of every scene as a painting. For him there needed to be plastic value; it was the most important thing. In fact, Federico felt that the best book on his cinema was *Bottega Fellini*, written during the filming of *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980) by Florentine art critic Raffaele Monti (1981). This book was the first to talk about the painterly cinema of Federico Fellini. In *Roma*, there is also a lot of reference—even direct quotations—to the style of Attalo, cartoon illustrator for *Marc'Aurelio*. Fellini and I talked a lot about this aspect of his cinema: that it should be approached as painterly cinema. And if you look at his films through this lens, you'll see them in a new light; they'll surprise you.

At the same time, because his dialogues are absolutely literary, you could read Fellini's films without needing the images because the written texts have a powerful, expressive force. Nevertheless, he knew that those texts needed to come to life as a great tale made of both images and words that become one singular thing. This is where he returns to his origins as an illustrator who combined images and words into comics. In fact, in some ways, it was as if he continued to do the same thing from his early days until his work with Milo Manara toward the end of his life. At heart, Fellini's last two works are comics.

FB: Fellini met Manara through you, if I am not mistaken? (See Figure 2.2.)

VM: Yes, that's true.

The relationship between Manara and Fellini is one that should be studied very deeply. Fellini found an extraordinary talent in the graphic artist. He had seen a story called "Indian Summer" that was scripted by Hugo Pratt and illustrated by Manara, and he was spellbound. From there a beautiful friendship was born. They met; Milo did a beautiful tribute to the characters of Fellini's dreams. Their friendship deserves an essay unto itself.

They worked together on *Viaggio a Tulum* (Manara and Fellini, *Trip to Tulum* 1989), which Fellini enjoyed, and when it was finished, he said: "Why don't we do another comic book?" And I said: "Why don't we try to make that "Viaggio di G. Mastorna" ("Journey of G. Mastorna") that you keep coming back to but have never made?" He pulled the script out of the closet. He told me to read the treatment first (he had written it in the form of a letter to Dino de Laurentiis), then the script—in order to tell him which aspects were the most comics-like. So I did. I told him which fifteen segments I thought were the most interesting to draw as comics, and that's how this story, which should have been in three parts, was born.

It took Manara and Fellini six months. Milo did a first draft of the story, in black and white. Then he did an aquatint. Fellini wanted it to be done with this old technique, in black and gray

shades, but it also needed a veil of color. If you look at the story, there are some greens, some blues, hints of yellow… Milo even put a stop to a story he was doing with Pratt for *Il Grifo*, a comics magazine I was editing, in order to work on the story with Fellini.

As we know, the story of Mastorna is a story about the afterlife, about death, a story with which Federico (given his obsession with symbols and signs) had a very conflicted relationship. After the draft was finished, the graphic designer casually wrote THE END—which meant the end of the first episode. Due to a typographical error, the words THE END wound up in the printed text. Shortly after that, the novelist Ermanno Cavazzoni[2] called him and said: "Federico, what a beautiful story! It really is a perfect tale!" At that point, Federico understood, and said to me: "Vincenzo, this story ends here. We won't continue." In reality, Federico had already written the second episode and had started writing the third with me; there were already three drafted episodes. But if you think about it and you read those 26 pages, it is a perfect tale, a perfect journey in the afterlife. And there's all the feeling and spirit of the Mastorna story.

Since we couldn't make a book out of a twenty-six-page story, Fellini gave me two more little tales: one was called "*La grande soirée*" and the other "The Farmer," which, unfortunately, we were unable to bring to fruition due to Federico's death. But I have these two little stories that would have made up the trilogy at home.

Manara also did a four-page story for an exhibition I organized in Rome in 1992 called *Fellini sognatore. Omaggio all'arte di Federico Fellini* ("Fellini the dreamer: a homage to Federico Fellini's art"), for which many great comics artists created work in tribute to him.

Figure 2.2 Milo Manara became a friend and collaborator of Fellini via their friendships with Vincenzo Mollica. Manara's sketch of Fellini and Mollica captures the nature and closeness of their relationship. Milo Manara, Vincenzo Mollica Collection. Courtesy of Milo Manara.

FB: The discussion of Fellini's drawings leads rather naturally into a discussion of Fellini's dreams and, more precisely, his *Il libro dei sogni/The Book of Dreams* (Fellini 2007/2008), the elaborate notebooks he kept of his dreams on the advice of his Jungian psychoanalyst Ernst Bernhard. An important link between his comics and his dream recordings is *Il Grifo*, the wonderful periodical that you edited.

VM: Fellini collaborated with the magazine, because it reminded him of the days of the *Marc'Aurelio* and *420*, the first satirical magazines for which he worked. He said, "You know what we're going to do, Vincenzo? In the first 10 to 11 volumes I want to publish my dreams!" He had already done some of this for a magazine called *Dolce vita. Le energie fondamentali*, directed by Oreste del Buono and then edited by Lietta Tornabuoni. So, he gave me *Il libro dei sogni* to read; I kept it at home for about twenty days, then I told him which dreams I thought were the best to publish, and finally we chose them together. And then he did the layout. That is, Fellini himself designed the layout of the pages that were published in *Il Grifo*!

But what was new compared to the few dreams he had published before? He invented a psychoanalyst, "the professor," to interpret his dreams—who in reality was him! So, he had lived these dreams, transcribed them, and in the end also interpreted them! And it was magnificent. These dreams and the "professor's" analysis are all there toward the end of *Il libro dei sogni* (567–578); as well as an explanation of mine (564).

The book ended up being published posthumously, but there was a certain period in which Fellini thought of publishing it—first with Franco Maria Ricci, a publisher of refined editions, as well as a designer. Then he won the Praemium Imperiale, the Japanese prize awarded to him by the Emperor; he went to Japan, and at a certain point, he played with the idea of publishing it there. Because that way, it would have been written in Japanese and no one would have understood any of it.

After Fellini's death, Vittorio Boarini, director of the Fondazione Fellini in Rimini, and Maddalena Fellini, the director's sister, decided to publish it. His biographer Tullio Kezich wrote the introduction, I did the afterward, and Boarini edited it. It was the last major Fellini venture I dedicated myself to. I convinced Boarini and his heirs to do it because it was an essential book.

When *Il libro dei sogni* came out, the academic world and the critics displayed it as one displays something on a shelf, just for show, but no one actually read or studied it. But many symbols and many keys to understanding Fellini's world are right there. If you want to understand Fellini's art, you can't *not* read *Il libro dei sogni*, his true codex, in the Renaissance sense of the term. It is a precise, extraordinary, powerful code. And it is also his perspective on the personalities of his time. Everyone is in there: from Dalí to Ranielli, Totò, Macario, Pulcinella, Giulietta Masina. You can also come to understand how certain films were born, because he developed the habit of transcribing his dreams from the 1960s on.

FB: You have mentioned Fellini's passion for literature and the literary quality of his work. I think the importance of the written and spoken word for Fellini has been greatly undervalued.

VM: He was an omnivorous reader: when he gifted me a book, he always said: "You haven't read this, have you?" He's the one who got me reading Georges Simenon. He made me realize that Simenon was extraordinary even with his Maigret stories, not just for his novels. Simenon was one of the authors Fellini loved most, and their encounters were extraordinary. I have in my possession a polaroid, given to me by Federico, of them together, the last time they saw each other. The first Simenon book that Fellini gave to me was *La neige était sale* (*Dirty Snow* 1948) and he said to me: "You know, I'm really jealous of you. Because you will get to read, for the first time, a book that really moved me. I'm envious of the emotions you will feel tonight when you go home and start reading it."

I found it amusing that Federico was often asked to write the introduction to a book, whether for a catalog of painters, a book of poetry, etc. Everyone wanted him to write a few

lines, especially the painters. Once a month, beneath his house on Via Margutta, there was an exhibition of the "Sunday painters" (as we called them), street artists who were always asking him to do this. Each time he called me and told me: "Vincenzo, let's write this thing." And every time he came up with something. These writings are all lost; they should be found again.

The most interesting writings were the ones he sent to those who wanted to give him an award. He would tell me: "Vincenzo, awards should never be accepted in person. Because they don't give you any money. You should go to accept an award only if you are about to be strangled, otherwise no." However, he always sent a little letter to those who gave him an award, excusing himself for not being able to be there. There was always an incident he invented to justify it. We must have admitted his aunt to the hospital about ten times; his sister must have been sick I don't know how many times… "What are we going to tell him? We can tell him about this relative, but we already told the other guy that…." This game was so much fun.

Another great thing Fellini taught me was how to act in a bookstore. He went to the bookstore often, two to three times a day; Feltrinelli was near his house. He spent a lot of time there, half-hours at a time, and he always said that he was more attracted to a book's cover than the name of the writer. They were like lures for him. And so, lured in by the cover, he discovered many authors.

He really cared about his words being accurately reported. For him, the spoken word was proximate to the written word, which he also thought about deeply. He wasn't someone who wrote haphazardly, but someone who reflected while he wrote. On one occasion, a critic undertook a book-length interview with him. Fellini was so unhappy with the results; he rewrote the whole thing, questions and answers.

Though it seems as if he spoke simply, in reality every word that he said was well thought out. What he said often seemed surprising precisely because he reflected before speaking. This is why I think that it is essential to make a collection of his interviews. It is as if he lived many lives: one as a writer, one as an interviewee, one as an illustrator, one as a screenwriter, and one as a director. A life as an actor, too. Let's remember that, if he had wanted, he could have been an extraordinary actor. When he showed Mastroianni or Roberto Benigni how to do scenes— I've seen it—he did all the parts.

FB: Did you spend much time on set while Fellini was shooting a film?

VM: Only as a reporter, for films such as *Ginger e Fred*, *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990), and *Intervista* (1987). I spent a lot of time doing that, and it was wonderful to see him work. I would often go out to dinner with Federico the night before, and on napkins he would write out the scene he was going to film the next day, especially for *La voce della luna*. While we ate, he would say: "Wait, it just came to me. I need to have Paolo [Villaggio] say this…" Sometimes we would leave with five napkins in our pockets because he had written or drawn the phrase, face, or costume he wanted.

FB: When I interviewed him in 1983, Fellini told me that an artist needs to keep his art separate from his life—and he used Rossellini as an example of someone who failed to do so. Do you think he had a kind of religious notion of artistic vocation?

VM: It's possible that what he told you was an actual belief of his. In reality, though, much of his life entered into his art, and much of his art entered into his life. We always think about the passage of life into art, but never about the contrary, about how at times art enters into life, and there were moments of Fellini's life that were authentic works of art. I think that this is the way it should be understood.

FB: Did he speak a lot about his work?

VM: He spoke a lot about work that needed to be done, but not about that which he had already finished. He always said that he never rewatched his films (but between you and me, he knew them by heart). He was always oriented more toward the future than the past. He needed that there to be something to do—a producer to speak with, a contract to seek or to honor. He did not take it well if he was idle; his serenity returned when he was involved in a project.

FB: Speaking of producers…

VM: The story with the producers is quite a particular one, deserving of a film in itself. But in the end, the most important thing for Fellini was to be able to return to the set the next day and continue working.

FB: Did he ever discuss the difficulty of adopting a project as opposed to developing his own story from scratch?

VM: He always said that when there was a story to tell, there was a good film to make. A book, or rather an original story, led him to make a film because, for him, that film was necessary. Another thing that no one ever thinks about is that Fellini made cinema because he had a need to make cinema. He didn't do it because he had to be a director, but because he felt an urgent necessity to express a feeling, an emotion, a necessity to create.

FB: When there were interruptions, as with *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976) and *La città delle donne*, was it a problem for him to start up again?

VM: Absolutely not. For him it was a fluid process. Making cinema was natural, like breathing. Cinema was not something outside of himself, but something that he had inside. He had invented his own language, but it had the naturalness of breath. It was like seeing, listening, breathing, like the fundamentals of life that keep you on your feet. This was the cinema for him. And it was like that when he worked. There was never a creative block.

FB: Are there any other significant comments of Fellini's regarding his film work that stand out for you?

VM: Fellini told me something wonderful: "For a film artist, the movie finishes many times: when you've thought of it, when you've written the synopsis and the screenplay, when you've scouted locations, when you've shot it, when you've edited it. Then, finally, what remains of what you've done is like an airplane that takes flight and goes to meet the people that will see it." There was this feeling of finishing a story and then restarting it only to finish it again, like boxes that lead to a box that contains them all, like Russian dolls.

And Fellini also confessed: "If there are moments in which I see that there's a deafening silence, you know what I do? I put in a little bit of wind, Vincenzo."

FB: Moving on to the more social side of Fellini—but referencing the question of art-as-vocation—Fellini critics are inclined to say that, beginning with *La dolce vita* (1960), he shut himself inside Cinecittà, and thus became isolated. However, it seems clear that he had an abundant social life beyond the set.

VM: Very abundant. He met so many people. It was extremely interesting to go out with him; you would truly encounter a whole world, writers, directors…. It's true that he would shut himself inside Cinecittà, having decided that he could reconstruct whatever he imagined there. But Cinecittà, for him, was a spotlight that drew people in. It wasn't a form of seclusion; on the contrary, he was happy when people came to meet him on the set.

One time, Elia Kazan came to Rome. Fellini called me and said: "Vincenzo, come to my house because this afternoon Elia Kazan is coming over." "You mean Elia Kazan, the director?" "Yes, he called me, he said he's coming here." Now, Fellini and I knew "intestinal" English, as I called it. He knew a little; I knew a little; we put our knowledge together to make half a person. Elia Kazan arrives: "Now what are we going to say to this guy?" asked Federico. "Federico, let's hear what he has to say to us." Elia's wife takes Giulietta away for a chat, and we stay there. When they return,

they see Elia on the ground, laughing like a madman, and Federico and I laughing like two idiots, sharing a joke that neither of us could explain.

It was an incredible afternoon, extremely magical. Because then, when the part of the joke, the festive welcome, was finished, Federico started speaking about cinema. He tried to answer the questions posed by Kazan, who felt like a schoolboy in front of Fellini, like all of the other directors I had seen. They arrived in his presence as if in front of a schoolmaster, with boundless admiration. He was the only one for whom the word "Maestro" was valid. From Scorsese to Kazan, David Lynch to Billy Wilder (whom he met in Los Angeles), Federico was always the point of reference, the supreme artist.

FB: Fellini and Marcello Mastroianni?

VM: It was wonderful to watch Federico with Marcello. Going out with the two of them was like watching a theater play, staged especially for you at the restaurant. Some of the stories were absolutely wonderful. During the dinner there was always a moment when Fellini asked Marcello to tell us about the end of his love affair with Catherine Deneuve and the beginning of one with a new love interest. It was hilarious. Federico would tell me: "Now listen to what Marcello has to say."

Marcello began: "When we met, we spent three weeks in the hotel…"

"Three weeks" would interrupt Fellini. "What did you do?"

"It never ended…"

Then the story went on, and after the love part came the final scene which took place in Deneuve's sitting room in Paris, with her throwing things at Marcello and each time shouting something offensive: "*mascalzone*!" (there goes a vase); "sleazebag" (there went a cushion).

Then, finally, "And you can't even act!"

This was the only moment when Marcello reacted, looking up at her in an upsurge of pride: "You nasty creature! (let's pretend he said "you nasty creature," though in reality he said something much worse). It was not you who did *8½*, was it?"

At that point Fellini would draw closer to me and say quietly: "Ah Vince, what do you think Marcello has understood of *8½*?"

Going out with them was insane. They had incredible vitality… Neither bothered about the lies of the other. One day near Christmas, we were in Piazza del Popolo at Canova's, and the waiter arrives and tells us: "Oh, Maestro, Marcello's inside!" "Mastroianni?" "Yes!" "But how is that possible? He called me two hours ago saying that he was in Greece making a film with Angelopoulos! Go see, Vincenzo, maybe he's mistaken!"

Inside I find Marcello behind a pillar smoking, with a panettone in hand. "Marcello, what are you doing?" "I'm waiting for the sun to go down, because I told Federico to tell Flora [Marcello's wife] that I was in Greece." In reality, he was seeing his mistress. I go outside and tell Federico: "Look, it's really Marcello inside." "Really? But that's not what he told me…"

He goes inside and as soon as they see each other, they start going "Bing! Bang! Boom! Zap! Wham! Pow!"—mimicking the onomatopoeic sounds of comics. And they started laughing. Then we ordered a coffee, and I did not hear anyone ask "Why did you lie to me?" It served the purpose. Basta, finished, time to move on.

FB: Fellini and you (though I know you will be too modest)?

VM: Fellini told me that our relationship was like that of two schoolmates. He would say: "Always go to Vincenzo's because he's got the best snacks."

FB: Fellini honored his friends through his drawing as well.

VM: Absolutely. When he wanted me to be Mastroianni's sidekick in the comic book *Viaggio a Tulum*, Marcello didn't know anything, not even about the comic book itself until one day Chiara, his daughter, bought the version that had come out in France and brought it to Marcello. The day

after, we were meeting at the Tuscan restaurant on Via Germanico, and Marcello happened to be there, sitting outside. Fellini was on the phone, and I went up to greet Marcello. He said: "Vince, I didn't know we were in a comic book together!"

"Fellini wanted to surprise you."

"It's extraordinary!"

Marcello was really happy about this. "For sure, Vincenzo," he said, "it would be nice if movies could be made like this, without having to work." Because only Manara and Fellini had worked on the book. At the time Federico had done a proper casting. He said: "So, Marcello will be the protagonist, Vincenzone, Anita. . . ." He drew all the storyboards. He worked on these comics with Manara as if Manara were his lighting technician, costume designer, set designer, and cinematographer all in one.

FB: Can you share your thoughts about Giulietta Masina?

VM: She was an extraordinary woman. Giulietta Masina was one of the greatest Italian actresses, and she still hasn't received the recognition she deserves. In the history of cinema, she is considered Fellini's shadow, whereas she was his light. She was a fountain of great inspiration for Federico, who had projected something into her, both in *La strada* and in *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957), and in *Ginger e Fred* (1986). She was momentous. And even so, if it was ever necessary to disappear—because in her mind it was Federico who always deserved the spotlight—she always took a step back.

When Fellini received the Lifetime Achievement Oscar in Los Angeles, they had been married for almost fifty years, and Giulietta said something beautiful: "Look, for me what's important is that Federico accepts this award, because he deserves it for how hard he worked; he deserves it." And then: "There are five Oscars, one for each decade of our love story." How beautiful. Sentiments that would make anyone cry. But Fellini, for his part, had Giulietta in mind. He wasn't supposed to go to accept the Oscar. In fact, he recorded, with great care, an acceptance video to compensate for his absence. However, at the last minute, he changed his mind. His reasoning in a phone call with me, "Giulietta bought such a beautiful dress… how can I disappoint her?"

Giulietta was very present in Federico's life. When there were still pay phones in Italy, before cell phones, he didn't go longer than half an hour, at the most an hour, without calling her. They had a very close, very important, relationship.

I was fortunate enough to have dinner many times at their house. When we worked on comics stories together, and on other occasions, Giulietta would bring us two trays with white paper and pencils, one for me and one for Fellini. "When you're finished working, Vincenzo, I'll make you *bombolotti* pasta with tuna" (she knew that it was a dish I really liked). Then this funny scene would play out. "Yum, bombolotti with tuna!" Federico would say. "You can only have a few!" Giulietta would respond. She would bring me a substantial plate, and him a small one, and when she was back in the kitchen, he would attack my plate. "Leave me *something*!" I would say.

There was a beautiful domestic warmth between them. The tenderness that they had for each other was incredible. They were two people who had lost a baby, Federichino; two people who, together, had shaped the history of cinema. Giulietta made four films with Federico, and it always touched me that (recounted by Federico and confirmed by Giulietta) when Federico wanted to ask her to participate in one of his films, he left a letter for her in the morning, and, in the evening, he found her response, also in letter form. This is an extraordinarily tender thing because it demonstrates the respect that Federico had for his mythic actress, and the respect that Giulietta had for the man who was her husband, but at the same time one of the masters of world cinema.

For both of them, the greatest award ever was when Charlie Chaplin said, after having seen *La strada* (1954), that he had finally found the Tramp in a skirt: Gelsomina. This compliment for Giulietta Masina and Federico Fellini was worth more than any Oscar. Because, for Federico,

Charlie Chaplin was Adam, the forefather of all. Rossellini was Homer—both in his life and in his profession. That's what he told me in an interview.

Their tenderness endured throughout their illnesses. I was there the night Federico found out that Giulietta had a tumor. I had gone to visit Fellini, who was in Ferrara, where Giulietta was also due to arrive. He met her at the exit of the hospital where he was getting physical therapy, and Giulietta had a turban on her head, and at that moment he understood the situation. I had never seen Federico so devastated. Not by his own illness, but by this news that he had understood very clearly. Afterward, there was a very long phone call with the attending physician who explained the reality of Giulietta's condition to him. It took three or four hours for him to calm down.

The news that Giulietta would be gone was like an electric shock for Federico, and it was a shock for Giulietta, too, to know that one day Federico wouldn't be there. They ended up passing away four months apart.

After Federico's death, Giulietta called me at one point and said that she wanted Fellini's work to be cared for by three people: the films by Tullio Kezich, the drawings by his painter friend and collaborator Rinaldo Geleng, and the writing by me.

FB: Were there premonitions of Fellini's illness and death?

VM: His dream in which he found himself in front of a mailbox and had to mail a letter to himself, and on the letterhead was written "lost of the lost." It was the omen of the end. I still get chills; it was insane.[3]

We were on the airplane coming back from Los Angeles, after he received the Academy Honorary Award for Lifetime Achievement in 1993, a few months before he died. Fellini was in business class and I was in economy, and the stewardess came up to me and said, "The Maestro would like to see you. If you could come up there…." There was a free seat near him, we started chatting, and that night he told me about the dream.

In reality, the first inkling of his illness had already occurred at the end of 1992, when we were together in Milan. We went to visit an occultist he knew, who looked like a monk, he said. Afterward, we took advantage of our free time and had some fun, as if we had skipped school. We had lunch at the home of Maurizio Porro[4]—his mother had made an amazing lunch. We visited various comic book shops, and at a certain point we went to Linate airport to take the plane back. We get out of the taxi, head toward the gate, and all of a sudden, I feel Fellini throw himself on me, on my shoulders, with all his weight, shouting: "There's a dog! A dog is biting me!" But it was his blood circulation. I had to sit him down; the people around were all frightened. Unfortunately, there was no doctor on duty. I took him to the restaurant at Linate. He ate something, and it seemed as if he calmed down. But, in reality, no. Coincidentally, Milan was in the middle of a crazy storm, exactly as in *Mastorna*. We flew in the middle of the storm, and during this trip Fellini said to me: "See, Vincenzo, this is how *Mastorna* is." As if it were a prophecy of what would happen soon after.

FB: Concluding thoughts?

VM: Fellini created a language, a way of speaking, of being heard, of welcoming. The film viewers are welcomed by Fellini, as if he takes them in his arms. In the mid-1990s, I met up with Bernardo Bertolucci in Paris, when he presented his film *Little Buddha* (1993) there. Fellini had just passed away, and I asked Bertolucci for some thoughts. "I'd like to put Fellini in a bag and bring him with me wherever I go, to keep him with me always, to have this continuity." Fellini gives you that feeling, so embracing, which you never leave behind, like a love that never ends. For me, he was one of the greatest storytellers of the mystery of human adventure.

I think that extraordinary artists such as Fellini have the unique capacity to turn your relationship with them into an emotion. The great artists, such as Caravaggio, Michelangelo, Dostoevsky,

Dante Alighieri, or Homer, possess the power of creating a special relationship with you through their works, based on strong feeling, on a strong connection. A lover of Fellini's art experiences his relationship with Fellini as a unique emotion, which goes beyond friendship or love and has something to do with the beauty of art. From then on, the works of that artist become an illumination, a point of reference, which touches your most secret nerves. I feel very lucky to have been his friend, for it was like being a friend of Caravaggio or Michelangelo. Fellini's place in art history is next to these great names. With time this will become only more obvious. Very few artists of the twentieth century managed to do what he did; that is, to tell universal and yet time-specific stories. None of Fellini's stories has suffered the attrition of age. They are never remote in time, always contemporary. That's why you connect emotionally with the author of these stories, feeling something like friendship or love, life's most wonderful emotions. And that's what an art like Fellini's has made me feel.

Notes

1 Editors' note: the oldest amusement park in Italy, named after the EUR district of Rome where it is located.

2 Editors' note: author of *Il poema dei lunatici* (1987), the novel upon which Fellini's final film, *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990) was based.

3 Editors' note: Fellini (2008) describes the dream as follows: "I was near my studio in Corso d'ltalia in Rome. I was myself, and yet I was also the person charged with delivering a letter to me. I saw that all my windows were closed. I tried ringing the bell, but instead of a bell there was a plaque with a slot for letters, and the plaque didn't read "Federico Fellini" but: "*Disperso Dei Dispersi*" ("The Lost of the Lost"). The envelope I had to deliver opened, and inside there was just a single blank white sheet. When I went out in a wheelchair, and therefore as a person unknown to myself, and I saw the shocked, inquisitive looks of others, I understood the power of that dream. I was even pleased with myself for its energy, vitality, inventiveness and direction."

4 Editors' note: film and theater critic.

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3

Fellini: Backstory and a Dream

Goffredo Fofi

Backstory

I met Fellini in his office in Via Sistina to interview him for *Paris Match* on the request of Michel Ciment. In those days, Fellini was shooting the night scenes for *Roma* (1972)—those in Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere, with its restaurants and technicolor crowds, where Alberto Sordi appears,[1] and the scene in which Fellini tracks down Anna Magnani. After a few minutes, he said that he thought—based on my ruthless, radical, 1968-ist, reviews of his films—that I would be a ferocious and aggressive antibourgeois, when instead he found himself in front of a mild-mannered young friar (*fraticello*). I was a bit offended. It was a great interview, but my technical clumsiness resulted in a disastrous recording. Zero, you couldn't hear anything, and sending it to an accomplished technician I knew at the RAI was to no avail.

I wrote to Liliana Betti, Fellini's assistant. I knew her because she was a friend and coscreenwriter of Marco Ferreri, with whom in those days I felt a great kinship, because I considered him antibourgeois and revolutionary. (My two favorite Italian directors were Ferreri and Bellocchio, though later on, both disappointed me: the first, a lot, and the second, quite a lot.) Liliana responded that Fellini was convinced I didn't consider the interview worthy of publication, that I didn't find it up to my standards, that, in short, in some way, I was embarrassed by and disdainful of his responses to my questions! There was no way to convince him otherwise, and I was unhappy because *Paris Match* would have paid me extremely well and I was (and remain) anything but rich…

Only many years later, when, in *L'Unità,* I praised *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990) as an exceptional analysis of the decline of Italy and a true recounting of our present, he called me. "Goffredino, Goffredino! What a beautiful thing you have written." He took to calling with a certain regularity and invited me to look him up when I came to Rome. I was living in those days in Milan, where I was editing the journal *Linea d'ombra*, which he received for free and which, I realized, he read attentively—becoming enthusiastic, for example, about the story of Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, the great archaeologist and scholar of ancient art, who being from a noble Tuscan family and having a mother from a major German family, ended up serving as a translator when Hitler came to visit Mussolini. He talked as well of

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke,
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Chaplin's genius in recounting that Hitler–Mussolini encounter in his own way (in *The Great Dictator* 1940), seizing the essentials.

Eventually, I moved to Rome, and we talked and saw each other often. Once, when Federico was in good spirits, he asked me why, when I was younger, I had criticized him so harshly, and I told him in all sincerity "because you were not a revolutionary." "Me, a revolutionary?" he responded. "Are you crazy?" However, in an interview/book by his friend and coscreenwriter Bernardino Zapponi, he mentions that what the critics said (he was speaking of Italians) didn't matter to him, but adds that what I wrote intrigued him and forced him to think about his choices—which to me was a great compliment.

I must add that in his final years, Fellini was very, very sad—because of Giulietta's illness and his own, and because he could not find producers for his projects, which were deemed too costly. At one point, he proposed a film with all the comic actors then in fashion whom he had more or less protected and launched, such as Alvaro Vitali, others of the "trash cinema" of the 1970s, and those of greater importance, such as Sordi and Paolo Villaggio. But the producers responded that for little money, with just one of those comics, they could make a bundle, while with much higher costs, with many comics, in an "artistic" film such as Fellini would make, they would spend infinitely more and earn infinitely less. The world was changing, the cinema was changing. The best thing offered to him was an American commercial, to be shot at the Colosseum, or perhaps—I don't remember well—a short film or documentary on the Colosseum, for an Italian bank.

They were very sad, these last years, and I remember certain lunches in which, already ill, Fellini limited himself to eating a plate of far from abundant tagliatelle, seasoned only with a touch of olive oil and a sprinkling of uninspiring parmesan, and nothing else—observing, admiringly and enviously, my hearty appetite.

He was involved in an important project, he told me often, but I was convinced that it was a lie. The final times I saw him, and then in our last phone call, he asked me if I thought he should go first for treatment and an operation in Switzerland or make his film. A rhetorical question, obviously. He went to the clinic—and died there.

A Dream

I dreamed that Fellini was coming to see me from the afterlife, as though from his office full of papers and photos on the wall. He said to me, more or less, "I am very happy because I was finally able to make "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna" ("The Voyage of G. Mastorna")." He told me that the afterlife was much different from what he had imagined it for the film, much more surprising and bizarre, and he told me that it had been a help in a thousand ways to have had at his disposal technicians, actors, extras, without limit, happy to work with him for free (obviously)—even those he didn't know, even some from silent films. "The film is beautiful, it seems to me; I think it has turned out well, and, certainly, it will enable me to make others. I would be very happy if you would see and write about it, and I have found a way to get it to you. There is a person who has to go back down to earth and must pass through Bologna. I have asked him to leave a copy on the desk of Gian Luca Farinelli[2] with a note that it is for you. You absolutely must see it and tell me what you think."

I awoke happy for the happiness of Fellini. I wrote an email to Gian Luca, recounting the dream. He quickly telephoned—around 8 in the morning—to tell me that on his desk, unfortunately, no DVD was to be found.

Notes

1 Editors' note: the scene with Sordi ended up being cut, though it can be seen on The Criterion Collection release of the film.
2 Editors' note: director of the Cineteca di Bologna.

David Lynch

In October of 1993 I was shooting a Barilla pasta commercial in Rome […]. The DP was Tonino Delli Colli, who'd also been the DP for Intervista *[…]. The production manager … [and he] were talking and they said, "David, Fellini is in a hospital in the north of Italy, but he's being moved to a hospital here in Rome." I asked if it might be possible to go say hello to him. [Fellini's] niece came out of the hospital and leaned into the car and said, "Only David and Tonino can come in" […]. We go into this room where there are two single beds, and Fellini's in a wheelchair between the two beds, facing out…. I sit down in front of Fellini's wheelchair […] and he holds my hand. It was the most beautiful thing. We sit for half an hour […] and he tells me, "David, in the old days I'd come down and take my coffee, and all these film students would come over and we'd talk and they knew everything about film […]. Now I come down and there's nobody there. They're all watching TV […]." After our time was over, I stood up and told him the world was waiting for his next film […]. He went into a coma two days later, then he died.*

Lynch, D. and McKenna, K., Room to Dream *(New York: Random House, 2018), 385.*

4

A Certain Freedom in Filmmaking[1]

Lina Wertmüller

To begin with, Fellini was the most simpatico man you could imagine. Being his friend was a great joy and pleasure for me. I met him through Marcello Mastroianni and his wife Flora Carabella, who had been my classmate. Then I worked with him as assistant director on *8½* (1963). I was not a good assistant director, for I was already busy with my own film projects and did not have the required professional serenity. But he did not seem to mind. I was curious about everything, and we felt a strong connection. We spent most of the time chatting. While we were shooting at Cinecittà, I played around filming Fellini on set.

Rather than learn from him, I admired him. I don't think one can learn from someone like Fellini. He is unique; you can't possibly learn to tell stories as he does. It is more like opening a window and discovering an unknown and unexpected panorama. What I may have acquired from him is a certain freedom in filmmaking. I came from a theatrical background and working along with Fellini was like a thunderbolt.

Fellini's studio was full of photos of actors and actresses whom, in the end, we never chose. He liked faces, and he was right, for they are a profound part of any historical period. For *8½*, we published an announcement saying: "If you look like Titian's Venus, please come up for a screen test." And thousands of women turned up in front of Fellini's studio, women of all types and ages. "You take care of it," he said to me, a little frightened.

He was not satisfied with the usual extras available in Cinecittà's reservoir, so he had me go looking for others. Once, Federico and I were in a taxi, heading to Cinecittà, and a car passed in the opposite direction with a man inside whose looks Federico liked. So he forced me to track him down. I hopped into another taxi and said "Follow that man!" as we all dream of saying once in our lives.

Did he improvise on the set? Yes, quite a bit. Once, we were shooting on a location we'd already used, a corridor of the hotel where Guido and some of his crew are housed. He decided to add a door from which you'd see a seamstress. When I told him that the last time we shot on that location the door was not there, he said, "If anyone notices that the door was not there, then I have messed up the whole film."

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Almost immediately after *8½*, I started my own career as a film director with *I basilischi* (1963). But we remained friends. At home, I still have a caricature he made of me at the time, with a syringe in my hand, saying "Where is Fausto?" He made fun of the fact that I had forced Fausto Ancillai, the sound editor, to work for a whole month on the sound of the girl's shoes in *I basilischi*, never satisfied with the result. We finally found the right sound by overturning an armchair and beating on its wooden boards. The syringe referred to my having "tortured" Fausto.

As I was about to shoot *I basilischi*, with most of Fellini's crew, he said to me something that was very enlightening: "There will be lots of people telling you: shoot to the right, to the left, what lens, what focus… Ignore them all! Just tell your story as if you were telling it to your friends. And if you are a skilled storyteller, your story will work. If you are not, no technique in the world can possibly save you."

We laughed a lot and had great fun together. There was our common passion for comic strips. We also organized séances, in spite of Giulietta's protests. Fellini was very attracted to esotericism, though I can't tell you how deeply he went into the matter. Definitely more than I did. I never took it too seriously. Fellini was also much more Catholic than I. I wasn't religious at all. The whole thing bored me so much that as a child I was expelled from numerous Catholic schools because of my naughtiness.

Giulietta was the middle-class part of Fellini. She grounded him. Just think about the woman he chose to play the wife in *8½*: Anouk Aimée, a woman of great beauty and charm. In a way, he paid homage to Giulietta. Living with Fellini meant living with a monster, because he was a genius. In Fellini's films, Giulietta is presented very affectionately, as someone lively and mischievous, nothing like the Junoesque women who characterized Italian cinema of the time.

Figure 4.1 Lina Wertmüller talks of her relationship with Fellini on the grounds of Cinecittà, with the famous prop from *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976) behind her. *Source*: *Dietro gli occhiali bianchi* (*Behind the White Glasses* 2015). Directed by Valerio Ruiz; produced by White Glasses Film, Recalcati Multimedia (coproduction), and MiBACT (support). Screen grab captured by Frank Burke from the 2017 DVD version.

It is interesting to make a list of Fellini's women, beginning with Giulietta, then the majestic Ekberg, then the amusing and witty Sandra Milo. They are all very unusual. Of all these, he chose the most serious one, Anouk Aimée, to interpret the wife in the film. Then there was Claudia Cardinale, with her interesting voice, hoarse and sexy, which he was the first not to dub. Women amused and fascinated him, for they have some mystery about them, their own universe, where man cannot enter, is not meant to enter.

Federico and Marcello never took each other too seriously. Famous as they were, they never really bought into it. Their way of being could be summed up with the last line of *8½*, an unforgettable line: "Life is a party, let us live it together."

In the end, to me it all boils down to one thing: having fun. This is often seen in a negative light, but it is actually very important. At least it was so in my life. Seeing the funny and ironic side of life is an art that ought to be cultivated and cherished as much as one's health, if not more.

Note

1 Editors' note: we would like to thank Valerio Ruiz, director of the documentary on Lina Wertmüller, *Dietro gli occhiali bianchi* (2015), for his assistance in the preparation of this interview.

Clive James

Feminism was one of Fellini's touchstones of liberty. The anger he aroused in feminists later on was caused by his other touchstones, one of them being the liberty to express the full squalor of the male mind. He did it with such bravura that it struck the censorious eye as a boast. It wasn't, though: it was an abasement, and Anouk Aimée's tight-lipped fury as Luisa is there to prove it.

In "Fare un Film," Fellini movingly looked forward to the day when women would give us their view of the world in film. That day hadn't yet come, and in the meantime, he was stuck with his own stuff.

Mondo Fellini, The New Yorker, *March 21, 1994: 161.*

Susanna Nichiarelli (director of *Cosmonauta*, *La scoperta dell'alba*, and *Nico, 1988*)

The one Fellini film that I was able to see in a theatre was La voce della luna. *I was fifteen years old, and I was a solitary and frightened adolescent, yet what was considered his most pessimistic film was for me an injection of courage. Growing up and discovering one by one all Fellini's films, I could see each time that even the saddest of his movies carried with them a strange sort of happiness. Instead of creating plots and dramatic turns of event, Fellini's cinema pursues traces, faces, characters, leaving us always in the suspended time of his open endings and reconciling us with the incompleteness of life. As with the concluding smile of Cabiria, which speaks to a faith in humanity notwithstanding everything, Fellini left this earth over twenty years ago reminding us that we need just a bit more silence to hear the voice of the moon—and that there is always hope, even if we don't know, in the moment, exactly where or in what.*

Personal communication with the editors, 2018.

5

A Bit of Everything Happened: My Experience of *La dolce vita*[1]

Valeria Ciangottini

Fellini announced in newspapers and on TV that he was looking for a young girl, between 12 and 14 years of age, and he gave a description that I do not remember. But everyone around me began to say, "You must audition, because it is you!!!" It was crazy because I went there with my mother (obviously—at the time I was 13 years old), and then Fellini walked by casually, looked at me, and said, "Oh my god, it's her!" Then he had me do photographs, an audition, another audition… and then I was chosen. At the time, I knew only that he was a director and that he was the husband of Giulietta Masina. I was more familiar with Masina, maybe because I had seen her in many films. I was struck more by the actress than by the director.

First, I did the scene in the restaurant, then on the beach. He showed me how I needed to move, what I had to do—for example, the gestures of the final scene, such as typing and then dancing, because in the restaurant there was the jukebox with the music, so I was saying to Marcello: "Do you remember?" More than the cameraman, it was Fellini who said to me: "Look here! Look there!" I did what he told me to do, easily, without any problem.

I felt so free and relaxed because he had an incredible gentleness. The first time I met him, I said to myself, "What a nice man this is." And not only with me. He was affectionate with everyone. He gave everyone nicknames, like *Marcellino*. I was *Paolina*, because that was the name of my character. With everyone in the cast he always had such a sweet, gentle, affectionate attitude. Later, when we met again, I realized that he was a person who looked at you intensely; it seemed that he wanted to read you within. Others have said this as well.

Regarding the Umbrian angel mentioned by Marcello in the film: I don't know how this thing about Umbria came to Fellini. I was born in Rome, but the family of my parents is originally from Umbria, and I did live there for a while. That Paola was to represent purity, a better life—I absolutely had not understood that. I just played this character who wanted to make Marcello remember our encounter, and there it ended. Now I see this character as a message from a potentially different world, an unrealized possibility.

I found Fellini a wonderful person, magnificent. Since it was my first experience, it could have been traumatic if the director had been a boor. Instead it was an idyll. He seemed like a father. It was delightful. I thought the world of cinema was always this idyllic. I had too happy an experience compared to what followed. Not that there was anything traumatic, but I have never again

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experienced the atmosphere of *La dolce vita*. Perhaps because these were the final days of shooting, there was a looseness, a pleasantness. Nothing violent or dramatic.

I always liked his cinematic world, so fantastic and yet so realistic. Speaking of *La dolce vita* and *8½*, it is not true that they are unrealistic. There is a profundity, an exceptional understanding of culture, which makes itself felt.

A bit of everything happened around the release of the film. When it was presented in Rome—I was there, obviously—the public was divided. There were those who thought the film was terrible because "dirty linen should be washed within the family" (as Andreotti said of neorealism), and then there were those who were enthusiastic. The premier in Milan was hissed, it was a disaster. I was more or less terrified. When we were descending the stairs, there was a violent man who spat at Fellini. Unbelievable!

Since I was considered to be the "positive part" of the film, journalists turned their attention toward me, often putting my photo on the cover of magazines. I had an exaggerated fame for a young girl of 14. I was even recognized abroad. When I went on vacation with my parents in Germany, I was recognized in bars. But the success of the film itself was also scary. There were screenings from morning until deep into the night. The last screening began at 1 in the morning. The cinemas were crowded.

I met Fellini many more times, sometimes by chance, in a theater, and sometimes because he summoned me to his office, maybe curious to see how I had grown. The last time I saw him he said, "I would like to make a film with all the actors with whom I have worked." Perhaps it was a lie, but it does not matter. It was a sweet thing to say.

Fellini has not disappeared like so many others. Even on TV his films have high ratings. And if you go to the Museum of Modern Art, you will find many figures who have influenced or been influenced by Fellini. Even more than in the realm of cinema.

Note

1 Editors' note: comments drawn from an interview conducted by Marita Gubareva.

6

Fellini a Casa Nostra

Carlo and Luca Verdone

Carlo Verdone

I consider Federico among the greatest directors the cinema has ever seen. Perhaps, I am inclined to say, the greatest. He possessed a sensitivity and combination of virtues that are rare to find in other filmmakers. Beyond an absolutely special sense of the image, Fellini was, for me, a great set designer, a sublime make-up artist, an acute psychologist of the soul. No one could discern the multifold DNA of people the way he could. The faces he chose among minor actors, extras, and bit players were absolutely perfect. Through a hair style, a tic, a particular physiognomy, Fellini represented Italy and the Italians as a superb observer. His observations were, however, translatable and often comparable, in societies and cultures quite diverse, thanks to the poetry that infused them. There doesn't exist a Fellini film without poetry, and if this great director succeeded in reaching poetic heights, it was owed in part to the perfect harmony he was able to establish with his composer Nino Rota. Each inspired the other.

Fellini came often to my parents' house with Giulietta. They came willingly because they knew we would have dinner on our lovely Rome terrace without other guests and without talking of cinema. This made Fellini relax, because his days were always spent under pressure with journalists and film specialists. Inevitably, as my brother Luca's comments suggest, my father[1] and Fellini would finish the evening talking of the circus, their great passion.

One evening, I asked him if he was aware how wonderful two of his earliest films, *Lo sceicco bianco* and *I vitelloni*, were—films that I loved greatly. Opening his arms, he said in a mixture of roman and *romagnolo*: "What should I say, Carlo. I no longer know how to judge my films. They seem to have been made by someone else. You have to be the ones to say how they seem to you. So many years have passed."

I asked him about the actors Leopoldo Trieste, Ernesto Almirante, and Achille Majeroni to hear anecdotes about them. I remember that Fellini began to imitate them, one by one, with memories from off the set. He was not only hilarious in his retelling, but perfect in his rhythm, gestures, and mimed idiosyncrasies. I understood that, even if he couldn't imagine it himself, Fellini was, deep down, a great actor. And for this reason, he succeeded in getting the most out of even the least significant of his performers. He was a consummate artist who knew how to

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impart the perfect timing to each of his characters. The last time I saw him was the winter of 1991 in Via del Babuino in the dead of night. I saw him leaning against a wall that faced his street, Via Margutta. I asked him what he was doing, and he said: "seeing that I can't sleep at all, I am waiting for a squad car that takes me along to see what is happening in the city. It could always spark an idea." I laughed and laughed and went off to my parked car. While I was getting into it, I realized that a police vehicle had stopped in front of Fellini. A policeman opened the rear door and let him enter. The vehicle took off, squealing, carrying Fellini away to who knows what crime-beat adventure.

Luca Verdone

I had the privilege of knowing Fellini as one of his young friends, for a rather long time: from 1969 until his death. I received this precious gift because my father introduced me to the great director. I was fifteen years old, and during school vacations I often went with my father to visit painters whose works were on display in the galleries of Rome. One time, our trip ended with a meeting at the Caffè Canova in Piazza del Popolo with Fellini. During the conversation between my father and Federico, the topic of the circus came up. I marveled at their deep knowledge of both older clowns and those still performing. They exchanged books in French on the circus and amused each other proposing analogies between the clown and American silent film comedians. For me, it was really instructive to connect the art of the clown with that of the tradition of Mack Sennett, et al., and it ultimately helped me understand better the nature of Fellini's cinema. When I began to visit the set at Cinecittà during the making of his films, beginning with *Roma*, I had the sensation that his cinema was a circus spectacle composed of a substantial number of extras, all made up in extravagant, caricatured, ways: a celebration that crossed over into burlesque with unexpected melancholic moments that alternated with dreamlike episodes of poignant beauty. A large fresco of voices and faces, intertwined, communicated a profound sense of whatever Fellini was addressing; whether the Eternal City that had hosted him from the end of the Second World War to the end of his life (*Roma*), memories of his youth in Rimini (*Amarcord*), Casanova (*Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*), or the political and social situation in Italy at the end of the 1970s (*Prova d'orchestra*). For me, his figure took on the role of a great "master of ceremonies," a "mogul" of representation, gifted with an extraordinary capacity for storytelling that revealed itself not only in the visual aspects of his cinema but also in the seductive eloquence of his words.

His cinema always had a tender and impassioned regard for his characters, who in their failings and ingenuousness appear in their full humanity, thus attaining the level of poetry. Fellini would obtain this result by observing his friends, his collaborators, and society in its full complexity, transforming his intuitions into images of great visual impact.

Fellini was by nature shy and resistant to large social gatherings, and preferred to hang out with close friends, whom he involved in his evening adventures among fortune tellers, magicians, itinerant artists, painters, and cartoonists.

His collaboration with the great set and costume designer Danilo Donati was an example of perfect professional sharing. Working with Donati, he was stimulated to create environments and characters in an oneiric dimension that appeared on screen with absolute verisimilitude, even if the backgrounds were made of papier-mâché and polystyrene. He argued often with Donati, and at times there were battles that Fellini sought to remedy with affectionate little notes and apologetic phone calls. Donati, who could be difficult, would vanish for weeks, but in the end,

Fellini would always find a way of reconciling. Dante Ferretti, the other great set designer who worked with Fellini, was more accommodating, and there were never disagreements that caused estrangement. His secret was to indulge Fellini's fantasies, not infrequently resorting to an innocent lie or two.

When he was tired, Fellini would ask those around him to look after his female admirers, whom he often invited to dinner. Many of these, who came from far away, mainly from the US and Japan, stopped at Rome for long periods to have the opportunity to meet with Fellini more than once. A young American had interested him in the magical aspects of Mexico and convinced him to go to the Yucatán peninsula to meet Carlos Castaneda. This extraordinary trip became the subject of a film, never made, "Viaggio a Tulum," but it turned into a comic book illustrated by Milo Manara.

What still amazes is Fellini's divinatory ability to imagine worlds that no longer exist. The Rome of Petronio Arbitro in *Fellini - Satyricon* comes alive with places and people re-evoked by Fellini's fantasy, leaving the spectator with a profound impression—more precise than what one could gather from murals or archeological finds. The astounding images of *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* provoke the same sensation.

Fellini's cinema is a world of dreams that wrap the spectator in a blanket full of suggestion and mystery. A world that he knew how to communicate with unmistakable grace—the measure of his genius. He kept company with great contemporary writers, such as Georges Simenon, and everyday people, whom he encountered in screen tests at Cinecittà. Fellini interacted ironically, kiddingly, with those around him, and he loved to surprise with innocent jokes, refusing to spare even his wife, Giulietta Masina. He delighted in astonishing his friends, seeking out the arcane or the marvelous, like a circus artist. The circus ring was his point of reference for realizing his cinematic "frescoes."

In his later films, such as *Ginger e Fred* and *La voce della luna*, Fellini contemplated the major mutations of a society enslaved by the power of television and consumerism. The protagonists of *La voce della luna*, Roberto Benigni and Paolo Villaggio, resemble two clowns out of place in a world they no longer recognize, as though beyond the familiar confines of the circus tent. I think that, at a certain point, Fellini's dreams could no longer find the magic of a former time, and the lights that illuminated his dream world went suddenly dark, leaving him alone.

Now, at least, there are his works, which remain precious in the history of cinema.

Note

1 Editors' note: the father of Carlo and Luca Verdone, Mario Verdone, was a prominent film professor and critic who also served as director of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome, and was, as the Verdones' account makes clear, an important figure for Fellini.

Part II
Beginnings, Inspirations, Intertexts

Martin Scorsese

[Fellini] was so much a part of my life through his movies for nearly 25 years, 35 years […] actually, since La strada, *and a joy and inspiration to film makers everywhere. I live with his images and his characters […]. I was excited by the humor and the compassion in a world that he showed that was often hostile and grotesque […]. I was 10 years old when I saw* La strada. *[…] his world was full of apparitions and surprises, where laughter and sadness were always intermingled, especially with Nino Rota's music. I was captivated by his world and his dreams, his great curiosity and his tireless efforts right up to the end, to the very end, to get new projects off the ground.*

[….] the spiritual power and the lasting poetry and beauty of Fellini's work [are] like a treasure chest that a younger person can go into when they are 21 years old […] and when they are 31 years old and find more, and when they are 51 years old and find even more. And I know this for a fact because I've lived with these films since 1947.

[…] You could say that his legacy is with us […] but, for me, his films won't stay here unless we gather like this and make it clear to the rest of the world that these are invaluable gifts that have to be preserved and restored for posterity and for generations to come. I am committed, more than ever, to keeping his work alive.

Ricci, G., ed., Il mio Rimini *(Rimini: Fondazione Federico Fellini, 2006), 212,* 215.

7

Neorealism Masked: Fellini's Films of the 1950s

Stefania Parigi

Fellini and Neorealism

Problematizing Fellini's relation with neorealism became a more or less obligatory step both for critics of the 1950s and for subsequent rereadings and interpretations of his work. At the time of the release of his first films, neorealism was already a label used prescriptively by Marxist critics and their Catholic counterparts. Fellini's cinema appears in the thick of a "war of realisms" typical of the cultural debate of the period. The controversy over *La strada* (1954) is characteristic of the political and artistic climate then prevailing in Italy. The Communist weekly, *Il Contemporaneo,* attacked Fellini's film for its alleged deviation from the canon of realism, while the Venice Film Festival in 1954 witnessed a curious clash between the supporters of *La strada* and those of Luchino Visconti's *Senso*. The latter had been selected by the editor-in-chief of the magazine *Cinema Nuovo*, Guido Aristarco, and by Marxist critics, as a manifesto that "goes beyond" neorealism, abandoning the "newsreel" approach of the early postwar period to present a critical and constructive reflection on history, taking up the narrative forms of the nineteenth-century novel.

In France, distance from the heated climate in Italy allowed critics as strikingly different as Georges Sadoul and André Bazin to examine *La strada*—and Fellini's cinema in general in the 1950s—in a more balanced manner, freer from prejudice and the schematic taking of sides. While Sadoul stresses, from a Marxist perspective, the strength of this film, which he describes as "so unusual or irritating at first sight,"[1] Bazin includes *La strada* in the phenomenological orbit that, in his opinion, characterized the most innovative postwar cinema. Taking up the ideas of the Catholic philosopher Emmanuel Mounier, Bazin affirms that Fellini—and Rossellini before him—are developing a "neorealism of the person" (Bazin 1955/1962a, 127). In response to the accusation of spiritualism made against the two French directors by the Italians, Bazin countered with the concept of the person as the union of nature and history, body and soul, interiority and exteriority.

Emmanuel Mounier is explicitly cited in the article in defense of his work that Fellini writes in *Il Contemporaneo*, probably with the help of his artistic collaborator Brunello Rondi, who just a few years later published two books on the theory of neorealism,[2] where personalist philosophy appears as his point of reference, together with phenomenology, existentialism, and the thought

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of André Bazin and Cesare Zavattini. The article, which appeared in the form of a letter to the critic and cineast Massimo Mida, who had sparked the controversy in the Communist journal, is a veritable review of the favorable responses to *La strada* by French leftist intellectuals, and cites phrases by the poet Louis Aragon, and by critics or directors, such as Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, Georges Sadoul, Jean de Baroncelli, André Cayatte, and Georges Charensol. The reference to Emmanuel Mounier concerns "the communitarian experience between one man and another" that must underlie man's social relations. It emphasizes the problem of the solitude and monadism that typifies modern society. According to Fellini (1955a, 4), *La strada* seeks a "supranatural and personalistic communication," a dialogue between human beings, beyond the specific "historical–political reality" that the Italian Communist critics accuse him of having ignored:

> Sometimes a film, leaving aside precise representations of historical or political reality, can incarnate, in figures almost mythic and by means of a basic dialectic, conflicted contemporary feelings, becoming much more realistic than a film that refers to precise social and political reality. It is for this reason that I do not believe in "objectivity," at least in the way you people define it, and cannot accept your ideas of neorealism, which, for me, do not exhaust or even approximate the essence of the movement to which I have been honored, from *Roma città aperta* [*Rome Open City* 1945] to belong.

The theme of the social nature of the person, in contrast to individualism, returns in a later article in *Il Contemporaneo*, also written by Fellini (1955b, 10), which closely reflects the words and ideas that Rondi uses in his writings on neorealism. The article, written in the form of a letter to the Communist, Antonello Trombadori, argues openly with Aristarco's theme of "going beyond" neorealism through the recovery of the narrative forms of the nineteenth-century novel, and, thus, highlighting the new humanism, the "new idea of man," that characterizes postwar culture and cinema. "Neorealism," writes Fellini, is "the movement of the 'public' man," that is, of a "concrete" man who coexists and "lives alongside" other men, and who primarily emerges in a network of "relations" with others. At the end of the article, he makes explicit the connection between the physical and the metaphysical that Rondi will later indicate as a vital core of Fellini's work: "I believe that man's most 'public' element is, in this sense, Mystery. It is not for love of a vague spiritualism, it is for love of man and life that one learns to listen to Mystery" (10). Mystery then is nothing other than an aspect of existence, of experience, and of the human condition, that must be included and not expelled *a priori* as incompatible with the contemporary world.

Bazin's notion of "neorealism of the person" is not far from the idea of the "creatural realism" that Pier Paolo Pasolini, writing in 1957 (1981, 153), attributes to Fellini, in the wake of reading Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis* (1946, 1956 in Italy). According to Pasolini, who collaborated on the dialogue for *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957), Fellinian realism has a basic instinctive quality that is not shaped by a strong referential ideology, and that manifests itself in the realm of the "creature, lost and alone," left "to despair and to rejoice in a mysterious world." Reality for Fellini is a mix of "aspects of nature," of the "now dead concretions of civilization," and of "social products" understood as "modes and aspects of superstructure and custom, more than of structure and story." Pasolini continues, "And in effect, this social reality (see the *vitelloni*, the *bidonisti*),[3] loved with a sensual unattached love, is continually contradicted in its rationality, its normativity, by the prevalence of extraordinary, marginal, extravagant characters, useless or forgotten, who unleash violent currents of irrationality in the world that surrounds them, which is, in any case, violently true and reliable" (Pasolini 1957/1981, 151).

The words "mystery" and "irrationality" return as terms of an awareness and a communication that go beyond the rigid confines of the materialist and historicist vision expressed by the Marxist-leaning Italian critics, with whom Pasolini had an unresolved relationship, but with

whom he still shared some fundamental principles. He managed to grasp the double stratum of Fellinian imagery, while criticizing it: that of adhesion to the physical world represented and that of its continual "stylization" in the form of the mask(ed), the prodigious, the abnormal. From the very start, Fellini's films offer a kind of seesaw between the ordinary and the extraordinary, between dream and waking, between the seen and the envisioned, According to Pasolini (1957/1981, 149–150):

> The real world of the films of Rossellini and Fellini is transformed by excess of love for their reality. Both Rossellini and Fellini enact, in representing and in framing, such an intensity of affection for the world, brought into focus by the brute and obsessive eye-a-thousand-times-an-eye of the ugly and obsessive camera, to oftentimes magically create a three-dimensional sense of space (recall the scene where the *vitelloni* return home at night, kicking a tin-can around). Even the air is photographed.

This expression of the capacity to "photograph air" is later used by Fellini to re-evoke the phenomenological adherence of Rossellini to the material world recounted in *Paisà* (*Paisan* 1946). Even the word "love" is part of the Rossellinian vocabulary, in addition to returning frequently in Bazin's reflections, in those of Rondi, and in Fellini's defense of *La strada* in *Il Contemporaneo*. The Fellinian image is an affective image, charged with sentimentality and, at the same time, a caricatural stylization. Both these traits appear as deviations for the Marxist critique of the moment, which primarily attends to neorealism's capacity to analyze social reality and to transform it.

Reviewing *Le notti di Cabiria*, Bazin reaffirms the phenomenological reach of the Fellinian perspective and, conscious of the pitfalls of the "spiritualist vocabulary," substitutes for the concept of "soul" that of "depth of being in which consciousness is only weakly rooted" (Bazin 1962b, 135). According to Bazin, Fellini, leaving aside the psychology of the characters and conventional dramatic structures, works on the "appearance" of his characters, on their faces, the way they move, on "everything that makes the body the [very] skin of being"—on the "more outward clues" that constitute "the borderline between the individual and the world, such as hair, moustaches, clothes, spectacles" (138). This focus on appearance produces an oscillation of the natural toward the "supranatural" or the "supranaturalization" of the world. Bazin (139) says: "I regret this equivocal word that the reader can choose to replace with poetry, surrealism, magic or any other term that expresses the secret accordance of things with a 'double invisible' of which they are, in a certain sense, nothing but a mere sketch." For Bazin, the universe represented by Fellini is simultaneously phenomenological and symbolic. "So we can say that Fellini does not contradict realism, or even neorealism, but that instead he accomplishes it while going beyond it in a poetic reorganization of the world" (140).

The discussion of Fellinian realism and its appraisal *vis-à-vis* the poetics and ideologies of neorealism become compulsory elements of all successive studies of Fellini's cinema and underlie the division of his filmography into phases or periods.[4] For example, Jean-Paul Manganaro (2009) subdivides the work of Fellini into: (1) the "epoch of reality," from *Luci del varietà* (*Variety Lights* 1950) to *Le notti di Cabiria*, where the epicenter is the story of "appearances"; (2) the "epoch of creation," from *La dolce vita* (1960) to *Roma* (1972), distinguished by a privileging of the image over reality—and by exquisitely mental narration that abandons realistic residues; and (3) the "epoch of reflection," from *Amarcord* (1974) to Fellini's final film, *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990), characterized by musings on past and present, on personal and collective history.

The realistic Fellinian story is rooted in one of the most productive paths of postwar cinema, at the crossroads among the satirical press, popular entertainment, and neorealistic fiction. The satirical weeklies of the 1930s and 1940s are the training ground for Fellini, along with all of Italian cinema's greatest early postwar comic screenwriters and, then, the authors

of *commedia all'italiana*. These new figures who impose themselves on postwar cinema are from *avanspettacolo* (brief variety theater/vaudeville acts to entertain audiences before the screening of movies), and variety theater proper, amidst a meteor shower of nonprofessional actors, recruited from the streets.

At the time, the debate on comedy and the comic was excluded from the neorealist ambit, considered the chosen territory of *cinema d'autore*, as opposed to the formulaic genres of the film industry. There is an intense dialectic between neorealism and genres that are adapted to new social and artistic postwar horizons or reworked and reinvented in an authorial way. *Roma città aperta*, the film that launched neorealism, is often cited as a founding work of this "hybridization" in which it is above all the choice of actors from variety theater, such as Aldo Fabrizi and Anna Magnani, that generates the forms and faces of the comic within epic drama.

As we know, Fellini's participation in Rossellini's film was the result of his friendship with Aldo Fabrizi, united by their shared passion for *avanspettacolo*. According to Rossellini, the dialectal comedies, in which Fabrizi performed on his own or with Magnani in the early 1940s (*Avanti c'è posto/Before the Postman*,[5] 1942; *Campo de' fiori* 1943; *L'ultima carrozzella/The Last Wagon* 1943), are the direct forerunners of neorealist cinema. Fellini took part as screenwriter, with Cesare Zavattini (*Avanti c'è posto*) and Piero Tellini.

We should not forget that in the late 1930s an important collaboration was initiated among the satirical press, *avanspettacolo*, and comic cinema. According to the theoretical writings about the future of neorealism that Zavattini published in *Marc'Aurelio* (for which Fellini, Vittorio Metz, Steno (aka Stefano Vanzina), Marcello Marchesi, and Ruggero Maccari wrote as well), the new comic film was to emerge from the conjunction of three elements: satirical journalism—to which scriptwriters and inventive talent were to be recruited; the variety-theater actors who were breaking the rules of classical theatrical recitation; and the antinaturalistic tradition of American slapstick and the European avant-garde. The contributors to *Marc'Aurelio* take part en masse in the films of (Erminio) Macario and Totò before, during, and after the war.

As this suggests, Fellini, like many other artists and intellectuals of the time, moves in a profoundly intermedial panorama. In addition to providing sketches and gags for the theater and cinema performances of Fabrizi and Macario, he provides, together with Ruggero Maccari, humorous stories and sketches, original or already presented in *Marc'Aurelio,* for the radio. It is no coincidence that his debut film with Alberto Lattuada, *Luci del varietà*, is dedicated to popular theater, and that his first solo directorial effort, *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952), imprints itself on the comic body of Alberto Sordi, a figure from *avanspettacolo* and radio, not yet consecrated by the critics and the film industry and brought into the spotlight by Steno, as well as Fellini, in the early 1950s. The focus on popular entertainment characterizes a cinematic career that begins with Peppino De Filippo in *Luci del varietà* and with Sordi, concluding with Roberto Benigni and Paolo Villaggio in *La voce della luna*.

In the early postwar period, forms of humor and the comic were inevitably linked to a social, cultural, and existential landscape. They encompass the iconography and moral tensions of neorealism in the face of a profoundly traumatic reality, where architectural rubble is the backdrop to the ruins of community and individual life. We need think only of the films of social denunciation by Steno and Monicelli, centered on Totò (*Totò cerca casa* 1949; *Guardie e ladri/Cops and Robbers* 1951), that deal with dramas of homelessness, unemployment, bare subsistence, and marginalization. Fellini moves, albeit from a less explicitly political perspective, along this same path that leads to the *commedia all'italiana*. Even his representation of the world of popular entertainment is shared by Steno and Monicelli who, in the same year as *Luci del varietà*, dedicate *Vita da cani* (1950), with Aldo Fabrizi, to the lowliest form of variety theater (the title says it all). In 1949, Steno together with Maccari had already scripted Mario Mattoli's *I pompieri di Viggiù* (*The Firemen*

of Viggiu 1949), in which the world of *avanspettacolo* and variety theater are retraced through the character of Totò. In an evocative passage, Fellini (1980, 128) recalls the appearance of Totò when, as a journalist of *Cinemagazzino*, he interviewed the comedian. In his eyes, Totò, with his aura of both a clown and Alice in Wonderland, represents "the history and character of the Italians: our hunger, wretchedness, ignorance, and petit bourgeois *qualunquismo*;[6] the resignation, mistrust, and cowardliness of Pulcinella." He incarnates "with exhilarating lunar elegance the eternal dialectic of baseness and its negation" (Fellini 1980, 128).

Caricatural Realism

The connection between satirical journalism and cinema that occurs between the late 1930s and early 1940s has been highlighted by Italo Calvino (xxii) in his "*Autobiografia di uno spettatore*," which accompanies the 1974 publication of the screenplays of *I vitelloni* (1953), *La dolce vita*, *8½*, and *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965):

> The satirical weekly [is] I believe still virgin territory for the sociology of culture [… and] should be studied as an essential conduit when defining the mass culture of the Italian provinces between the two wars …. It is the input of the satirical newspaper … that provides Italian cinema with a tried and tested form of communication with the public, in terms of the stylization of figures and story.

His apprenticeship in the world of graphics, cartoons, vignettes, and satirical writing shapes the working style on which Fellini builds his cinematic experience (see Costa 2002, 79–86). Every film—he declared—starts with a "great scribbling" (Fellini 2004, 7). The sketches are his first notes for a film; they allow him to identify the characters and their "masks"; they show the way on stereotypes and their bodies, behavior, and language. Fellini bases his imagery, graphic and cinematic, on caricatural deformation, on breaching the canons of mimesis and verisimilitude, in the interests of an explicit figuration that defines itself precisely by the abandonment of normalized vision.

All the properties attributed to caricature by Ernst Kris in his historic essays of the 1930s are reflected in the forms of representation adopted by Fellini. Kris (1952/1988, 171) describes caricature as a "technique of degradation" of the real, linked to an aggressive double move of disguise and unmasking that provokes pleasure in the author and acts as a form of seduction in relation to the reader/spectator. Taking up Freud's thesis on humor, Kris stresses that the pleasure derives from a "saving of psychic energy," a release from repression, that can connect caricature with dream, childhood, and games. The caricatural sketch is presented as "a chance scribble," but also as a "game with the magic power of the image." In the same way in which its "scribbling style and its fusion of forms evoke the pleasures of early infancy, the deployment of a magical belief in its transformative powers constitutes a regression with respect to rationality" (Kris 1988, 198). While putting oneself in contact with the world of urges and the unconscious, the caricature is supported, however, by the control of the "primary process" on the part of the ego. Its regressive, and, at the same time, aggressive, aspect is tied to judgement or awareness. In this sense, the caricature always has metalinguistic repercussions, offering itself as work on, not merely the reinforcement of, clichés and their distortions.

In an interview with André Delvaux in 1961, Fellini (1961/2002, 13) declared, "The caricature has an essential strength—that of synthesis—that seems to me one of the basic aspects of the art, and thus I am not in the least bothered that sometimes the critics define as "caricatural" certain

aspects of my deformed or deforming characters or settings. No, it is a vision that has, in itself—that presumes—a moral judgement on things."

Caricature also forcefully highlights the "supranatural" vein that we have seen evoked by both Bazin and Rondi, as well as by Fellini himself. The supranatural must be understood in its most literal sense: as what stands above the natural and the human, becoming a way to embrace, at the same time, the particular and the universal, the singular trait and the general one. The caricature means the denaturalization of reality and, at the same time, the identification of its processes and essential forms. The boundaries between the caricatural and the visionary remain constantly open (see Calvino 1974, xxii–xxiii).

In Fellini's films, what Kris defines as the "magic of the image," linked to an archaic and almost witchlike belief in its power, coexists with the processes of deconstruction and unmasking. The characters from *Luci del varietà* to *Le notti di Cabiria* are "persons" also in the Latin sense of masks, which reproduce their most exterior aspects, linked to the *mise-en-scène* of body and costume. The most apt examples are the white sheik/Nando played by Alberto Sordi in *Lo sceicco bianco* and Gelsomina played by Giulietta Masina in *La strada*. The first is the caricature of the Latin lover, Rudolph Valentino, adapted to a mass audience, the followers of *fotoromanzi*. Fellini presents him through the deforming lens of provincial Italian culture and the carnivalesque and primitive mechanisms of spectacle, devoid of professionalism. His techniques of degradation shatter the romantic and dreamlike illusions provoked by the stars of the fotoromanzi in their naive female readers. The key scene is where Alberto Sordi, in his white sheik's costume, appears to the adoring gaze of his devotee, Wanda, as an almost divine apparition, on a swing hung unrealistically high amid the treetops in a pine grove (Figure 7.1). The height of the swing and the masked body, made-up face, and gestures of Alberto Sordi

Figure 7.1 The white sheik appears "miraculously" airborne to his greatest fan, Wanda. *Source*: *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by OFI and P.D.C. Frame grab captured by Stefania Parigi from the Mediaset Cinema Forever DVD version (nd).

immediately caricature the photonovelesque enchantment that is further undercut by the harsh sounds of Roman dialect that intrude from off-camera: "'A Nandooo!"

Jacqueline Risset (1994, 15–68) suggests that Fellinian imagery is built on a continual dialectic between illusion and disillusion, between immersion in a dream and a brusque reawakening, between abandoning oneself to regressive ghosts and returning to a disenchanted existence. The same flight metaphor embodied by the Sheik—and destined to return in many later films as a feature of Fellini's fantastic world—is indissolubly bound to the inverse movement of "the fall." The caricatural form allows us to formulate an image perennially poised between affirmation and negation, belief and discredit, mythologizing and demythologizing. It is the same way of representing things that Fellini (2008) brings together in his *Il libro dei sogni* (2007/2008).

The image of Gelsomina in *La strada* is another exemplary manifestation of a "scribbled" being who, beyond clear references to Frederick Burr Opper's comic strips (*Happy Hooligan*) and Charlie Chaplin, emphasized by Fellini himself, evokes a creatural quality, starting with her name, and further revealed through make-up and circus costume. Like Wanda, who writes to the white sheik under the pseudonym of *Bambola Appassionata* ("Passionate Doll"), Gelsomina has an astonished and childlike view of the world and continues to meet deconsecrated angels, they too a sort of caricature. In the first appearance of *Il Matto*, he is suspended in the air walking the high-wire, with fake wings and a clown-like face. He descends to earth and becomes a strange mix of guardian angel and derisory judge. To him, we owe the so-called "philosophy of the pebble"—that everyone, even a little stone he has found on the ground, has some purpose in God's inscrutable scheme of things—in which the Catholic Church has been greatly invested.[7]

By contrast, when the white sheik descends to earth, he appears as merely one of many elements in the great ramshackle carnival that lies behind the false romanticism of the fotoromanzi. In *Lo sceicco bianco*, the caricature of the angel passes from the living body (a white sheik without sexual traits, almost feminine) to stone sculptures, that seem to come alive to mock the lost and dreaming gaze of humans. A Bernini angel is present in the ridiculous scene of Wanda's botched suicide, and another statue in the colonnade at Saint Peter's presides over her reentry into the institutional ranks of church and family. The angelic figures[8] are often marked by paradox: on the one hand, they represent the world of life dreamt; on the other, they x-ray the collapse of illusions, presenting themselves as the ironic "guardians" of human adventures.

In *I vitelloni,* the statue of a gilt angel is subject to a process of profanation and reconsecration. After being stolen from a religious articles shop and offered for sale to nuns and monks, it becomes the object of childlike religious contemplation for Giudizio, one of the simple-minded and mad who often inhabit Fellinian scenes and who emerge directly from the filmmaker's memory (Fellini 1980, 27). Previously, Giudizio had driven the cart with the angel emblematically, blowing the "trumpet of judgement." The play with bodies, names (Giudizio means "wisdom," of which he possesses little or none), and gestures in a caricatural vein could not be more amplified.

In *Il bidone* (*The Swindle* 1955) the only really angelicized figure is feminine: the young paralytic who bears her suffering smiling. On this figure of innocence-as-salvation, Fellini constructs a caricature of the protagonist's redemption, as a swindler with "good intentions" who never succeeds in going beyond the threshold of negativity, never achieves "redemption" other than a terrible death. (The "inept gangster" typology is not far distant, though somewhat different, from that of the *commedia all'italiana*—for example, Mario Monicelli's *I soliti ignoti*/*Big Deal on Madonna Street* 1958.)

In *Le notti di Cabiria*, the protagonist claims more than once to have met an angel of salvation, someone to take her away from her life of prostitution. "Oscar" materializes, but as a joke of fate, after Cabiria undergoes hypnotism at the Lux theater. He seems to be a man sent by Providence

Figure 7.2 Cabiria's mascara, as she looks into the camera eye and at the spectator, links her to the circus and to *La strada*'s Gelsomina. *Source*: *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1956). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Dino de Laurentiis Cinematografica and Les Films Marceau. Frame grab captured by Stefania Parigi from the 2013 DVD version.

(his name means "spear of God"), and he has the same name as the man evoked in her fantasizing on the stage. Instead, he is another swindler, another illusion. His diabolic nature is revealed to the spectator in some signs visible in his face and body language and amplified by the use, in the last scene, of black glasses, the same that we saw worn at the beginning of the film by another assassin-lover of Cabiria.

Fellini repeatedly stresses his characters' nature and function in a caricatural way. Cabiria is defined by her little fur jacket, as Gelsomina is by her cloak, hat, and striped jersey. For Cabiria, the transition from the fur jacket to the sailor costume or the little hat with the butterfly embodies the illusion of a revitalizing change. In the last shot, she looks out at the spectator, with a tear of black mascara painted on her face, giving her the features of a Pierrot and reactivating the link between Cabiria and Gelsomina that is implicit in the actress who plays both: Giulietta Masina. The black tear takes Cabiria back into the circus arena and the carnival of life symbolized by the road in the final scene and by its dancing fellow travelers (Figure 7.2).

The World of the Spectacle and the "Spectacle of the World"

In the rich amalgamation of satirical journalism and variety theater, Fellini establishes an intense bond with popular culture and develops a strong reflective vein which becomes more radical over time, involving not only the thematic aspect of his films (the representation of performance and cinema), but also the textual, relating to the metalinguistic processes activated by his cinematic gaze.

In the 1950s, his caricatural vision is linked deeply to the representation of the world of entertainment. He shows us the provincial theater stages frequented by the troupes of entertainers and dancers in *Luci del varietà*; the fabrication of the fotoromanzi images in *Lo sceicco bianco*; the

circus exhibitions in *La strada*; the nightclubs in *Il bidone* and *Le notti di Cabiria*. In all these cases, the spectacle is presented in its most peripheral and degraded manifestations, like the caricature of a serious and legitimate artistic activity.

Inside the dilapidated theater in *Luci del varietà*, actors and spectators continually exchange parts. Fellini is interested in the dialogue that takes place between the stage and the stalls, amid the laughter, mockery, and suffering of shared marginalization. Fellini's camera shifts continually, through shot–countershot, from the recitation of the actors to that of the spectators, showing us a variegated sampling of faces representing all ages and types.

The show takes on a physical and, at the same time, a metaphysical dimension, full of moods, desires, and ambitions almost always unsatisfied, and subject to an ongoing process of parody. In the theater and on the stage, the caricatural shadows of existential laceration, more than the lights, make their presence felt. Fellini highlights the unresolved dialectic between being and appearing, between authenticity and falsification, between tragic and comic, between nature and history that expands beyond the theater to the "real world," represented, itself, as a continual spectacle of life and the human condition. In a grotesque way, Fellini also stresses the incantatory and bewitching aspect of the show: in *Luci del varietà*, the performance of the magician with the goose, Spazia, is subject to the disorderly reactions of a public that only wants to see the women dancers' legs; in *Le notti di Cabiria*, the performance of the hypnotist acquires the character of a psychoanalytic session, before the prying and mocking eyes of the spectators. Cabiria is unmasked and ridiculed; beneath her apparent brazenness as a woman of the streets, she reveals the amorous illusions of an adolescent and is ready to fall into the same trap as the readers of fotoromanzi. More than a process of identification between public and stage, the variety performance triggers a staging of identity that involves both actors and spectators, bound by the same experiences of hardship.

In cheap hostels and deserted nocturnal piazzas, Checco, the main character in *Luci del varietà*, discovers "unknown artists," carnivalesque figures, such as Pistolero Bill, "the prairie shooter," who inhabit the most dilapidated theaters and the most marginal lives. In *I vitelloni*, the character of Sergio Natali is presented as "the great actor" but turns out to be the disfigured mask of a glorious past, which renders grotesque even his homosexuality.

By contrast, luminosity and luxury are linked to the iconic film star Amedeo Nazzari, who, in *Le notti di Cabiria,* assumes the mask of Alberto Lazzari to play himself. The scene dedicated to him already represents places and icons from the Debordian "society of the spectacle" at the center of *La dolce vita*. Cabiria and Nazzari meet after wandering in an animated Via Veneto, a showcase of the modern high life. Then they visit a nightclub, where the spectacle is infused with an eroticism and exoticism that return regularly in later Fellini films. The figure of Nazzari is presented with all the characteristics of a vision, while his home turns out to be a sort of luxury temple closer to Hollywood fable than to reality. Cabiria's entry into this space inhabited by a divinity is like entry into a dream, which is soon interrupted by one of those dawns that cross and recross the path of Fellini's characters and stories. She passes from illusory participation to passivity and reclusion, from incredulous immersion in the fairytale to expulsion from the god's magic circle, expressed spatially by her segregation in the bathroom where she is confined together with a dog. Here she is forced into immobility and silence, just like a film spectator, whose voyeuristic position she emulates, spying from the keyhole, an aperture sometimes employed in early cinema.

In Fellini's films in the 1950s, the representation of cinema includes, above all, reference to theatrical exhibition and spectatorial practice. The filmmaker gives us indications, through advertising posters, of the films currently programmed, along with vaudeville shows, and reveals to us the audience in semidarkness and a haze of cigarette smoke.

In *I vitelloni*, the cinema is presented as a place of erotic encounters, often evoked by the author's youthful memories, while in *Il bidone*, it becomes a space invaded by noise and the busyness of life, where, in the intervals between darkness and light, the detection and arrest of the protagonist, Augusto, take place. The exceptional and surprising have to do not only with the fictional stories of the movies, but also with the human component of the public and the events that occur in front of the screen.

In *Lo sceicco bianco*, instead, we see "cinema at work": we are dropped into a fotoromanzo set that has all the characteristics of a second-rate film shoot. Production takes place on the beach at Fregene in a confusion of reality and artifice, exotic costumes and "vernacular" characters, the mask of fiction and the mask of reality, which recreate the same mechanisms at work with the traveling variety show or circus. Here, the Fellinian parody reaches a peak: while a strong wind animates the set, exalting, in the forms of caricatured exasperation and scenic artifice, the material, phenomenological, dimension of filming, the "vulgarity" of the actors and their dialects contrasts with the pseudoliterary style of the dialogue and the exoticism of fotoromanzo settings.

The carnival aspect is also stressed in the scene in the Roman editorial offices of the fotoromanzo, where Fellini stages a *défilé* of the actors that comes from his experience of vaudeville and circus, and that will be a recurring element throughout his work. These spectacular and spectatorial dynamics also inspire the depiction of the many parties that fill his films from the 1950s onward, such as, for example, the celebration of carnival in *I vitelloni*, where disguise and dressing up are always accompanied by desolation and existential impotence. The more degraded the comic mask becomes the more it reveals its intrinsically tragic nature. A deep sense of depersonalization and death accompanies the carnival euphoria.

The mechanisms that govern religious ceremonies and the countless processions that we find in Fellini's films are not very different. The procession in which Gelsomina immerses herself in *La strada* is presented as a grotesque conjunction of the sacred and profane, spiritual and material, suggested by the alternating angle of the camera shots, from high to low and vice versa.

But it is without doubt the pilgrimage to the shrine of Divino Amore in *Le notti di Cabiria* that is most representative of this carnival chaos that includes the ceremonial vestments of both religious spectacle and worldly pleasure, the fair and the market, to which the false miracle scene in *La dolce vita* will add the merciless press machine and media spectacularization. It is here that the cross-section of humanity reaches its peak of marginality and unstable identity. As though filling a great Noah's Ark, Fellini proffers maimed bodies and animals, basing his parodic vision on a precise anthropological substratum, made of a humanity ever wounded, scarred, incomplete, unresolved. These are the elements and motifs that appear throughout his films, but which reach their high point of synthesis and explication in the scenes dedicated to collective ceremonies.

In *La strada*, we encounter the most rudimentary dynamics of the circus, which, for Fellini, represents the archetype of the spectacle. In this case, there is not even need for a location dedicated to performance; it can take place anywhere, in the open air or under the classical circus tent. The magic is entrusted entirely to the actors and their movements, to their feats of strength or other abilities: in other words, to their use of the body together with a few meager stage props. The show assumes the most primordial form of a game, to which Fellini links the roots of every artistic activity: a game that is both life-giving and funereal, a game of exhibition and degradation of oneself, of freedom and constriction, that ends up coinciding with the game of existence, with its hazards, uncertainty, and vulnerability.

The street performance is organized around a circle that puts the bystander-spectators in a completely different position from that of a variety theater audience. While in the latter, the

space for recital is divided from that of its reception, in the street performance it is the passersby who, playing spectators, create and delimit with their physical presence the circle in which the artists perform. As a result, the Fellinian gaze also changes form: while in *Luci del varietà*, it adopts the form of the straight line to represent the dynamic of meeting and the clash between the stage and the audience, using a shot–countershot technique; in *La strada*, the movement is that of a circular overview, that includes actor and spectator in the same space. At the end of the film, where the Circo Medini is camped on the beach, this sense of encapsulation and coexistence is expressed through a 360° circle traced by the camera.

The line and the circle, however, are not just two different configurations of viewpoint, but, as Frank Burke has stressed, also two different ways to trace the story that moves from a more traditional evolutionary linearity of narration (seen in *Luci del varietà* and *Lo sceicco bianco*) to a logic based on accumulation, on repetition, on retracing (from *I vitelloni* to *Le notti di Cabiria*). According to Burke (1996, 80–81), the endings of *Il bidone* and *Le notti di Cabiria* suggest a substitution of the circle (in which the end reconnects with the beginning) by the spiral, which allows a free coming and going in space, in time, in the real and the imaginary.

If we think of Eisensteinian theorizing, the form of the spiral evokes, besides a narrative orientation, a sort of anthropological dynamic, that binds nature and history, body and mind, "sentient thought" and the rational. Films in the 1950s can also be read as ethnographic explorations of an archaic and borderline humanity, tied to the antique rituals and forms of a life that predates and resists modernization. The culture of Italy's Mezzogiorno (Southern Italy), explored in that same epoch by the anthropologist Ernesto De Martino, is not far away from what we see in *Il bidone* or in *La strada*. In Fellini, the anthropological connotation is incorporated as a basic element of the spectacular dimension.

The rhetorical expression "the world as spectacle" lends itself well to describing an inclination to view reality as a continual representation of the human condition, a great circus perennially in motion, where the "creature" expresses itself through the "caricature"; where what is normal is filtered by an estranged eye—in the Shklovskian[9] sense—ready to catch the deformed, unexpected, archaic, or lowly; where the hidden face of things reveals itself through underlining exceptional appearances. The world is already itself, according to Fellini's eye, a gigantesque and inexhaustible traveling circus. The first human appearance in *Luci del varietà*, whose title evokes Chaplin's *City Lights* (1931) and *Limelight* (1952), is a hunchback who stops in front of a theater poster. From this opening image seem to flow all the singular figures revealed by Fellini—the clowns, the crippled, the lame, the mad, the innumerable others who inhabit the streets, the countrysides, the cities, and the vaudeville stages—a world both grotesque and material, made of flesh and visions.

The protagonists in *La strada* belong to a subhuman or protohuman universe: Gelsomina, with her floral name, is a simple-minded young woman who talks to plants and animals—they, too, obsessively present on the Fellinian screen. The comic figure is often contiguous not only with infancy but with vegetable and animal matter, reproducing at times their traits, like a sort of ancestral imprint of the human condition. After all, since antiquity, the caricature has taken on the forms of an original animality, predating the state of consciousness and reason. If the characters in *Lo sceicco bianco* and *I vitelloni* still belong to a provincial petite bourgeoisie, those in *La strada*, *Il bidone*, and *Le notti di Cabiria* are vagabonds who have lost the ordinariness typical of neorealist characters, who mainly suffer from problems related to work and its absence. In their own way, Fellini's characters win back the charisma of exceptionality. Around them the space is filled with magical figures, who appear in the landscape like apparitions: a horse sauntering down the street in the dark of night, a trio of musicians in the deserted countryside.

Vagabondaggio and Itinerancy: A Path into the Heart and to the Edges of Neorealism

Fellini's films of the 1950s are based on the founding experience of vagabondage or itinerancy. Like their performances, his artists are peripatetic. Gelsomina and Zampanò present the nomadism of the circus in rural Italy. In their small-town setting, the vitelloni do nothing but wander about aimlessly. The protagonist of *Le notti di Cabiria* is by definition a "streetwalker" (or *peripatetica*, as they say in Rome), whose trade always takes her back to the road. In *Il bidone*, the delinquent confidence tricksters are constantly on the move to trap their prey. The archetype of journeying in search of oneself proceeds in step with one quite different: that of man, uprooted and drifting.

These motifs are not just a characteristic of Fellini's characters; they determine the filmmaker's modus operandi and derive in part from Roberto Rossellini's first neorealistic explorations. Italian cinema in the postwar period is based on a constant pressure to rediscover Italy in its particular aspects and with its regional and cultural differences. The journey across Italy is often evoked by Cesare Zavattini as the principal form of the cognitive tension of neorealism. In *Paisà*, it becomes the pivot on which turns not only the story but the adventure of filming it. Fellini was involved in the film as scriptwriter and assistant director, and writes memorable words about this experience in which he recognizes its initiatory value: in his eyes, the journey of *Paisà* represents the "discovery of Italy," while Rosselini's way of conceiving cinema appears to him as an almost miraculous conjunction between life and fiction:

> Together with this exciting, riveting discovery of my Country, I realized that cinema miraculously allows you this great double game: to tell a story and, while you tell it, live another, adventurous, one with extraordinary characters like those in the film that you are narrating. Sometimes even more fascinating, which you will talk about in another film, in a spiral of invention and of life, of observation and creativity, spectator and actor at the same time, puppet-master and puppet, special correspondent and event, like people of the circus who live in the same ring where they perform, in those same caravans in which they travel (Fellini 2004, 57).

Beyond the meeting with Rossellini, the practice of exploration and investigation underlies Fellini's experience as screenwriter alongside Tullio Pinelli for the films of Alberto Lattuada and Pietro Germi, for Luigi Comencini's *Persiane chiuse* (*Behind Closed Shutters* 1951), and for unfilmed projects, such as *Happy Country*. Screenwriting a neorealist film means above all journeying and transforming the work of investigation into an inventive point of the story that is defined in direct contact with the material that it represents. The script of Lattuada's *Senza pietà* (*Without Pity* 1948), for example, was preceded by a dangerous exploration of the film's setting, where the screenwriters went "dressed up as vagrants" (Pinelli 1956, 184).

The method of research in the field then takes root in the works written and directed by Fellini. *La strada* stems from the sight of solitary couples of gypsies in the Italian provinces and is scripted while he and his screenwriters traveled along "Lazio's many roads, visiting small circuses, talking to traveling artists—and what unexpected encounters!—… ever more convincing ourselves that the film was on the road and that it was there, right there, that we had to look for it" (Flaiano 1954, 449). *Il bidone* is built on direct contact with the type of swindler portrayed in the film, while *Le notti di Cabiria* reworks, among other things, the fascination of a meeting that took place during the filming of *Il bidone* and, as Pasolini (1957/1981) tells us, is also based on endless car trips in search of a famous Roman prostitute known as *la Bomba*.

In this context, it is obligatory to cite Gilles Deleuze (1989, 11–36),[10] who in *L'immagine-tempo* (*Cinema 2: The Time-Image*) points to "restless wanderings" as one of the cornerstones on which neorealist phenomenology is based: the movements of the characters seem to lose their purpose; the traditional narrative schema based on a rational system of cause and effect, action and reaction, is fractured or destroyed. The interweaving among situations and actions becomes increasingly weak, while the story takes the form of dispersion and emptiness. For Deleuze, classical action cinema is substituted by the cinema of "the oracle" based on "purely optical and acoustic situations," taken in by the "liberated senses"; set against the distinction between real and imaginary, physical and mental, objective and subjective, is their "indiscernibility."

Thus, the journeys and wanderings in Fellini pass without clear borders from the sentient world into the realms of memory, the unconscious, and thought, acquiring the double connotation of a path within and outside oneself—something that, according to Fellini (1980, 46), served in Rossellini's neorealism, to "reveal what of the elusive, the arcane, and the magical life has to offer."

Even space and time acquire a new dimension that tends to remove them from the customary dynamics of the story, and reshape them as concretions of past and present, of sentient matter and fantasy. Fellinian narration often represents the same elements of an episodic and fragmentary nature on which variety theater is based, or on which is imprinted the myth of the journey articulated in phases.

Fellini's immersion in the physical nature of the setting is at one with the rediscovery of the landscape promoted by neorealism. In his films of the 1950s, as in those of Rossellini, space acquires a potency that is both concrete and symbolic, documentary, and, at the same time, transfiguring. The Rome traveled through by the newlyweds in *Lo sceicco bianco*, for example, is a city deformed by the dreaming or hallucinatory perceptions of the characters, while the nocturnal Rimini of *I vitelloni* is conceived as a scenario of constriction and existential wandering. In its streets and piazzas, the characters are prey to a kind of "stupid flânerie," an "empty agitation" that spurs them to move without performing actions that resolve anything, without planned destinations, abandoning themselves to the incessant repetition of the same rites (Bazin 1962c, 144). In *La strada*, the landscape takes on the nature of a desert, full of ahistorical, primitive, and mythical signs. It presents itself as a wasteland that reaches the summit of the sublime, helping to define the isolation and disorientation of the characters.

In *Il bidone* we also find the search for barren, poor, arid, and run-down locations, where the "landscape painted by Corot" evoked at the beginning by the character nicknamed Picasso is followed by abandoned countryside, heaps of stones (as in the tragic ending—Figure 7.3), and even glimpses of outlying Roman slums suspended in time. *Le notti di Cabiria* opens the eye even more intensely and extensively in the direction of the city's extreme hinterland, toward a space that in its tragic desolation recovers associations that are almost fable-like, constantly invaded by children, animals, and odd presences. The caves visited by Cabiria and the "man with the sack" are configured as underground civilizations in which the coordinates of space and time seem to cancel each other out in a mythical realm.

In "Agenzia matrimoniale," an episode of *L'amore in città* (*Love in the City* 1953), the first film-investigation envisaged by Cesare Zavattini, Fellini works on the continuous slippage from the level of the ordinary to that of the extraordinary. In this episode, the procedure of the Zavattinian investigation is circumvented, ridiculed, and inverted with an explicitly metadiscursive approach. It is no longer the filmmaker who is carrying out the investigation, but the character in the fiction, a journalist, who uses paradox and deception to enter a reality (that of a naïve and unsophisticated young woman) that is so marginalized and extreme that it reveals signs of hallucinatory distension.

Figure 7.3 The rocky countryside terrain where Augusto finds his final resting place. *Source*: *Il bidone* (*The Swindle* 1955). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Titanus and Société Générale de Cinématographie (S.G.C.). Frame grab captured by Stefania Parigi from the 2014 DVD version.

In the Fellinian representation of the walking and wandering about of his characters, there are elements that recur from one film to another, delineating a geography that, beyond its purely material aspect, suggests the presence of ritualized locations. Frequently highlighted by critics is the railway station. Another is the city street or the piazza at night, in a silence where sounds are amplified and in which humanity pours, carnivalesque and adrift. Here, the protagonist of *Luci del varietà* meets some of its "unknown artists": a black American who plays the trumpet and laughs in the deserted streets, a Brazilian who sings and plays a guitar. The bridegroom in *Lo sceicco bianco*, desperate, wanders about in a Roman piazza where he meets a prostitute called Cabiria (played by Masina, anticipating her later role) and watches a fire eater perform. In *La strada*, Gelsomina chooses a piazza at nighttime to act out her drunkenness and pain, reciting and singing. The motif of wandering in the nocturnal city and its piazzas reaches its apogee in *La dolce vita*, as Anita Ekberg glides through the streets and ends up (with Marcello) in the Trevi Fountain. At the same time, the metaphysics of the sea and the beach emerge in *La strada* and are destined to return in Fellini's later work.

In the urban and natural landscape, life always takes on, literally and symbolically, the dimension of a performance, a performance that exalts the unusual and the marvelous in its continual appearances. Moreover, the sentient dynamic of elements such as water and wind undergoes caricatural spectacularization, without losing its material consistency and phenomenological vibration. The landscape's "crossing into the magical" occurs almost always through a "lighting up" of the realistically given (Rondi 1965, 160).

Through the continuous incorporation of the extraordinary within the ordinary, the caricature within physical reality, the oneiric within the documentary substantiality of landscape and persons, Fellini faces the tragedy, mystery, and magic of being in the world—before the difficulties of living in a particular society. For this reason, he was considered a sort of "swindler" of neorealism in particular and of realism in general. Within the neorealist imaginary, he bears the marks of a lacerated and pulsing subjectivity in relation to the outside world, moving in a way that is similar—albeit stylistically different—to Rossellini and Michelangelo Antonioni. In the

cinema of the 1950s, their paths bring to light the more nocturnal aspects, the unconscious and repressed zones, in early neorealism.

Taking up Bazin's words in his review of *Le notti di Cabiria*, we can say that Fellini undertakes "a journey to the end of neorealism," conducting a sort of visitation of its most secret recesses, its least orthodox forms, its shadowy side. His films in the 1950s can be defined as "neorealism masked." While they work stylistically with some of the most important artistic elements of the early postwar period, they also help unmask many stereotypes that are still attributed to neorealism by exploring what lies behind and within its characters, symbols, and canonic locations.

Notes

1. These words appear in a review in *Les Lettres Françaises* (Sadoul 1955a) and are cited in Fellini 1955a. Successively, Sadoul wrote an article in *Cinema Nuovo* (1955b, 387), in which he stressed the presence of a "social critique (albeit incomplete)" and the creation of "types whose task it is to denounce some or other defect of the modern world." Although with some reservations "on specific elements of content and, even more, of form," he affirms that both *La strada* and *Il bidone* "do not deeply conflict with Italian cinema in its most recent form (neorealism) that [in any case] cannot be resolved in a single formula." To define *La strada,* French critics used expressions such as "Franciscan neorealism" (Agel 1955) or "magic realism" (Altman 1955).
2. *Il neorealismo italiano* (Rondi 1956), with a preface by Rossellini, and *Cinema e realtà* (Rondi 1957), with a preface by Fellini.
3. *Vitelloni* and *bidonisti* refer to the protagonists of Fellini's *I vitelloni* and *Il bidone*.
4. Analyzing Fellini films of the 1950s, non-Italian scholars refer to neorealism as a phenomenon that is "outdated" and "transcended," and not just negated or "betrayed." In his book *The Cinema of Federico Fellini,* Peter Bondanella (1992) entitles Chapter 3 "Beyond Neorealism: Character and Narrative Form in early Fellini from *Luci del varietà* to *La dolce vita*." Millicent Marcus (1986, 163) speaks of "transcending neorealism" in *La strada*: "Neorealism, for Fellini, has not been so much abandoned as subsumed in a vision that takes in the stars but does not forget the pebbles that line the way in this world." For Frank Burke (1996, 20, 80–81), Fellini's early films respond to a "relatively realistic esthetic" in the sense that, beyond the Zavattinian principles or Bazinian considerations, they are still bound to conventional forms of classical storytelling. While *Luci del varietà* and *Lo sceicco bianco* "are traditional and linear in development," *I vitelloni* presents a more complex narrative, "composed […] of multiple stories." From *La strada* onward, we have the transition "from realistic story to narratives conceived principally in symbolic terms": "conventional realism dissolves more than ever, in favor of psychosymbolic organization." With *Le notti di Cabiria*, the director starts to concentrate on "issues of representation and meaning," rather than on the presentation of reality (often transformed by fantasy).
5. Editors' note: a mistranslation of "There's room up ahead" or "up front."
6. Editors' note: *qualunquismo*, which derives from a short-lived movement in the immediate second postwar, signifies a kind of apoliticism or apathy that encourages the perpetuation of the status quo. Its English equivalent, "whateverism," though not a term in use, captures its essence.
7. For a long time, *La strada* was shown in parish film clubs and catechism classes as an exemplary film embodying the evangelic spirit. Recently, Pope Francis, who is considered a cinephile, cited the discourse of the pebble in *La strada* in his Easter mass homily 16 April 2017. See Vanelli 2017, 185–186.
8. On the figure of the angel in Fellini's cinema, see Rohdie 2002, 3–6.
9. Viktor Shklovsky was a literary and cultural critic who also wrote the screenplays of several iconic early Soviet films.
10. Deleuze repeats his terms on various occasions through the pages cited, hence the page range instead of multiple individual citations.

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8

Fellini's Graphic Heritage: Drawings, Comics, Animation, and Beyond

Marco Bellano

"On behalf of Moebius, I tell you 'Don't do the book on Federico's drawings!'" Such words of warning appear in a speech balloon of a Fellini sketch of the French comic artist Moebius (pen name of Jean Giraud) (Mollica 2000, 92). It was a gift to journalist Vincenzo Mollica, a *fumetti* (comics) and animation connoisseur, and one of the people whose company Fellini enjoyed the most in his late years, together with fumetti artist Milo Manara. Mollica intended to publish a volume of Fellini's drawings; however, even though Fellini agreed to do an interview for the proposed book (93–95), he also relentlessly discouraged his friend, asserting the marginality of drawing in his artistic activities and describing his graphic works as mere doodles. It is not by chance that Fellini issued his warning "on behalf of Moebius," a comic artist whom he compared to a "father almighty" (78).

The book was not published; however, this story hints that drawings had more than a supporting role in Fellini's artistic life, because the same sort of procrastination of a projected goal, sustained by a mixture of modesty, superstition, and obstinacy, characterized Fellini's relations to many of his films, leading to some famous unachieved works, such as "Viaggio a Tulum" ("Journey to Tulum") and "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna" ("The Journey of G. Mastorna"). Both those aborted projects took shape later as comics, storyboarded by Fellini and drawn by Manara. In the "Tulum" comic (Fellini and Manara 2015, np), Fellini has the character Helen ask him (as a figure in the story): "So is it true that the airplanes lying at the bottom of the pool are the films that never took flight?" The director does not reply, but "Mastorna" was supposed to open with allusions to an airplane incident, and the symbol of the endangered or wrecked airplane obsessively recurs throughout the most conspicuous organized collection of drawings Fellini (2007/2008/2016) ever produced, the illustrated record of his dreams known as *Il libro dei sogni* (*The Book of Dreams*).

Drawings had a crucial role at both the beginning and the end of Fellini's career. The first public evidence of his activity, before his professional involvement with the satirical magazines *420* and *Marc'Aurelio*, was a series of caricatures of young campers in the one-shot publication *La Diana* in 1937 (Kezich 2010, 21; Cattaneo, Bajetta, and Stroud 2003, 20). A drawing is also the last attested artistic creation by Fellini: Mollica reported that, on 16 October 1993, the day before Fellini fell into an irreversible coma, Rinaldo Geleng, creator of many production paintings and posters for Fellini's films, brought to the hospitalized director a magazine containing a picture of the showgirl Valeria Marini. Fellini drew with a felt-tip pen, on the woman's rear

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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end, a little figure resembling Pasqualino, an alter ego of the artist from about 1942 and a model for many of his early comic characters (Kezich 2010, 40; Caruso and Casetti 1997, 22–23). A speech bubble announces: "I made up my mind, I'll live here!" (Kezich 2010, 383; Cattaneo, Bajetta, and Stroud 2003, 41).

Even without Fellini's opposition, a systematic account on the director's drawings would have been extremely difficult to accomplish. Fellini did not keep drawings for himself (De Santi 1982/2004, 352) except for the ones in *Il libro dei sogni*. Some pages of this volume shared the same fate as the vast majority of Fellini's other drawings: they were given to magazines (Fellini 2007/2008/2016, 10) or to friends and acquaintances. Fortunately, some of the recipients of Fellini's donations collected them, creating the possibility of exhibitions, catalogs, and archival preservation. Exhibitions have been based on the private collection of Liliana Betti, Fellini's script supervisor and second unit director until 1980 (Betti 1970; Angelucci and Betti 1977; Montalto 2008), and on the drawings owned by film critic Renzo Renzi (Ricci 2004); by Daniela Barbiani, Fellini's niece and assistant; and by Mollica (Cattaneo, Bajetta, and Stroud 2003). Gérald Morin, the second unit director for *Roma* (1972), *Amarcord* (1973), and *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976), has provided the bulk of the archive of mostly unpublished Fellini drawings at the Fondation Fellini pour le Cinema in Sion, Switzerland. On the basis of accounts in publications, collections, and exhibitions, an overview of Fellini's drawing output could now at least be attempted.

The complex relationship between Fellini's graphic output and his filmmaking confirms the relevance of drawing in the director's career: he produced many storyboards and preproduction sketches, but most important, he used drawing as a gateway to directing: "To me, drawing is a … first glimpse of a film, a sort of Ariadne's thread, a graphic line that leads me to the film set.… The concept of my images is a pictorial one" (Mollica 2000, 94). Fellini's "doodles" managed also to become a major influence for illustrators, as well as comic and animation artists, who referenced the director's drawings in their works.

Fellini the Cartoonist, 1937–1947

Fellini had liked to draw since he was a child (Fellini 2015, 68–69). Guided by his mother, he did not have any formal training, although he spent time with at least two painters, older and more expert in fine arts than him. In 1937, Fellini joined with Demos Bonini in order to meet a request from the Fulgor cinema in Rimini for caricatures of famous actors with which to attract and amuse the audience. They set up a small shop in Via IV Novembre, named "Febo," after the first syllables of their surnames. Most of the caricatures, signed with one of young Fellini's favorite nicknames—"Fellas"—are now part of the private collections of Franca and Anna Maria Bassetti in Rimini (Cattaneo, Bajetta, and Stroud 2003, 46–57). They reveal a work of self-instruction in the rendering of volumes through sfumato, but also a developing taste for expressive and nonrealistic use of color, in dialogue with a strong contour line and a tendency to an abstract synthesis of facial features, inspired by the works of the renowned cinema caricaturist Nino Za (Giuseppe Zanini) (Maggiore 2011, 20). Za, in turn, drew caricatures of Fellini in 1942 and 1988 (Mollica 1992, 55–56).

A second training occasion came as soon as Fellini moved to Rome, in the early 1940s. In a small restaurant in Via Urbana, he met a certain O.G. (Fellini mentions him only by initials), nicknamed Caporetto after the unhealthy color of his beard, resembling the red, white, and green of the Italian flag (Fellini 1980; 2015, 69–70). In 1944, Fellini and Caporetto started a

caricature business: the "Funny Face Shop." Their intent was to offer on-the-spot caricatures to the American soldiers in Rome by using preprinted templates of characters and settings: they just had to draw faces on headless bodies. Apparently, it was in the "Funny Face Shop" that Roberto Rossellini approached Fellini to involve him in the production of *Roma città aperta* (*Rome Open City* 1945). They had previously met at the script office of the ACI Film company, where Fellini had been employed. Rossellini knew Fellini also from his drawings and columns for the *Marc'Aurelio* magazine.

From his early days in Rome, Fellini associated with Rinaldo Geleng. They offered their skills to shops and tourists. While Geleng produced realistic and refined portraits, Fellini indulged in quirky transfigurations of his subjects into beasts (Kezich 2010, 31–32). As this might suggest, Fellini immediately established an almost exclusive preference for caricature. According to Edoardo G. Grossi, Fellini's predilection for caricature is a derivation of his early experiences in humorous drawings for the popular press, recalling "that kind of very rough and provincial culture, with an extremely banal and always superficial humor, that had its best expression in the *Marc'Aurelio* biweekly magazine" (Grossi 1978, 21). Fellini's early professional work with comical and satirical drawings enriched his fervid production of magazine columns, while providing character studies for his first efforts in scriptwriting for radio and cinema. Grossi (21) notes how caricature became a precious tool for Fellini's filmmaking, allowing him "to develop … an expressive line mainly centered on visual and spectacular values, by which, in the film, he gets to free himself from the constraints of narrative construction and the rule of psychological character development …."

While remaining true to this preference for caricature, Fellini's drawing style did not always stay the same. Pier Marco De Santi (1982/2004, 21) argued that "The first feature that catches the eye when looking at Fellini's drawings … is the uniformity of the style"; however, this can be said only of the drawings he produced once he quit working for magazines and dedicated himself to cinema. Before that moment, Fellini's drawings display stylistic variation, according to their destination. Caricatures, such as those for the Fulgor cinema, could be detailed and rich in their exploration of colors and shapes (though distant from Fellini's mature drawing style), as they arguably needed to draw attention and invite people to buy them. The drawings destined for small printed formats in black and white, instead, used fewer details and a naïve and straightforward cartoon design, with puppet-like characters.

Such was the look of the works Fellini submitted in 1938 to *La Domenica del Corriere*, a famous illustrated weekly magazine that hosted contributions from its readers in the "*Cartoline dal pubblico*" ("postcards from the audience") column, and to the first magazine he worked for, *420*, published by Nerbini in Florence. He principally used the single-frame comic cartoon accompanied by short lines of character dialogue. He kept this format when he joined the Roman magazine *Marc'Aurelio* in 1939, and also in his contributions for publications such as *Il Travaso*, *Campanello*, *Marforio*, and *Cine teatro magazzino*. In the second half of the 1940s, he also developed single-panel comics with speech bubbles and rhymed verses further commenting on the action in each frame, in the tradition of the funnies published in the magazine for children *Il Corriere dei Piccoli*. In all, Fellini consistently used only two-character designs, male and female. Men were identified by a squashed elliptical head, with a big potato-like nose and little or no hair; the eyes were simple dots, sometimes sporting the "slice of pie" reflection, a typical eye design element in American cartoon characters of the 1920s and 1930s, with small parenthesis-like signs on the sides and a single line for eyebrows. Their bodies were mostly skinny (as Fellini himself was in that period), with loose joints and limbs. Female characters had elliptical heads too, but with more expressive eyes, drawn as large circles containing small mobile dots. Their noses were a slightly larger dot and their bodies looked shapelier and anatomically more consistent than the

male ones. Even though their breasts were sometimes emphasized, they were far more chaste than the exuberant female anatomies of the mature Fellini (see the cartoons published in Caruso and Casetti 1997, 5). Such was the design used also in Fellini's own illustrated book of the 1940s,[1] *Il mio amico Pasqualino*, which Kezich (2010, 41) compared to James Thurber's *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*.

In this same period, Giulietta Masina entered Fellini's life, and they married on 30 October 1943. She eventually became part of her husband's work as a main character of his drawings and films, but the earliest artistic transfigurations of Giulietta were mostly conveyed by written stories or radio programs. In fact, Fellini and Masina met for the first time in the office of Cesare Cavallotti, an EIAR[2] editor who, beginning in 1941, created successful short and light radio scenes, often hiring Fellini as a scriptwriter. Masina served as voice actor for several of Fellini's radio scripts, such as "Rifugio di montagna" or "Invenzioni." She also played the character of Pallina in a 1946 Fellini radio series called *Le avventure di Cico e Pallina*. This fictitious couple was created by Fellini in his magazine columns, and it was intended to be autobiographical. Cicco was unmistakably Federico—the character debuted with a double "c" in the *Marc'Aurelio* column "Primo amore"—and was only later nicknamed "Cico" with only one "c." Pallina, however, was not initially Giulietta. Federico did not know her in 1939 when he introduced the character in the successful column "Ma tu mi stai a sentire?" ("But are you listening to me?"). Pallina was in fact sometimes named Bianca, the name of Fellini's first love, Bianca Soriani. Fellini perpetuated his love story in a sentimental saga of inexperienced newlyweds, with Pallina becoming more and more an ideal figure that foreshadowed Giulietta's personality and relationship with Fellini (Kezich 2010, 40). When Giulietta arrived, it was natural to let her take the role of Pallina.

Giulietta was a constant presence in Fellini's drawings after 1947.[3] Her image remained consistent with the puppet figures Fellini used for the *Marc'Aurelio* cartoons, in stark contrast to the grotesque and hypersexual traits he gave to other drawn women. This very rarely happened to other female figures Fellini drew after his youth: a few examples are the caricatures of his friend and second unit director Liliana Betti (Montalto 2008) and of Antonella Ponziani in *Intervista* (1987) (Cattaneo, Bajetta, and Stroud 2003, 112). Giulietta was based on the female design with big eyes, elliptical head, and a nose reduced to a single dot. Her anatomy was reduced to a stick figure with almost no female attributes, except in rare cases.

The comics published in *Il Corriere dei Piccoli* played an important role in Fellini's development of this sort of imagery. Fellini used to be an avid reader of the *Corrierino*, as it was often called, one of the most important magazines for children in Italy, which brought to its audience many landmarks of American comic art, while also fostering the development of a local group of cartoonists and illustrators. Fellini built his comic culture by reading the *Corrierino* series *Happy Hooligan* by Frederick Burr Opper; *Maggie and Jiggs*, also known as *Bringing Up Father*, by George McManus; *Felix the Cat* by Otto Messmer and Pat Sullivan; and *The Katzenjammer Kids* by Rudolph Dirks and Harold Knerr (Cattaneo, Bajetta, and Stroud 2003, 37). He was also known to like Winsor McCay's *Little Nemo in Slumberland* and Lee Falk's *Mandrake*. From comics, Fellini learned to admire "a type of outlook where everything took place in a fairytale manner, and yet was perhaps more real than any other view of things" (Fellini quoted in Cattaneo, Bajetta, and Stroud 2003, 37). He no doubt assimilated the strategies of graphic and communicative synthesis in those comics. A late drawing related to his unachieved film project "Block-notes di un regista—L'attore" ("A director's notebook—the actor") shows a character nervously standing on the cornice of a building. On his face, Fellini pasted a cutout head of Jiggs from *Bringing Up Father* (Cattaneo, Bajetta, and Stroud 2003, 60). In 1972, Fellini, Franco Pinna, and Tazio Secchiaroli created a *fotoromanzo* (a comic assembled with photos of actors playing roles) for *Vogue* magazine,

featuring Marcello Mastroianni as Mandrake (Stourdzé 2011, 30). He reprised that comic character in *Intervista*. Another reference to American comic strips is found in the name of the main character, Fortunella, played by Giulietta Masina, in a 1958 film of the same name directed by Eduardo De Filippo, inspired by Fellini's ideas, and created by many of Fellini's regular collaborators. Fortunella was the Italian name of Happy Hooligan.

Among the Italian comic authors published by *Il Corriere dei Piccoli*, Giovanni Manca, Sergio Tofano, and Antonio Rubino especially caught Fellini's attention. Rubino's influence is distinctly perceptible in some of Fellini's work as a cartoonist. Fellini's elliptical heads and round eyes were likely borrowed from Rubino's characters, such as Pierino, a child always trying unsuccessfully to get rid of a disturbing puppet (see Pallottino 1978, 25). The dot-like eyes with slice-of-pie reflections in Fellini's male characters are well represented in many of Rubino's drawings (see Riva 1980, 127–128). Fellini denied a preference for Rubino over other Italian illustrators; he reported that Rubino's comics appeared to him "unsettling," with "puppet-like stiffness" and with characters who seemed "spring-loaded, as if they had a robotic, automatic life" (Fellini quoted in Pallottino 1978, 12). However, Pallottino (1998) argued that Gelsomina and Zampanò from *La strada* (1954) could have been inspired by the main characters of Rubino's *Girellino e lo zingaro Zarappa* (Girellino and Zarappa the gypsy). Some shots from Fellini's film even seem borrowed from its panels. Rubino's Art Nouveau-like elaborations, full of bizarre characters and surrealistic settings, and a pungent dark humor imbued with a pervasive grotesque, baroque, and macabre flair, could not fail to impress the young Fellini. Rubino, an illustrator, poet, composer, and later a film animator—one of the driving forces of the *Corrierino* since its establishment in 1908—brought to Italian comics a unique style, in open contrast with the local and American traditions. According to Bernardino Zapponi, one of Fellini's favorite scriptwriters, Rubino silently fought tyranny and intolerance during the Fascist period by keeping his inspiration true to absurd worlds where imagination and hope still had a place: "This is where Rubino's magic stays, the gift that he shares with all the great creators: his ability to cover his eyes to see nothing but dreams; his stubborn rejection of the everyday banality" (Zapponi quoted in Pallottino 1978, 10). This trait was strikingly similar to Fellini's "invincible lack of interest" (Kezich 2010, 37) in politics, although many of his films addressed political issues in an indirect and imaginative way and created strong political and social reactions, as happened with *La dolce vita* (1960).

During his career as a cartoonist, Fellini supposedly acted as scriptwriter for an Italian surrogate of the science-fiction comic *Flash Gordon*, produced for the *L'Avventuroso* magazine by the Nerbini publishing company that also published *420*. Fellini reported that the comic was illustrated by Giove Toppi in 1938, when the Fascist regime forbade the circulation of American comic strips (Cattaneo, Bajetta, and Stroud 2003, 24). Because of this prohibition, some American comic serials were replaced by Italian retellings, with retouched designs and altered settings (see Gadducci, Gori, and Lama 2011). However, the comic by Fellini and Toppi has never been found (Gadducci, Gori, and Lama 2011, 222–223). The writer and journalist Oreste Del Buono said to film critic Giovanni Grazzini, who also remembered a "homemade" retelling of *Flash Gordon*, that this was an unreliable "fabrication" (Cattaneo, Bajetta, and Stroud 2003, 24). Fellini recalled that the title of one of his stories was "Rebo, re dei Mercuriani" ("Rebo, King of the Mercurians"). Rebo was the main villain of a science-fiction Italian comic series, *Saturno contro la Terra* ("Saturn versus the earth"), written by the neorealist scriptwriter Cesare Zavattini with the comic artist Federico Pedrocchi, and drawn by Giovanni Scolari. The series, in seven episodes, was published from 1936 to 1946 by Mondadori and intended to counteract the "invasion" of American comics that entered Italy largely thanks to Nerbini. It could be that Fellini confused his memories of Zavattini's serial with his own early commitments at Nerbini, where he met with Toppi and other illustrators he admired. Rebo was a king in the comic, but of the Saturnians and not of the Mercurians.

Fellini's drawing style was thus defined by a mixture of the refined comics for children published in the *Corriere dei Piccoli* and the sulfurous caricatural humor required by *Marc'Aurelio* and other satirical magazines. He balanced and alternated those two influences in his later stylistic evolution, during his career as a film director.

The Age of Dreams, 1948–1993

"Why do I draw the characters of my films?" Fellini asks (2015, 66). The answers he provided were always vague, and seemed to derive from feelings of attraction, seduction, self-exploration, and even psychological persecution. In any case, when Fellini became a director, the sketches of his characters took center stage in his personal preproduction strategies. In general, his production of drawings flourished. Without caring anymore for an anonymous audience, he started to draw only for himself and his closest peers, on any "canvas" at his disposal, including napkins at restaurants.[4] With no concern for academic technique, he mostly used simple drawing tools, such as ballpoint pens, colored pencils, and, above all, colored felt-tip pens or markers. This choice deprived Fellini's art of the subtleties of the sfumato he tried to approach in his early caricatures (Cattaneo, Bajetta, and Stroud 2003, 29), in favor of bright, unmixable colored areas with sharp and expressionist contrasts, sometimes mitigated by hatching and a kind of shading done by thickening contour lines with color. In some instances, he attempted a pointillist use of markers (as seen in Ricci 2004, 20). The art was barely prepared with preliminary pencil sketches or construction lines: the drawing hastily proceeded to its final form, as a kind of direct emanation of Fellini's thoughts.

Fellini's filmmaking routine included drawings as a means to identify and control the characters (Grossi 1978, 13). The idea of control is central to this graphic production, maybe more relevant than the visible features of each drawing, as is reflected in a picture Fellini drew during the production of *Ginger e Fred* (1985) (see Fig. 18.1): he represents his actors as puppets whose strings he pulls with his right hand (cover, Cattaneo, Bajetta, and Stroud 2003). Even if, especially in his late period, Fellini felt less than empowered to let his work take unpredictable turns during the production, he retained a controlling attitude over his actors. Casting, for Fellini, was an occasion not just to find an apt onscreen presence, but also to embark on a quest to incarnate an image seen with the inner eye. Fellini's conflict with Masina over Gelsomina's appearance in *La strada* was just one instance of Fellini's controlling instinct in his approach to his actors and characters. More radically, he prolonged his drawing well past preproduction, imposing his sketched images on his actors. That is to say, Fellini "drew on" his actors in two senses of the term, and in the case of *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, he forced Donald Sutherland to resemble the sketch of his protagonist as much as possible (Magrelli 2015, 53, 55). Fellini enjoyed playing with graphic elements on the faces of the actors. The eyebrows are a key feature of cartoon characters, necessary to convey expressions and emotions in simplified face designs. Fellini often altered the eyebrows of his actors, sometimes drawing upon the circus makeup traditions that he explicitly addressed in *I clowns* (1970), presenting several artists with hand-drawn eyebrows graphically exaggerated or asymmetric. The eyebrows of Masina in *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957) were consistently replaced by makeup. An annotation about Sutherland's makeup reads: "Shave the eyebrows and draw them *each time* [emphasis Fellini] according to the required expression" (Fellini in Magrelli 2015, 55) (Figure 8.1). Fellini even used this habit as a source for film gags: in *8½* (1963), Guido, the alter ego of Fellini, during a playful erotic encounter, draws eyebrows on the face of his lover Carla, to make her, in the character's own words, more like a slut. In "*Le tentazioni del*

Figure 8.1 A sketch of Donald Sutherland as Casanova, with annotated instructions to shave the eyebrows and redraw them as necessary. Federico Fellini. Diogenes Verlag AG Collection. © Estate of Federico Fellini/ SOCAN (2019).

dottor Antonio" ("The Temptations of Dr. Antonio"), an episode of *Boccaccio '70* 1962), Fellini appears to raise the practice of "face drawing" to a new level. When an enraged Peppino De Filippo throws ink bottles at the billboard with Anita Ekberg, one brief shot shows a strange stain on his forehead. He gets ink on his face elsewhere, including his nose, but the sign on his forehead looks like a little halo of rays departing from a central dot. It seems like one of those dynamic lines that, in comics, signify rage or distress.

Even when other artists participated in the production of Fellini's films, they had to comply with the director's guidelines. That was the case of Rinaldo and Giuliano Geleng, who received detailed instructions about the final appearance of their posters or paintings (Fellini 1973). Fellini also exerted a great deal of control in working with art directors and costume designers, such as Danilo Donati and Dante Ferretti.

Notwithstanding Fellini's assiduous production of character and location sketches, his films are seldom referenced in his largest organized collection of drawings, *Il libro dei sogni*. First published in a luxury hardcover 1:1 edition by Rizzoli in 2007 and since reprinted in smaller versions,

both in English (2008) and in Italian paperback (2016), *Il libro dei sogni* is a facsimile collection of almost 400 handwritten and hand-drawn pages, originally distributed in two large ledgers, repurposed by the director himself. The first one, of about 245 pages, covers the period from November 1960 to August 1968; the second one goes from February 1973 to 1982. They are collected along with several single pages and a few notes from 1990, though as noted above, some pages are missing and the whereabouts unknown—given away to friends or magazines. Two are part of the Fellini archive in Sion and have been published in Marti 2015, 22, 24–25.

Il libro dei sogni is an illustrated diary of Fellini's oneiric activity, after a suggestion from the foremost Jungian therapist in Italy, Ernst Bernhard, whom the director saw from 1960 until the psychologist's death on 25 June 1965. Fellini avoided interpretation of his own dreams, although he invented a professor who provided mock interpretations of dreams he published in *Il Grifo* in 1991. He did however venture his own opinions on those that seemed to carry especially strong emotion, as in the often-quoted dream of 12 November 1961 (Fellini 2007/2008/2016, 461–462) about an inquisitive Eastern stranger at an airport (see Figure 27.1 and discussion of that image in the essay by Greene in this volume). In the director's opinion, this figure was a symbol for a haunting and elusive film idea (Fellini 1980/2015, 66–68). Though Fellini did not believe in intellectual or ideological certainties (perhaps the reason for his reluctance to interpret) and preferred "a magical form of knowledge, a religious participation in the mystery of the universe" (Cattaneo, Bajetta, and Stroud 2003, 27), he respected Bernhard greatly as mentor and guide. When he drew him, it was always in a composed and noncaricatural way (Fellini 2007/2008/2016, 171), reflecting his personal relationship to the psychoanalyst. More generally, he maintained a playfully skeptical attitude toward psychology. He did not shy away from caricaturing the face of Jacques Lacan with a naked woman sitting on his head, the thick eyebrows of the psychologist coinciding with the woman's pubic hair. The speech bubble says: "Do not disturb me, I have to think!" (Marti 2013, 24). The woman's profile recalls that of drawings of Anna Giovannini by Fellini. Giovannini revealed in 1995 that she had been the director's secret lover since 1957, nicknamed "La Paciocca" ("the chubby one"). She remained unknown even to Fellini's closest friends but appeared often in *Il libro dei sogni* (Figure 8.2).

Fellini remained dedicated to his dream practice for decades. Moreover, the pages of *Il libro dei sogni* never look like a hasty record of memories by someone who has just woken up; Fellini clearly devoted great effort to writing down his dreams and illustrating them. The quality of the drawings increases with the years, peaking between the 1970s and 1980s. In fact, in the first ledger, Fellini mostly used felt-tip pens to outline the figures, which, accordingly, looked bold, but also chunky and scarcely detailed. The thinner lines of ballpoint pens were employed to create hints of shading and to trace preparatory drawings. The colored areas were mostly filled by soft hues provided by crayons. In the second ledger, instead, ballpoint pens became the preferred tool for contours, with a boost in clarity and design intricacy. Colored felt-tip pens largely substituted for crayons, so the color palette became aggressively vivid.

The drawings are unevenly distributed through the pages, which are sometimes filled with handwritten text only. The images are sometimes small and feel like illustrations to the written content; in other instances, the drawing takes almost a full page and the text is reduced to a mere caption, or to a couple of lines in a speech bubble. Nonetheless, there are no pages without text.

Psychoanalytical analysis of *Il libro dei sogni*, along Jungian lines, has been attempted (Gaillard and Ravasi Bellocchio 2009; Cavaglion 2011), but such analysis is not within the scope of this chapter. It is also important to note that *Il libro dei sogni* includes not only accounts of dreams, but elements from the *I Ching*, a divination practice Fellini learnt from Bernhard. Fellini probably considered dreams to be esoteric and prophetic—not solely reflective of the subconscious—hence interesting more for their enigmatic character than their psychoanalytic

Figure 8.2 First dream on page: a drawing of Anna Giovannini, "La Paciocca" from *Il libro dei sogni* (Fellini 2007/2008, 305). Federico Fellini. Cineteca Comunale di Rimini, Archivio Federico Fellini. @Comune di Rimini and Francesca Fabbri Fellini. Digital rights, © Guaraldi Srl. The original manuscript is preserved at the Museo della Città del Comune di Rimini.

interpretability. Nonetheless, the dreams are haunted by Fellini's inner worries and obsessions; there is a scarcity of positive visions, though occasional relief is provided by real-life people seen in embarrassing or grotesque predicaments. As in Fellini's art as a whole, characters dominate the show: *Il libro dei sogni* presents the vast anthology of people and creatures that populate the director's imagination.

Women have overwhelming and at times even aggressive centrality. The so-called "Fellinian woman" is explored in detail by means of caricatural exaggeration and exhibition, and often through nude features of people present in the director's life, such as Anna Giovannini; Norma Giacchero ("Normicchia"), a script supervisor; and actresses, such as Sandra Milo ("Sandrocchia"), Anita Ekberg ("Anitona"), and Sophia Loren. In some cases, caricature transcends itself and gives birth to plainly impossible bodies, as wide as a street (Fellini 2007/2008/2016, 130) or as high as the sky (293). These are manifestations of the giantess, a recurring visual figure in Fellini's art. It seems no coincidence that, while *Il libro dei sogni* contains few explicit references to Fellini's films, two are from "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio" (457), featuring Anita Ekberg as a giantess. Sylvester Wojtkowski (2017, 18–20) has argued that such obsessive recurrence of enormous women had its inception in a recurring dream Fellini had for the first time when he was 14: he started to drown, and then was saved by a naked sea giantess, who carried him to the surface squeezed between her enormous breasts. Sometimes, in the dream, Fellini (who did not know how to swim) went to the beach with his mother, who warned him against the sea woman. However, Fellini was able to drive away his mother and call the giantess by clapping his hands. Such imagery, apart from its sexual and psychoanalytical implications, is connected with a rich iconographic heritage. It resonates with suggestions of the Upper Paleolithic Venus figurines, symbols of fertility and with ritual exaltation of female sexual attributes. It is also evocative of the Sphynx (Fellini draws her in *Il libro dei sogni*, 354), of the myth of Aphrodite Anadyomene emerging from the sea, and more generally of the archetype of the Great Mother that recurred in many Mediterranean cultures, from Egypt to ancient Rome and acquired relevance in psychological studies based on Jung's theories (see Neumann 1991). These archetypes would have been known to Fellini not just because of his Jungian interests, but because they were part of the education of twentieth-century Italian children in the visual heritage of past civilizations.

While the Fellinian woman in *Il libro dei sogni* reveals its mythical and even monstrous nature, she also originates in real women. It is rare to find a diary entry in which the giantess is not a transfiguration of an actual lover, actress, collaborator, or public figure. At first glance, it seems that Fellini selected from everyday experience (consciously or not) the female types that would be most satisfying to play with in his caricatural exaggerations. However, given Fellini's attitude toward reality and his relentless search for real-life manifestations of his inner fantasies, it could be argued that such women are featured in *Il libro dei sogni* not because they seemed fit for caricature, but more likely because they resembled the giantess of his imagination. So, the drawings of Fellinian women started off as archetypical fantasy; they were then discovered in the attributes of actual women; and finally, ontologically confirmed, they became reincarnated in the visible fantasies of caricatural drawing. It could be said that the final drawings are the "real" Fellinian women, while the real-world women are just a stage in their elaboration. If this assumption is plausible, then, in Jungian terms, the status of those real women would be that of symbols: "The best possible figure by which allusion may be made to something relatively unknown" (Jung quoted in Campbell 2002, 99). The Fellini woman is thus, in the end, both "realized" and, at the same time, unattainable. Perhaps it is this unattainability that addicts Fellini, making him attempt endlessly in incarnate her only to recognize on some level that the lady keeps on vanishing.

When traces of the Fellinian woman appeared in Giulietta Masina's caricatures as part of Fellini's recording of a dream, the director usually felt the urge to comment on (or in effect

qualify) this anomaly in the text "[she] is more rounded, more teasing, more feminine [than the actual Giulietta]" (160) (see also his distressed comments related to the appearance of a "pornographic" Gelsomina, 347). He seems uncomfortable with the "corruption" of Giulietta as both figure and symbol. Otherwise, the appearance of Masina retains the "infantile" style of Fellini's early cartoons.

Il libro dei sogni invites an additional speculation around the figure of Masina: a Disney influence. Fellini expressed great respect for Walt Disney and his achievements. When he went to the United States to receive the Academy Award for *La strada* in 1957, Disney accompanied him and Masina on a guided tour of Disneyland, filled with especially staged adventures with fake crocodiles, cowboys, and Indians (Mollica 2000, 126). Fellini honored this memory with a drawing in which Disney, in a band leader costume, marches ahead of Masina-Gelsomina and Fellini himself (see cover of Mollica 2000) (Figure 8.3). Fellini also greeted with enthusiasm and gratitude the creation of Italian Disney comics inspired by his works (Mollica 2000, 90). The connection between Disney and Giulietta's appearance is revealed in a dream recorded on 12 August 1961 (66–67). While visiting Giulietta's aunt Giulia, Fellini hears some friends commenting on a recent purchase: a baby owl. Fellini finds the animal behind a glass window, and he is captivated by the animal, that "rolls his big round eyes, making funny and pathetic faces, like a Walt Disney character!" He adds, "The little bird resembles Giulietta a bit, doesn't it?"

In one of the pages removed from the ledgers (but part of the facsimile *Il libro dei sogni*, 437),[5] Fellini drew Masina as a fairy dressed in blue, whose magic wand ends with a star that radiates a circular halo of light, just like the wand of the Blue Fairy in Disney's *Pinocchio* (Hamilton Luske et al., 1940). The text reads: "Bernhard says to me 'Draw your wife' and I do the usual fairy." Fellini's stylization of Giulietta somewhat along Disney lines would have

Figure 8.3 Fellini's sketch of Disney, "Gelsomina," and himself. Federico Fellini. The Vincenzo Mollica Collection. © Estate of Federico Fellini/SOCAN (2019).

contributed to the "childish appeal" Giulietta often exudes in Fellini's designs and in her characterizations as Gelsomina and Cabiria.

One of the recurring components of *Il libro dei sogni* is self-portrait. Fellini's self-portraits do not adhere to a consistent design. In the first ledger, as Fellini explicitly announces (20), the character is anachronistically presented as thin and with a head full of hair, as if in his 30s. It is an ideal Fellini, which is preferably seen from behind, hiding his face from the reader. In the rare instances in which his face appears (107, 170, 203), it is sketchy, with few recognizable features except one: the eyebrows. Considering how important that facial feature was to Fellini when directing his actors, it makes sense that he decided to center his own character design on that simple yet effective element. In the second ledger, Fellini abandons his youthful persona and embraces a more realistic self-caricature, quite pitiless about the crudest details of aging. However, the design remains protean, as it is in the many self-portraits Fellini drew for his friends, where he continuously experiments with his appearance, even to the point of turning himself into a muscular and ominous naked woman (Marti 2015, 23). In a virtually unrecognizable self-caricature and one of the most abstract drawings Fellini produced, made with thick felt-tip pens of dramatically contrasting colors (Cattaneo, Bajetta, and Stroud 2003, 71), the eyebrows, though turned into decorative patterns, retain their unmistakable frown. Hence, we know it is Fellini (Figure 8.4). Such drawings, some of which are also in Sion, apparently derived from the automatic habit of scribbling geometric shapes while at the phone.

Fellini is the most relevant male protagonist of *Il libro dei sogni*, but the parade of male caricatures that accompanies him in his colorful oneiric visions is by no means negligible. The huge variety of deformations and exaggerated traits eludes any attempt at precise classification: each character, be it Marcello Mastroianni, Pope Paul VI, Aldo Fabrizi, or Luchino Visconti, is interpreted in many slightly different ways, according to the meaning and feelings of the dream.

Figure 8.4 Even in the most imaginative self-caricatures, such as this one, Fellini keeps his frowning eyebrows. Federico Fellini. Galerie Daniel Keel Collection. © Estate of Federico Fellini/SOCAN (2019).

The male characters never get as imposing and menacing as the women; also, their sexual traits are not regularly exhibited, though sometimes Fellini liked to indulge in goliardic enlargements of the male member. However, that was something he mostly did in drawings intended for friends[6]—and by pasting drawn male members on photographs, as in several pictures preserved in Sion. The repeated representation of Fellini as a caricature or narrating voice insures a strong male presence throughout, and the male gaze (inevitably) dominates the dream records. The uncanny theme of the double appears in different drawings and narratives. Apart from self-caricatures, Fellini recognizes himself within other characters, such as Giulietta (288) or unnamed male figures (290 and 376). Also, the idea of the double is hinted at by the return of paired objects of shapes: one of the first images of *Il libro dei sogni* shows two locomotives side by side (21; see also the two trams at 117). Pairings of circular patterns often recur in the book, but also in the drawings done while on the phone, present in the unpublished collections in Sion. They could be interpreted as references to his favorite sexual imagery—female breasts—but also as an abstraction of the profile of a film camera, with its two reels. Perhaps one could infer testicles, but certainly the organs that signify Fellini's gaze and profession: the eyes. Apropos of the last, in a few cases, *Il libro dei sogni* presents broken glasses (397), ophthalmic illnesses (115), and excisions of Fellini's eyes (149 and 449). These could betray fear and/or guilt about the sense of sight and its role in relating him to external and internal realities and the movies he made from both.

Fellini During and After Fellini

Fellini's drawings from his second stylistic phase, after his years as a magazine cartoonist, were revealed to the public in the 1970s. At the beginning of that decade, a collected edition of the graphic production for *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969) was published by Milano Libri (Betti 1970). Two similar volumes were later dedicated to *Amarcord* (Del Buono and Betti 1974) and *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (Angelucci and Betti 1977). In 1973, Fellini illustrated a novel by Alberto Perrini, *Analasunga* (1973). It was however in the 1980s that Fellini's graphic production received strong public recognition, thanks to several exhibitions and their related catalogs (such as Cabutti 1988). This trend continued in the early 1990s and became decidedly stronger after Fellini's death. At that point, many artists had already started to use Fellini's drawings as inspiration for homages or new works.

Milo Manara's friendship and creative partnership with Fellini started because of an homage: the 1983 4-page comic *Senza titolo* ("without title," Meo, Mattioli, and Bisi 2006, 88–91). Mollica invited Manara, a comic artist whose international reputation is based especially on his erotic production, to draw a short story in celebration of Fellini's birthday for an exhibition in Rome. Manara did some research about Fellini's drawings and dreams, reading Pier Marco De Santi's *I disegni di Fellini* (1982/2004) and Fellini's *Fare un film* (1980/2015). He did not try to imitate Fellini's style, except for a caricature of Nino Rota that appears, in the story, on the composer's grave (Meo, Mattioli, and Bisi 2006, 90). The rest of the comic is faithful to Manara's detailed and realistic manner, a synthesis between the *ligne claire* of Hergé (Georges Prosper Remi) and Moebius's intricacies. The plot consists of a narrative loop, starting and ending with Mastroianni (as a double of Fellini) shouting to the sea giantess, just before being dragged by Vernacchio from *Fellini - Satyricon* through an evocation of several film scenes, culminating in the visualization of Fellini's recurring dream about the man at the airport. The presence of the loop is signaled by the final tag "senza fine" ("never ending"); Fellini appreciated this detail that, by chance, was perfectly consistent with his own habit of not using the word *fine* to conclude a film. So, he invited

Manara to Cinecittà during the shooting of *Ginger e Fred* (Malara 2015, np). Fellini's respect for Manara's art led him to ask Manara to create the posters for *Intervista* and *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990), continuing a tradition of finely designed affiches, including that for *Amarcord* by Giuliano Geleng (son of Rinaldo). Even more important, with Fellini's collaboration, Manara adapted the unrealized "*Viaggio a Tulum*" and "*Il viaggio di G. Mastorna*" as comics or, as we might call them now, graphic novels (though the latter ended up only as an initial chapter). The first was based on a journey to Mexico Fellini made in 1985, inspired by the Peruvian anthropologist and mystic Carlos Castaneda. Mysterious events, including the disappearance of Castaneda and a hallucinatory ritual, derail the original travel plan, as the group reaches the pyramid of Chichén Itzá and the dead city of Tulun.[7] Fellini abandoned the idea of making a film out of his cryptic adventure after writing a short treatment of it with Tullio Pinelli, for the newspaper *Corriere della Sera* (Fellini and Pinelli 1986). Manara decided to ask Fellini for permission to turn the treatment into a comic, after a suggestion by Mollica. Fellini agreed, but after seeing the first panels, he decided to alter the story by sketching a storyboard and discarding some of the work Manara had already done (Tripodi and Dalla Gassa 2010, 189). The final product, which debuted in the magazine *Corto Maltese* year 7 no. 7, July 1989 (Fellini and Manara 1989/1990/2015), is different from the *Corriere della Sera* treatment, but is meticulously tailored to Fellini's intentions, except for the introductory sequence. In the comic, Mastroianni/Snaporàz takes the role of Fellini, and Mollica joins the company. Castaneda is not mentioned, apparently because of some anonymous phone calls that warned Fellini against doing so (Kezich 2010, 351).

The fact that Fellini consented to the comic adaptation of "*Il viaggio di G. Mastorna*" confirms his appreciation for Manara. "Mastorna" was the most obsessing film project Fellini ever conceived. It was loosely inspired by a short novel by Dino Buzzati, *Lo strano viaggio di Domenico Molo* ("Domenico Molo's strange journey," 1938; reprinted in 1942 and 1984 with the title *Il sacrilegio*, "The sacrilege"), and elaborated together with Buzzati in 1965.[8] The film was to be produced by Dino De Laurentiis, in his production facility known as Dinocittà, and it was to present the surreal journey in the afterworld of cello player G. Mastorna, who dies, without initially realizing it, in a plane crash. Because of several dreams and events Fellini interpreted as bad omens, he ultimately abandoned the project, even though a large set had already been built in Dinocittà. The film was to remain a fixation. Fellini commented that "*Mastorna*, like a sunken shipwreck, went on to nourish all my ensuing films" (Kezich 2010, 272).

In July 1992, the magazine *Il Grifo* published the first chapter of Mastorna's comic version by Manara and Fellini, titled *Il viaggio di G. Mastorna detto Fernet* ("The journey of G. Mastorna aka Fernet"—Fellini and Manara 1992/2001/2013). In Fellini's new conception of Mastorna, the character has the face of the comedian Paolo Villaggio, the main actor of *La voce della luna*. It is hinted that he is not just a musician, but also a clown; he has now also a stage name (Fernet). This is consistent with Fellini's view of Villaggio as an "ideal mask, the ultimate transformation of the clown" (Fellini in Kezich 2010: 376). The story, though, did not go beyond the first chapter. The word "end" was printed at the conclusion of the episode, and Ermanno Cavazzoni, author of *Il poema dei lunatici* ("the lunatics' poem," the source of *La voce della luna*), told Fellini he appreciated the open ending of the story. Influenced by this opinion, Fellini decided to conclude the fumetto there.

Again, Fellini created a storyboard for Manara. The comparison between Fellini's sketches and Manara's interpretation shows that only the layout of the scenes within the single panels was used as a reference. The rest, from the design of the characters to the overall graphic style, is an attempt by Manara to recreate the visual feeling of Fellini's films, not his drawings. There is, however, a difference between *Tulum* and *Mastorna*: the former relies on the hyperdetailed clarity of a black-and-white design, while the latter employs watercolors to create a suffused, dreamlike atmosphere of monochromatic nuances.

The most important design change Manara introduced concerned the female characters. While Fellini's storyboards sometimes posited massive and comedically grotesque women, Manara used his typical slender female type, with long legs and a youthful fit appearance. Such women are not caricatural, but sexualized ideals: they are *creature di sogno*, "dream creatures," as the title of a Manara–Fellini exhibition in Geneva said (Miriantini and Margueron 2003). Their model of femininity is akin to the new beauty standards that private broadcasting companies imposed on the Italian audience in the 1980s, through the massive presence of showgirls. Paradoxically, private TV and its indiscriminate use of commercials had been the target of Fellini's contempt in films such as *Ginger e Fred* as well as in active protest against commercial breaks during the airing of films (Fellini created a slogan for that, "Non si interrompe un'emozione"—"you don't interrupt an emotion"). Manara actually acknowledged this in a short comic called *Réclame* (1986), about a TV airing of *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* interrupted by commercials featuring a Manaran girl (Manara 2015b, np).

In both comics, Manara effectively removed the "Fellinian woman," making them feel more like sumptuous and respectful homages by Manara than new works by Fellini. In fact, artists and illustrators almost always preferred to do homages in their style, rather than imitate the director's graphic imprint. No doubt the specificity of Fellini's drawing did not blend well with others, tending to make imitations look like diminutions of the originals. The usual graphic homage to Fellini is thus a free drawing with a dedication, or, a rendering of a Fellinian character or situation in the style of the artist offering the homage. Examples of both kinds can be found in *Fellini sognato* (Mollica 2002), an anthology of homages by Italian and international artists from 1980 to 2002, including works by Charles M. Schulz, Bob Kane, Moebius, Manara, Ettore Scola, Bruno Bozzetto, Emanuele Luzzati, Jacovitti, Vittorio Giardino, Guido Crepax, and many others. In the same book, a three-page comic by Giorgio Cavazzano (69–71), celebrating Fellini's 1993 Honorary Academy Award, represents a series of homages created by comic artists working for the Italian division of Disney.

Cavazzano is the artist who contributed the most to this series. He first caricatured Fellini in a cameo appearance within the 1986 story, *Zio Paperone alla conquista del leone d'oro* (Cavazzano 1986, 33).[9] In 1991, Fellini, with Giulietta Masina, was drawn by Cavazzano in a more elaborate homage, written by Massimo Marconi after an idea by Mollica: *Topolino presenta "La Strada". Un omaggio a Federico Fellini* ("Mickey Mouse presents "La Strada": a homage to Federico Fellini"—Cavazzano and Marconi 1991, 37–72). The comic is a parody of the first half of Fellini's film, with Peg Leg Pete as Zampanò, Minnie Mouse as Gelsomina, and Mickey as *Il Matto*. The characters appear as they did in the 1930s, at the suggestion of Masina (Mollica 1999, 10). The story is set as a dream by Fellini, who falls asleep during his flight to Los Angeles to receive his Academy Award for *La strada*. The ending retells the meeting of Fellini, Masina, and Disney in Disneyland. Cavazzano again drew Fellini and Masina in a panel of the comic *Paperino Oscar del centenario* ("Donald Duck Oscar for the Centenary"—Cavazzano and Mollica 1995, 26). Cavazzano's caricature of Fellini is consistent with his synthetic and dynamic style, as well as with Disney graphic canons. He did not use the typical frowning and broken eyebrows of Fellini's self-caricatures, partly perhaps because such eyebrows, in a Disney context, would signify a malevolence. However, appropriately, he retained Masina's Disney-like wide eyes. Fellini enjoyed the 1991 story and made a drawing to thank the authors, which was published in the same *Topolino* issue (Mollica 2000, 88). Curiously, his caricature's eyebrows had a toned-down frown, as if to second Cavazzano's work. In an interview with Mollica, Fellini expressed his desire to see a Mickey-Mastroianni and a Minnie-Anita in a Disney remake of *La dolce vita* (Mollica 2000, 90). Cavazzano later made an illustration about *La dolce vita* featuring two different Disney characters, taller than Mickey and Minnie and more apt to act as

Mastroianni and Ekberg: Horace Horsecollar and Clarabelle Cow (Mollica 2000, 89). Fellini's wish was granted in 2012, with the comic *Topolino e il ritorno alla dolce vita* ("Mickey Mouse and the return to la dolce vita," *Topolino* no. 2935; see Mottura 2017, 31–61), written by Roberto Gagnor and Marco Ponti, with art by Paolo Mottura. Fellini appears at the end of the story in caricature (again, without frowning eyebrows), as a kind of ghost, announcing his next film, "The Journey of M. Mousetorna." The last appearance to date of a Fellini caricature in a Disney comic is a cameo from the story *Topolino e il peplum contrastato* ("Mickey Mouse and the hard-fought sword-and-sandal film"—Held and Gagnor 2018, 58). For the first time since the first Cavazzano caricature of 1986, Fellini has a dog nose, as do the standard supporting characters in Disney comics.

Fellinian homages sometimes get expressed in subtle ways. For example, the Italian comic author and publisher Igort (Igor Tuveri 1958) used the "Asa Nisi Masa" incantation from *8½* in a chapter of *Yuri*, a science fiction *manga*, a comic for the Japanese market (Igort 2003/2017).

There is only one major graphic homage that uses Fellini's drawing style: an animated short film by Russian director Andrei Iur'evich Khrzhanovskii, *Dolgoe puteshestvie* (*The Long Journey* 1997).[10] The script was by Tonino Guerra, who also cowrote *Amarcord*, *E la nave va*, and *Ginger e Fred*. In the animated film, Guerra voiced two caricatures: himself, and the lawyer from *Amarcord*. Khrzhanovskii is a specialist in using drawings by remarkable intellectuals as a foundation for his filmmaking. His contemporary fame in Western countries is mostly due to *Poltory komnaty, ili Sentimental'noe puteshestvie na rodinu* (*One and a Half Rooms, or A Sentimental Voyage Home* 2009) a live-action biopic about the poet Joseph Brodsky. In *Dolgoe puteshestvie*, there are animations of drawings of *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) by Sergei Eisenstein, illustrating the meeting of the battleship with the Rex transatlantic liner, which carries Fellini and his characters. Later, the Rex disembarks all the characters on a deserted island and leaves with only Federico and Giulietta on board, to start "a new journey to another totally distant island." *Dolgoe puteshestvie* meticulously uses Fellini's drawings from many different sources. Fellini's graphic line and coloring habits seem to come alive, through a mixed technique based on animated drawings and paper cutouts. The short was preceded, in 1994, by another work by Khrzhanovskii and Guerra, *Lev s sedoi borodoi* (*The Lion with the Silver Beard*).[11] In that case, Fellini was only a stylistic inspiration, together with a circus setting accompanied by Nino Rota's music from *8½*.

Conclusion: Never Ending Images

Animation could have been particularly congenial to Fellini, given his tendency to take the role of a "puppeteer" while directing. In Sion, there is actually a 20-page flipbook by Fellini: a colored felt-tip pen-sketched animation of a menacing naked woman seen from her left side, licking and then devouring a small male member. However, Fellini officially worked in animation only once, and the result of that effort is lost. To conclude this review of Fellini's graphic heritage, it could be appropriate to go back to Fellini's years as a cartoonist, and to the animated short *Hallo Jeep!*, produced between 1944 and 1945. There is no conclusive evidence about the extent of Fellini contributions, or about the completion of the film, which was directed by Luigi Giobbe and Niso Ramponi, aka Kremos (Scrimitore, Verger, and Fasano

2017, 14). Gianfranco Angelucci, film critic and cowriter of *Intervista*, holds that *Hallo Jeep!* was produced together with *Rome Open City*, in the same Rome building in Via Francesco Crispi, where the Nettunia Film company was located. He cites the testimony of Alvaro Zerboni that the film was about a 1942 Willys MB Jeep, humanized with eyes and a mouth, who fought a Stuka fighter bomber with the help of a Hermann tank, using its gun as a proboscis. The design of the Jeep is still visible in some surviving publicity materials (Scrimitore, Verger, and Fasano 2017, 15). Fellini's sketches were used as a sort of storyboard, but the short was basically a collection of unrelated gags. The production might have lasted three months. Zerboni said that it was completed in the USA, when Rod Geiger bought the rights to *Rome Open City*. It seems that Fellini did not lay claim to the film out of superstitious fear. He never even liked to speak about it because of several serious incidents that happened to the people who worked on it (Angelucci 2017). Angelucci implies that, decades later, the lost film became an uncredited reference for the *Cars* franchise by the Pixar Animation Studios. Though this remains unsubstantiated, the implication of disseminations and rearticulations captures beautifully the ways of Fellinian creation. Each graphic work was at the same time the final destination of an otherwise unfathomable thought or dream, and a starting point for something else. Actors and locations were searched, and then molded or built according to the dictates of the drawings; alternatively, film projects were discarded then returned to their origin as haunting dreams, ready to be translated into new works, even by other artists. Seeing Fellini's work in this way, as a dispersive and recursive process, is perhaps the best way to appreciate his eclectic graphic heritage, and the heritage of his total output as a visual and audiovisual artist.

Notes

1. The publication date is uncertain; it could have been published between 1942 and 1945 (Caruso and Casetti 1997, 138; Kezich 2010, 40–41).
2. Ente Italiano per le Audizioni Radiofoniche (Italian Radio Broadcasting Corporation), that later became the RAI—Radiotelevisione Italiana.
3. There were some early appearances of the character, as in Fellini's 1943 wedding invitation, that featured caricatures of bride and groom with no words, or in the 1945 drawing celebrating the birth of Fellini and Masina's son, Federichino (Maggiore 2011, 29). The couple is here caricatured as a hen and a rooster, while Federichino pops out of an egg. The style is still that of the *Marc'Aurelio* cartoons and Masina's face is very different from later representations.
4. The Fondation Fellini in Sion stores several pieces of art drawn on napkins from restaurants.
5. The drawing is probably from 1960, as the dream record that immediately follows is dated November 20, 1960.
6. See Angelucci 2018.
7. With an ending—"n"; Manara's comic spells the name with an ending—"m."
8. In 1969, Buzzati inserted a few "Mastorna" references in his graphic novel *Poema a fumetti*.
9. The character is named "Felini"; Disney comics often make puns out of the names of real people, or they merely change them; in this case, the name means "felines."
10. Available on the website of SHAR, an independent studio school for animators founded by Khrzhanovskii together with Fyodor Khitruk, Yuri Norstein, and Eduard Nazarov: http://sharstudio.com/en/catalog/the-long-journey-1997/.
11. http://sharstudio.com/en/catalog/lion-witn-a-grey-beard/ (accessed on 4 May 2018).

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Maurizio Nichetti

I met Fellini only once, but obviously, I found his "fantastic realism" contagious. Not so much in terms of what I have done or how I have done it, but rather for his way of visualizing characters that always seem to have been conceived in a sketch before being chosen through casting—for his way of being faithful to his memories rather than to the objective representation of reality. Fellini's is a cinema of which we have great need today, where there is no middle way among documentary, realistic fiction, and the most unrestrained fantasy creations (cartoons and superheroes), that make no reference to a real world. 'Fantastic realism' is rarely to be seen.

Personal correspondence with the editors, 2018

Maurizio Nichetti, actress Mariangela Melato, and Fellini, 1981. Courtesy of Maurizio Nichetti

9

In Bed with Fellini: Jung, Ernst Bernhard, Night Work, and *Il libro dei sogni*

Erika Suderburg

The whole dream work is essentially subjective, and a dream is a theater in which the dreamer is himself, the player, the prompter, the producer, the public and the critic. (Jung 1985, 266)

I thought I would begin the opening of this little film with a dream, the classic dream where one seems to fly … in this dream I found myself in a dark and troublesome environment, but one, which was at the same time also familiar. I was moving slowly; the darkness was profound, and my hands touched a wall that never ended. In other films, in dreams like this one, I freed myself by flying away, but now who knows, a little older, a little heavier, I lifted myself from the ground with great difficulty. Finally, I succeeded, and found myself freed at a great height, and the landscape I saw through pieces of clouds, down there on the ground, what was it? A university campus, a hospital, it looked like a penitentiary, an atomic bomb shelter. Finally, I recognized it, it was Cinecittà. (Fellini, *Intervista* 1987)

Bed cinema

As a little boy, Federico Fellini named the four corners of his bed for the four main cinemas in Rimini: Fulgor, Opera Nazionale Balilla, Savoia, and Sultano. As a child his access to this otherworld was infinite. As he grew older, he would continue these expeditions using multiple apparati including séances, LSD, and dream analysis. All these avenues emanated from that childhood bed and the possibilities hidden beneath the sheets: his childhood access to the hypnagogic—images abstracted into negatives, floating on the inside of eyelids—these deeply colored and flattened cinemas of presleep, beckoned. The hypnagogic is a form of protocinema, the body drifting into unconsciousness but tantalized, as if in the lobby of a dream, waiting for it to begin. These eyelid visions, flickering just before sleep, would later be recalled as something adults lose the ability to experience.

A galaxy of luminous points, spheres, extraordinarily bright circles, stars, flames, and colored glass, a nocturnal, shimmering cosmos that at first appeared immobile, then in movement ever more vast and encompassing, like a giant vortex, a dazzling whorl. (Fellini 2015, 137)

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke,
Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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Fellini mourns the departure of these visions in adolescence, lost to the emerging adult. Asserting that we needlessly throw up blockages to this vibrant source, Fellini recasts this fragile hypnagogic moment as a portal to filmmaking itself. He invokes these moments of protocinema as inclusive of all spectacles; the phantasmagoria and the magic lantern gathered within a dream, unspooling for the sleeper.

> *When I speak briefly of Jung, I feel as if I am inevitably failing to do justice to the depth of this experience and to its determining effect upon me. It was like the sight of unknown landscapes, like the discovery of a new way of looking at life, a chance of making use of its experiences in a braver and bigger way, of recovering all kinds of energies, all kinds of things, buried under the rubble of fears, lack of awareness, neglected wounds. What I admire most ardently in Jung is the fact that he found a meeting place between science and magic, between reason and fantasy. He has allowed us to go through life abandoning ourselves to the lure of mystery, with the comfort of knowing that it could be assimilated by reason.* (Fellini 1976, 147)

Plunging beneath consciousness, the dreamer grappled with unanswerable questions, with mystery—a mystery that Jung held to be dangerously absented and banished in modern consciousness—evoked like a hopeful incantation of what might be known through dream work, but could just as easily slip back, unremarked upon. Bed Cinema prepared Fellini to access Carl Jung's delineation of the vital potential of the unconscious. Our censorious waking self falls away, our boundaries refuse to hold fast; the trove of images is inexhaustible, if conscientiously mined, cultured, and tended to.

The act of dreaming for Jung courted the expansion of our ability to receive magic. Awaking, we tap into submerged or inactive energies. One can wake up fully to the visual, somatic, and emotional insights that surpass mundane narrative, neorealist drama, or documentary's pretense of truth. Jung proposed that a fusion happens while in the dream state that is integral to a human's well-being and creativity; linked forms, past and present, ground his theory of synchronic experiences and archetypal touchstones. For Fellini and Jung, synchronicity was a kind of alchemically charged, connective tissue that modern man discarded to his detriment out of fear and adherence to dogmas of church and state. Phantasmagoria and the hypnagogic fade, but that initial bed-centered topography permanently piqued Fellini's interest in modes of visual access not bound by the limits of designated "reality."

Fellini's metacinematic turn corresponds chronologically with his rediscovery of what the dream work could offer as he moved from *La dolce vita* (1960) to *8½* (1963). This period marked his abandonment of Freudian analysis for a lifelong tutorial on Jung. The Jungian analyst Ernst Bernhard guided this tutorial from 1960 until his death in 1965. Fellini did not enter into formal analysis but rather became a student of Jungian dream analysis under Bernhard's tutelage. Fellini analyzed his own dreams by writing them down but also, most importantly, by drawing them. Freud held that the purpose of the dream was to control the unthinkable, release and label subconscious thoughts, and then recount and dissect them according to specific narrative rules. The subject recounted the dream and relied on the analyst to put forth an interpretation. Jung, in contrast, held that the dream was an *urging into being*, part of individuation based on access to the unconscious. Via this access, which can never be stable, we cultivate the breadth of the unconscious, which contributes to the forming of a healthy psyche. This process lasts a lifetime as the human being gathers to itself the components of a healthy psyche, enabling it to live fully cognizant of what the unconscious offers—the full spectrum of self-knowledge. Jung and Freud's divorce hinged on multiple factors, but in Jung's later writings their disagreement on this issue is insurmountable. He must kill the father. For Jung, symbols and images in a dream were healing modalities, puzzle pieces, and glimmers of a transcendent nature.

For Freud, they were deceitful and codified interlopers that required a sanctified analyst to unravel, interpret, and offer curative absolution.

> *A film cannot be described in words. If I talk about it, it becomes a kind of materialization that has nothing to do with the film itself. If a film is born out of verbal images in those who are going to see it, then it will be born pre-constituted, outside its own nature. Besides I don't even know myself if it resembles what I wanted to do. I have now hidden it within me; I have made it a secret, a changeable, shifting thing. The first time it appears it is cloudy, vague and indistinct. Any contact one has with it is in the imagination: it is a nocturnal sort of contact. It may be, indeed it is, a friendly contact. At this point the film seems to have everything, it seems to be entirely it, whereas in fact it is nothing. It is a vision, a feeling*. (Fellini 1976, 159)

Fellini's origin stories are numerous: failed law student, successful cartoonist, neorealist screenwriter, vaudeville bit actor, studio technician extraordinaire, triumphant maestro, dream worker, lover, and skeptical Catholic. Already in the 1970s, Fellini could longingly articulate an origin story for cinema.

> *I should love to have been making films in 1920, to have been twenty years old at the time… When I started, the cinema was already an archaeological business, it already had a history, and there were already film schools… In its early days the cinema belonged to the fairground and I always feel a little like that about it still.* (Fellini 1996, 99)

Since then the communion taken in the collective cinema experience and the label *"cineaste"* have vanished and become archaic remnants. Reseeing Fellini's work *after cinema* presents an embarrassment of riches and a stark reminder of what has been lost.

For me, Fellini's images never went anywhere. To grow up *after* Fellini, *after cinema*, I cannot speak to, but I can speak to growing up with him. Fellini's images occupy a conscious and subconscious space rich with recall and longing, fraught with nostalgia and a reverie of rediscovery. As a filmmaker I can see him in many frames I make, in editing decisions and long held facial close ups and swish pans taking us off screen. Initially I thought that the best approach to writing about his work beside Jung was to begin keeping my own dream notebook and to locate the territory Fellini occupies in my own image bank. Which visual modes were his, which were mine, which were unidentifiable, which clearly beholden? As my own notebook became another project entirely, it became clear that Fellini's notebook carried within it such depth that I had best stick to his generous archive. Rewatching films that I had grown up with and that had formed me over 50 years ago made plain which images continued to haunt.

My first was *La dolce vita,* screened outdoors in the Roman Forum on a slightly wobbly screen in July of 1968. I grew up without television, was raised on movies, and, in this period, lived in a small farming village in Switzerland. My family saved some money and periodically drove to Rome in a borrowed Fiat 500L, which predictably broke down more often than it ran. Three image memories from this period continue to haunt: the Apollo 11 moon landing on a 10" TV in a smoky bar in Rome in 1969, going down to the village pub next to the slaughterhouse to watch the unfoldings of Mai 68, and Fellini at the Forum.

I am the daughter of a composer and a singer who moved constantly to find work. Work as avant-garde musicians was often in Europe. My father was an ancient Rome fanatic to his very core. He was such a fan that taking a kid to see *La dolce vita* outside at midnight did not faze him in the slightest. He clearly thought that a 10-year-old had the ability simultaneously to soak in antique Roman glory and its debauched cinematic present. On a characteristically hot Roman evening, surrounded by myriad cats that happily distracted me for half the film, poured into a

sticky wire chair, I watched and slept and watched and slept some more and was woken up just in time to catch the Trevi fountain scene, since we had been at the Trevi just the day before.

I continued to travel to Rome and it has entered my dreams, just as it has entered the dreams of many others. The Fiat 500L almost got the entire family killed numerous times and led to a dangerous encounter when my father slammed the car to a full stop in the middle of a Roman roundabout to confront a driver who had cut us off. My dad screamed at the man in Latin, which caused the confused object of his ire to shrug his shoulders in bewilderment and drive off. Our Rome is always black and white, magnificent in decrepitude and heat, full of cats, hot stones, exhausted gelato, and late dinners of grilled *spigola*. Fellini entered my consciousness through these avenues and has never left. Being born to two cinephile parents, who grew up in the art-house hothouse of the early 1960s, had its advantages. I cannot say I saw *La dolce vita* at the tender age of ten, but I can say I absorbed it from inside a humid dream. I know this because I can draw pictures of Fellini's frames in much the same way I can now draw every room I ever lived in since I was five. He occupies the inner core of my image data bank.

Fellini has often been recorded declaring variants of "filming is dreaming" (Kezich 2008, 15). Jung posits that the dream conjures itself spontaneously and is not dependent on will or reason. Dreams have a decisive purpose in developing harmony and individual personality and also serve a compensatory function in the human psyche, uniting us with everything that has come before. Symbols within dreams are a form of shape-shifting transcendence, inaccessible while awake but ignored to our detriment. Dreams have power as transformative journeys best magnified by a recall process but not solely by the free association favored by Freudians. For Jung, dreams had no precise set of keys, and he approached each dream as new territory. Jung (1985, 266, par. 509) repeatedly quoted from the Talmud, "the dream is its own interpretation." Jung's divorce from Freud was informed by his distaste for, and theoretical divergence from, Freud's strict codex of dream images and interpretative straightjackets. In "Approaching the Unconscious," the opening essay of *Man and His Symbols* (1964), his guidebook for nontechnicians (or the lay public), Jung proposes that Freudians have led us down a limited, Eurocentric and Judeo-Christian encumbered path, and we had best abandon it unless we want to lose our souls, our connection to nature, and our ability to tap into physic connectors. For Jung, dreams serve the self as it comes to realize its kinship with myriad cross-cultural backstories.

Fellini's *Il libro dei sogni* is populated by a large cast of fellow travelers with complicated backstories, a family of choice. Some dreams are compensatory and work out strained relationships, as in Fellini's dream of 1 January 1962.

> *I am in bed with Pasolini in the little room in Rimini where I studied as a young boy (thirty years ago). We slept together all night long like two little brothers, or perhaps as husband and wife because now that he's getting up wearing a T-shirt and underpants, heading for the bathroom, I realize that I am looking at him with strong feelings of tender affection*. (Fellini 2008, 36, 474).

After collaborating with Fellini on the dialogue/dialect used in *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1956), Pasolini as Marxist wrote critically about Fellini's later films, chastising him for his inability to deploy Marxist dialectic instead of celebrating the individual. Pasolini will appear in Fellini's dreams multiple times to challenge Fellini's negative views on homosexuality and his lack of class-consciousness, intruding from time to time in Fellini's dreams with "his boys." Fellini's conflicted attitude toward homosexuality is mitigated by the incorporation of Pasolini as potential lover in his dreamscapes. Pasolini also appears in the dreams as a trusted accomplice in nurturing the new, postneorealist Italian cinema. But Giulietta Masina is the primary reoccurring cast member. The dream is often so real that the waking Fellini is deeply disconcerted.

> *20 January 1961. Giulietta is lying on a little mattress spread on the floor, she is like an innocent-looking little saint ready to join her God creator and in my assurances, my lame lies, Giulietta weakly points to the white sheets of her bed and the throat band wrapped around her neck, giving her the semblance of an ancient chaste medieval princess who is part white nun and part fairy princess. "It's all too beautiful, too luxurious for this affair to end," she whispers, then she points out some typewritten papers lying here and there on the floor to me. I seem to understand that these papers are extremely important for me; if I could learn what's written there by heart everything would turn out better. But what are they? I embraced Giulietta, crying, I kissed her calling her name, asking her for her forgiveness for the bad things I'd done to her, for not having understood what an irreplaceable treasure she was for me, and now she was going forever. I remained alone, I'd always known this terrible day would arrive. Giulietta, dear Giulietta don't die, don't leave me. Note: writing these last lines I cannot hold back the tears.* (Fellini 2008, 30–31, 472–473) (Figure 9.1)

Fellini repeatedly dreams of Giulietta dying beside him in bed and wakes up to make sure she is breathing. The barrier between dream and reality is tissue thin.

Night Work

Proximate topography informs the assignment Fellini gave himself under the tutelage of Bernhard, a Jungian analyst who lived around the corner from Fellini's Rome apartment. Bernhard impressed upon Fellini the need to "not waste the night work." Jung saw the dream's purpose as serving individuation by making available to the dreamer priceless information that shapes the healthy psyche. The goal was a completeness, a being at home in the world with the knowledge that we are part of a continuum that communicates to us through dreams. Fevers, precognition, alchemical processes, religious ritual, artmaking, sex, and shamanistic powers can serve as avenues also, but the subject needs to know how and where to begin the search. The Jungian analyst can serve as the guide to these stores of knowledge.

Bernhard appears frequently in Fellini's dreams alongside prophets, fathers, sisters, demons, lovers, and brothers. He encourages Fellini to begin keeping the dream notebook and emphasizes the dual responsibility of analyst and subject. Bernhard was beside, not above, Fellini in this journey and was never representative of the punitive law of the father, which resided for Fellini in Church, State, film producers (finance), and Fascism. The relationship enabled Fellini to expand the dream work and interrogate the shadow side, which was represented often in his dreams by film producers, contracts, and film critics. The vexation of contractual commitments frequently penetrated his dreams.

> *8 October 1974. All I remember is leaving my work for a moment in order to ask Giulietta, who was at the top of a tree together with Groucho Marx, if she had signed her film contract (the one in which Groucho was her partner), and when it was supposed to begin.* (Fellini 2008, 280, 521)

Bernhard played the part of benevolent father alongside Roberto Rossellini and Pablo Picasso. This father asked questions, proffered solutions, and opened doors. He ran counter to a punitive God, Freudian cures, and Fascist dictators. Though LSD, the occult, and other liberatory aids were used by Fellini on his path through life, dream work was more important. It honored his impulse to access a spectrum of experiences and find ways of mining them for creative purposes.

Figure 9.1 Fellini dreams of Giulietta dying. *Il libro dei sogni*, 31. Cineteca Comunale di Rimini, Archivio Federico Fellini. @Comune di Rimini and Francesca Fabbri Fellini. Digital rights, © Guaraldi Srl. The original manuscript is preserved at the Museo della Città del Comune di Rimini.

Loss of sleep, and therefore loss of dreaming, threw Fellini into a desperate state. *Il libro dei sogni* records these desert days as well as the fundamental importance of the dream work to Fellini as director. When he is left sleepless, without images, either hypnagogic or within the dreamscape, he feels abandoned and destitute.

> *Today is November 23, 1981. My work situation has been motionless for two years. No project (loved or unloved) has managed to move towards realization. A vegetable. I don't do a thing. Seven hundred days have passed, each identical to the other*. (Fellini 2008, 394, 548–549)

In this entry, he goes on to ask the *I Ching* if it has abandoned him because he asks too many questions. Dreaming's return is Fellini's reinstatement to a state of grace.

> *7 December 1981. A few nights ago I was struck by a powerful current of vibration. I immediately felt myself being transported way up in the air, and finally (after a very long time), I saw the night sky. I was dizzyingly high up, but free, plunged into luminous nocturnal air. AH! FINALLY THE SKY AGAIN!* (Fellini 2008, 396, 549) (Figure 9.2)

Age, insomnia, and illness let him down as we roam through these 580 pages. He identifies childhood as a time of great receptivity and his aging as a waning of the power to join the energy stream that Jungian theory taps. He does not want dreams dryly interpreted and revels in the parts of each dream that cannot be solved, the layers mired in sea fog. The mystery is fertile, the naming lethal. Dreamtime is as important to Fellini as are oxygen, women, and the cinema. His life would be desolate, uninspired, and stagnant without these life forces. He would cease to exist without them.

The night work for Fellini was a dance with a seductive but aloof beloved about whom much remained forever a mystery. Everything that populates the night work—images, sound, figure, color, smell, and taste—had an independent existence not created solely by the dreamer. The primacy of images is central to *ll libro dei sogni* as a sketchbook that delves into buried connective tissue, unwrapping emotions, and bringing to light messages to the woke. Night work infiltrates the film work. Fellini's films pose conundrums about the awakened life and conjoin with Jung's quest.

> *For decades I always turned to the anima when I felt that my emotional behavior was disturbed, and that something had been constellated in the unconscious. I would ask the anima: "now what are you up to? What do you see? I should like to know." After some resistance she regularly produced an image. As soon as the image was there, the unrest or the sense of oppression vanished. The whole energy of these emotions was transformed into interest in and curiosity about the image. I would speak with the anima about the images she communicated to me, for I had to try to understand them as best I could, just like a dream.* (Jung and Jaffé 1961, 187–188)

The Book

The original version of *Il libro dei sogni* is a white, canvas-covered single volume that reproduces in facsimile size Volume 1 (1960–1968), Volume 2 (1973–1990), various loose pages, and pages given away as gifts. The white canvas cover absorbs a patina of use, as it is literally a blank canvas. My library loaner has lipstick, chocolate, possibly blood, and black scratch marks on the face and on the back. All its edges are frayed slightly grey by being held in tight proximity to a black volume. It looks as if it has never been checked out but used to press wildflowers or hold a door open. It weighs about eight pounds, is 25.9 × 6.2 × 33.9 cm, similar in proportion to the sketchbook in which I am writing this. It is also a rare object, having gone almost immediately out of print, published by a foundation that no longer exists. You may purchase the volume for between $700 and $8505 as of this printing. (New editions are projected for publication in conjunction with the centenary of Fellini's birth). *Il libro dei signi* was brought into the world with multiple Fellini–Masina estate caveats, one of which was that it could not exit its vault until each and every Fellini–Masina heir was present together to lift up the safe box lid. The book was never secret, but it was private except for gift pages, represented by voids with scotch tape edges in the printed version. The volume doesn't really rest comfortably as coffee table decoration; it is too sincere and worked over, a diligent record of the storehouse of the unconscious.

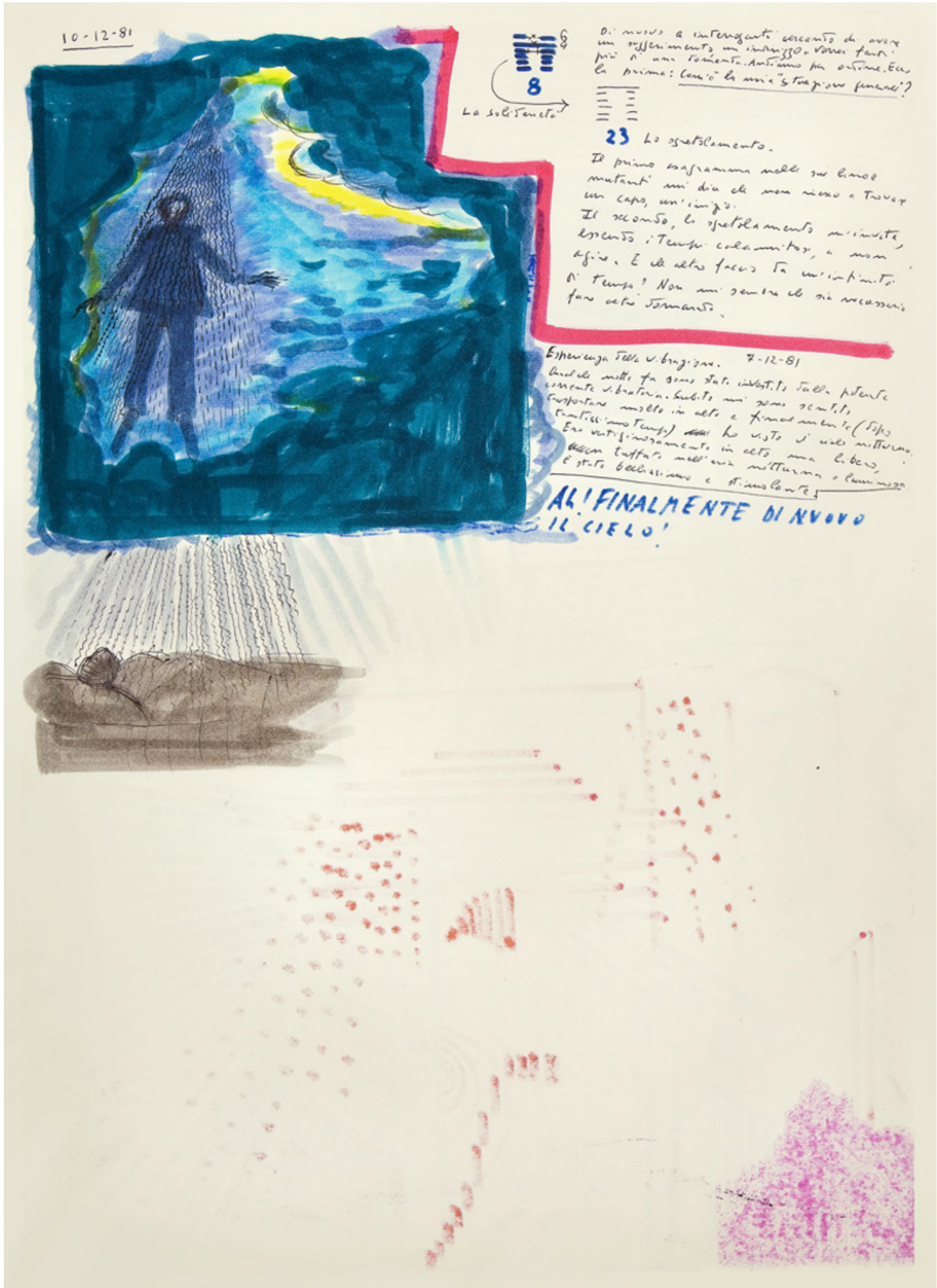

Figure 9.2 First entry: Fellini's dream of vibrations, air, and the sky. *Il libro dei sogni*, 396. Cineteca Comunale di Rimini, Archivio Federico Fellini. @Comune di Rimini and Francesca Fabbri Fellini. Digital rights, © Guaraldi Srl. The original manuscript is preserved at the Museo della Città del Comune di Rimini.

Fellini's commitment to Bernhard set up a rigorous project, essentially image-anchored, with written notes that sometimes overpower the pictures but mostly settle at the bottom of the page as extended subtitles. *Il libro dei sogni* also contains *I Ching* sequences and séance reports and details the agonies of not being able to dream. Film as literary adaptation is bound to lie, pictures less so. Casanova's memoirs (written between 1780 and 1792, and published posthumously in 1822) sickened Fellini, and his developing hatred for the character/author almost crashed the film. *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969) bypassed the reign of text because Petronius exists only in fragments, and Fellini could essentially improvise in the gaps and often riff on textual linearity.

Fellini deployed myriad extralinear narrative techniques including nondiegetic sound, post-sync dubbing, anachronistic rents in period scenography, foregrounding of the cinematic apparatus, and a continual rewriting of the script during shooting. All of this fed his metacinema, connected as it was not to autobiography but to a deeper kind of imagistic understanding. Sensual image experiences link each of the films and each journal page across time and space, and are shared with audiences who find affinity in and through them. The postshoot dubbing practices are an uncoupling from the text that destabilizes the realist aspirations of synchronicity and leaves language adrift, behind or ahead but never "correct." Linear narrative for Fellini is limiting in much the same way that Freudian dream analysis was for Jung, dependent as it is on an interpretive finality or solution. This type of traditional conclusive narrative dooms interpretation to a mimicry of the analyst's creed, not the subject's invention. Jung offers Fellini a space beyond, behind, and underneath expository language. Text is eaten up by the lack of a "true" picture/mouth link. Text in *Il libro dei sogni* is so secondary to picture because it fails to make room for multiple points of intersection in a time and space continuum. This modded-out, discontinuous hyper realism is the purview of a dreamscape, which is never beholden to a text traversing from point A to point B in search of a conclusion.

Text as explicative interpretation or narration also fell flat for Jung who devised a dedicated morning mandala painting practice between 1913 and 1923 that became the illuminated manuscript, "The Red Book." It remained unpublished during his lifetime, but Jung deemed it his single most important work. Any text contained within is meticulously embroidered with illustrative annotations dense with typography. Image and text are running in and out of each other and cannot be extracted from one another. The available published version (Jung 2009) reprints only text and by doing so destroys the radicality of its intertwined form. The original is a massive twentieth-century mash-up of fourteenth-century illuminated manuscripts where image is of primary importance, illustrations push notes to the margins, and Jung first outlines his theory of the essential and universal nature of the archetype. Somewhere in a rare book vitrine, *Il libro dei sogni* and the original Red Book lie side-by-side whispering to each other inaudibly and pushing paint pots of gold leaf and sharpies between them.

Drawing

The appropriate form of my text here would be for it to have been completely hand drawn. Drawing for Fellini is an allegiance to images as ideas.

> *... drawing, designing, although coming from a very natural instinct, never has an aesthetic finality. It is only an instrument, a means, a link in the chain by which fancy and imagination are anchored in a cinematic result. And even when I make doodles and drawings which serve no apparent professional necessity—a caricature of*

> *a friend seated opposite me in a restaurant, the obsessive repetition of an anatomical detail while waiting on the telephone, or attitudes, expressions or indecipherable graphic illusions scrawled during boring discussions—as I was saying, in these cases as well it is a matter of exercise, a professional habit of immediately giving visual materialization to an emotion, a snatch of some passing image, or some too pressing fancy.* (Fellini 1976, 101)

In 1937, at 16, Fellini is already established as an ace caricaturist in his Rimini shop, called "Febo." His skill in drawing film stars gets him free admission to his beloved Fulgor Cinema, which posted his sketches in shop windows as advertising for upcoming films. When he moves to Rome shortly after, he, along with a compatriot nicknamed "Caporetto," opens a "Funny Face" shop drawing caricatures for American soldiers. He contributes to a wide range of comic magazines, proffering both jokes and cartoons, which in turn leads to his work as an adman, gagman, and radio script writer. His visual universe is marked by caricatures, thought balloons, cartoons (*fumetti*), and quickly written gags. For Fellini, ideas can be born complete in the image. *Il libro dei sogni* is drawn in black marker, ballpoint, and pencil, filled in with rages of color, zigzag edges, as if the characters could be contained only within boundaries that vibrated. Seas are deeply colored with complicated green and blue washes. Ships appear on horizons and block out the sun with gigantic black prows. Giulietta is envisioned as a miniature doll woman, lacking in the voluptuous exaggeration of scale with which other women are drawn, gigantic and welcoming. People resemble themselves but with exaggerated eyeglasses, drawn too tall or too short, their heads larger than their bodies, eyeballs popping. Fellini depicts himself as small and disheveled. Danger comes in the form of sea creatures, vaginae dentatae, and airplane crashes. Ecstasy is had in the arms of gigantic pink and red women with five-story-high vaginas, in massive soft beds, and in perpetual disembarkations from carnival-colored cavernous airships that look far too heavy to fly.

Drawing is all about color here, washes and smudges in palettes as carefully chosen as his cinema was—considered and vibrant with mark-making that never stays still. Fellini's drafting facility spills over into preparatory sketches for films, ideas on napkins, and sketches taken to the set. In a dream of 2 April 1978 (Fellini 2008, 356, 539), we find him busy drawing a life-sized grotto to paste up over an existing grotto wall, piece by piece, in an abandoned mine. In my fantasy, the drawn (and colored) image is his first recording impulse. Any story can be told with a single drawing. Perhaps, in the morning, the book might sit beside his bed with a glass filled with colored markers. The book goes to the studio, the book goes home to bed, and eventually the book exits its posthumous vault, wandering libraries in search of viewers. The book lives with us now as a sentient entity consulted for any number of nosey investigations. The book sits with us and won't stay closed. It lives with us for a while and then moves along. It is unclear how quickly after waking from a dream Fellini made his entries. The book suggests it was instantaneous, and I tend to believe it. It is possible that he reworked the initial drawing, conjuring new strata that uncovered new connective tangents. It is often unnecessary for non-Italian readers to refer to the translations at the end of the book, as each drawing is succinct in its representative world. The undressed soundstage, the empty Cinecittà studio, these are analogous to the blank slate of the sketchbooks. As a director Fellini repeatedly stated that everything had to be invented. Fellini rebuilt huge portions of Rome in the studio and found his truth in the fabricated, the drawn, and the projected, which could come closer to a representation of the shifting unconscious. Drawing was the most direct way to coax a dream onto film.

The *Coniunctio*

Jung discovered for himself pathways that could not be accessed except through making images. He understood mandalas to be archetypal portals that unlock a series of primary realizations about self and the cosmos. In Tibetan and Indian philosophy, mandalas are living architectures, flat "models" to be projected into three dimensions by the user who activates and occupies the expanded sacred spaces. Jung spent a good deal of time drawing mandalas every morning for his Red Book. Jung's late-in-life fascination and investigation of alchemy and Fellini's dream space as catalyst had much in common. Making a film is an alchemical act in and of itself, which grew for Fellini out of diligent night work. Jungian dream analysis required the analyst and subject to cooperate without preconceptions, drawn together in the alchemist's coniunctio as two equal substances magnetized together by profound affinity. This affinity produces change, growth, and energy, unimaginable if the substances remain apart. Fellini and Jung were two such substances joined.

Spirits

In *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965), as Giulietta traverses the space between Suzy's house and her own, she repurposes malicious spirits, taming them and welcoming them back transformed.

> *She is finally awakened from these visions by a grim reality: the desertion of her husband but this fulfillment of her worst fear becomes the most positive episode of her life, for it forces her to find herself, to seek her free identity as an individual.*
>
> *And this gives her the insight to realize that all the fears—the phantoms that lived around her—were monsters of her own creation, bred of misshapen education and misread religion. She realizes that the spirits have been necessary, even useful, and deserve to be thanked; and the moment she thanks them, she no longer fears and hates them, and they turn into positive, pleasant beings.* (Fellini 1966, 54)

Il libro dei sogni contains a plethora of sages, spirits, and ghosts willing to share advice, condemnation, and encouragement that spill into Fellini's public oeuvre. As the Roman aristocracy languidly plays at séance in an underused portion of their villa in *La dolce vita*, Marcello is asked by Maddalena to marry her. Maddalena casts her proposal as an unseen spirit, voiced through an empty fountain that carries her words to Marcello seated in another room. For once he engages with her declaration of love patiently and without pretense. Neither can see the other, and because of this their voices take on a heightened quality impossible in a face-to-face encounter. Each of them is listening to the other. Not being with each other physically facilitates the exchange. Their performative flirtations are briefly stripped bare. They have no corporeal presence to fall back on. Their disembodied voices achieve a more intimate, nuanced connection, closer than any dance they might have had with each other. Each of the character's imageless longings is nested in the brief exchange. But as Marcello engages sincerely with her, Maddalena has already been joined in her part of the villa by a man who kisses the side of her neck and leads her away. Marcello is left vainly searching for her in the darkened villa.

Spirits can also be deceitful. Séances are dominated by both skeptics and true believers. Beyond the shelter of villa shadows and after the spiteful violence of a roadside argument with his lover

Emma, Marcello finally makes it to bed but is abruptly woken by the news that his mentor Steiner has killed himself and his young children. The existential dread worked through in the dream world has a dark and violent shadow in the "real" world of the film. Steiner's creative and philosophical salon to which Marcello clings has also been destroyed. A door of perception opened and now violently soldered shut.

La dolce vita begins with a statue of Christ dangling from a helicopter swooping toward St. Peter's and ends with a gelatinous sea creature blanched and suffocating at the edge of the sea. These images, along with a multitude of others, are older siblings of *Il libro dei sogni*. They live on as stubborn afterimages bookending our existential plight. Marcello searches for meaning in the void of decrepit Euro trash. His dissonance and desperation haunt us. Night becoming dawn, dawn declining into night, structure the film and mimic the dream work's insistent call.

8½'s "dream sequences" make it impossible for the viewer to identify any boundary between waking life and the dream. Fretful stagnation characterizes Guido, the director protagonist in the film. He has begun to shoot a sci-fi film that is now out of control. As it spirals beyond his grasp, his inability to move beyond difficult daily decision-making and clashing personal peccadilloes causes Guido to freeze, flee, lie, or hide. Fellini's edits of Guido's trajectory are violent transitions between worlds that destroy continuity by making the barrier between waking and dreaming life inconsequential. The wall in Guido's mistress's hotel room is being polished by Guido's mother, and a cross fade reveals that she is actually polishing the façade of her mausoleum. The mausoleum teeters back and forth on rocking pans between a producer and Guido's father who is inquiring as to how his son is doing. The producer gestures "not so well," and Guido, now dressed in his school uniform, is outside the mausoleum, helping lower his disappointed father back into his grave. One father is laid to rest. Another is born.

Jung is cast also as a father figure throughout *Il libro dei sogni*. He makes one of multiple appearances in a 1966 entry as a magician/farmer who decides to move to Italy and is preceded by a dump truck overflowing with his patient's dreams (Fellini 2008, 185, 503). *The Book of Dreams* is far too complex to be contained in a single dump truck, but it does reveal figures that Fellini paid heed to. Jung, Picasso, Dali et al. bring essential solutions, warnings, or challenges. From a December 1983 entry, Orson Welles tells Fellini that he "spends too much time seeking the muses' help" (Fellini 2015, 552). This is such an illuminating observation that Fellini tells us in the sidebar text that he feigned losing consciousness in deference to Welles's words. The two of them have been walking a back lot at Cinecittà deep in conversation. In the distance up ahead, they see Lina Wertmüller sticking her head out a window and urgently calling to them. Evidently there is a party going on for which they are woefully late. In an entry from 30 May 1981, Borges entreats Fellini to be quiet, to listen only and not talk. He listens (Fellini 2015, 552).

The Numinous

How do we mine the numinous (spell), talk of a psychic charge between images, people, and moments? How to make a film that can carry this charge and relay it across space and time? Jung was clear about our lost connection with nature, a sustainable reality, the magical, and the indecipherable. His disappointment with Freud lay in Freud's identifying and treating only the ego and his reduction of the central source of being to the libido. Fellini grappled with how to actuate a more inclusive numinous; keeping our access open, vital, and exercised. He sought a way to move across and beyond the border of self-absorbed ego-clinging, both material and spiritual. To manifest a *something*, an energy exchange that makes the film or the living of a life *be*.

For Jung, the ego was only a segment of the psyche, often tethered to archetypes. Archetypes live without us, but the ego shuffles them from sight, determined to make us work at reconnecting to them. Archetypes are events charged with energy. They do not need us, but we need them. The human being has to recognize and cultivate an interchange with archetypes that helps form consciousness but also motivates the human being to transcend ego as a stable formation of an identity. Jung identified a rift in contemporary human consciousness. "Numinosity is a fact and represents the value of an archetypal event" (Jung 1964, 87). As we create the monsters that contain us and dominate the natural world, we commit wholesale suicide (Jung 1964, 91).

> *Someone to oblige us to go through with it. What you really need, I think, in the end, is a customer, one who wants the things you make, in order to bring off the creative act, to trigger this medium-like interplay between your inclination—or let's use this obscene word again: your inspiration—and the practical act of its materialization. And by medium-like, I mean something that is felt rather than known, something the existence of which we suspect but cannot prove except through this very materialization, which may, in some cases, actually diminish it. In that case, we can't even prove the existence of that thing which our intuition had conjured up, and it may forever remain a dream, something I might try to materialize in the next film, or never*. (Fellini 1966, 6–7)

The numinous spark, this materialization that lives happily without/beside/in spite of us resonates in deep primordial time. Sentient beings and inanimate entities make connections in Fellini's work: the oracles, androgynes, horses on a beach, voices that emanate from architecture, the fog that reveals and obscures. Everything/one depends on a catalyst—what Fellini and Jung both called "emotion." Sometimes the charge lies dormant and ignites at the open "ending" of a film, sometimes it is found in the repetition of images that populates dreams. Great gelatinous sea creatures, ships that are impossibly large and slip off into the night, the frisson of debauchery that leaves an empty feeling, all these things have their own lives. The uncanny, the unseen, the disquieting are all alive, permeating the edges of Fellini's frames and grazing on the seams of his drawn dreams; pushing back against colorless complacency. Jung warned that cultivating culture at the expense of nature leaves us stagnant and sterile. Fellini arranged his field of images to attract psychic charge. For those of us who willfully ignore what we cannot label or explain, Fellini constructed an elaborate plane of play and an ocean of confounding depths. Emotion is triggered by the recognition of archetypical connective tissue. Fellini manufactures frames both drawn and filmed that are activated by viewing but also by holding them in memory and reactivating them anew in dreamtime, in recall, in questions.

> *We have obviously been so busy with the question of what we think that we entirely forget to ask what the unconscious thinks about us. Archetypes are pieces of life themselves, images that are integrally connected to the living individual by the bridge of emotions*. (Jung 1964, 92)

Fine (Senza Fine)

On a beach by Fellini, redemption beckons, purgatory is avoided, and monsters die. Paola offers a smile to the dissolute Marcello in *La dolce vita*. She is his innocence lost and also his proffered redemption. A monstrous alabaster sea creature is dying just a few feet away. The Church condemns Guido, as kite, to a purgatorial crash on the beach in *8½*. Venus gurgles up from the Venice lagoon in *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976).

Royals suicide into ash in *Fellini - Satyricon* rather than be taken captive, and Steiner murders his children and then kills himself in *La dolce vita*. Alchemical morphing, possible transcendence, warning signs in scenography, and graffito-covered walls offer a dip back or forward in time. A spaceship isn't quite built in *8½*, but parts of Rome are meticulously rebuilt in Cinecittà for *Roma*. In destroying diegetic verisimilitude, dubbing plunges the viewer into language/narrative free-fall. There is no perfect place to end, nor a particularly epic summation of itinerary met, trains caught, airships tethered, voluptuous women hidden in the bushes, or oracles near dead, but Guido in *8½* ends his film this way.

> *I have faith … that I am inserted into a design of Providence whose end I don't and can't and will never comprehend—and wouldn't want to even if I could. There's nothing for me to do but pass through this panorama of joy and pain—with all my energy, all my enthusiasm, all my love, accepting it for what it is, without expecting an explanation that does not concern me, that does not involve me, that I am not called upon to give*. (Fellini 1966, 16–17)

Fellini relishes the time we spend with him in Felliniworld, a theme park that stretches through time, stammering and shouting stories of liberation. The state, the Church, the producer, the censor, the puritan, the critic, the timid, tailors of interpretive straightjackets will never find solace in Felliniworld. The rest of us find inviting beds, exceptional room service, ample ride tickets, erotic entanglements, delectable eavesdropping, and heightened sensual perceptions. Guido's science-fiction extravaganza doesn't get made in *8½,* but it lives on as fodder for the next dream work and continues apace, populating the films we make, the way we look at one another, the tales we tell, and the dreams we can't quite remember. The after-effects of being raised on Fellini linger and ricochet, the layers he dove through will continue to astonish, for his films are living beings. *Il libro dei sogni* is one companion among many. We pry open the private sketchbook, becoming reacquainted with all that Jung offered Fellini and all that Fellini left for us. We can keep diving, coming up for air, and sleep soundly even though our dreams are haunted. The four corners of my bed are now properly named; sleep tight, kino, Federico, and sweet dreams. "My films don't have what is called a final scene" (Fellini 1976, 150).

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Ingmar Bergman

My admiration for Fellini is limitless […]. Fellini is Fellini. He is not honest, he is not dishonest, he is just Fellini. And he is not responsible. You cannot put moralistic points of view on Fellini; it is impossible […]. He is enormously intuitive. He is intuitive; he is creative; he is an enormous force. He is burning inside with such heat. Collapsing. Do you understand what I mean? The heat from his creative mind, it melts him. He suffers from it; he suffers physically from it. One day when he can manage this heat and can set it free, I think he will make pictures you have never seen in your life. He is rich.

https://www.scribd.com/document/381372486/Directors-Talk-Directors-My-Criterion-The-Criterion-Collection

10

Fellini and Esotericism: An Ambiguous Adherence

Federico Pacchioni

Fellini and Esotericism

Despite the abundance of scholarly literature on Fellini that has suggested an intense spiritual quality to his cinema, Fellini's interest in paranormal and mediumistic phenomena has received little critical attention. Fellini's reflections and dreams were influenced by his consultations with various mediums and psychics; and his intense relationships with figures such as the Jungian psychoanalyst Ernst Bernhard and the psychic Gustavo Adolfo Rol are useful in tracing the director's "voluptuous openness" (his self-description—Fellini 1964, 103) to the multiple dimensions of reality and the complexity of human life. The influence of Western esotericism on Fellini's cinema, which extends to lifelong collaborations with kindred minds such as Tullio Pinelli and Nino Rota, highlights a cross-section of an unorthodox spiritual sector of the culture of twentieth-century Italy and reveals the significance of numerous scenes from Fellini's cinema. Of course, Fellini's interest in esotericism is not an isolated case; Italy's modern cultural history presents an illustrious tradition of intersections among esotericism, politics, and art, linked to figures, such as Giuseppe Mazzini, Alessandro Manzoni, Luigi Capuana, and Giovanni Amendola (Gatto-Trocchi 2001).

In terms of major studies that have identified a spiritual principle at the core of the filmmaker's work, one can recall the traditional observations on the "ripening" of the characters as ruled by a transcendental logic (Bazin 1978a), the emphasis on a childlike perspective that is able to marvel at cosmic mystery (Renzi 1969), and the underscoring of the director's dominant interest in the irrational dimension of the mind (Bondanella 1992). More recent studies (Stubbs 2006, Van Order 2009, Minuz 2012, and Aldouby 2013) have focused on specific aspects of Fellini's cinema, exploring the artistic ramifications of its spiritual qualities.[1]

Nonetheless, as Pinelli (Pinelli, Zapponi, and Boggio 2009, 317) lamented, critics have either glossed over Fellini's interest in the paranormal and mediumistic as a personal and even embarrassing mania of little importance, or made a spectacle of it according to the aura of extravagance and madness attached to the authorial myth of Fellini. It is an oversight that is likely part of academia's tendency to reject knowledge of esoteric groups, largely because of inconsistency around concepts and terms, lack of archival sources, and, more recently, fears of being associated

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke,
Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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with New Age consumer fads. Rather than being censored or spectacularized, Fellini's penchant for esotericism and his consultations with mediums should be considered an expression of his interest in the life of the mind, the subjective construction of reality, and the interplay between reality and fantasy—hence, of a distinctive understanding of reality and a philosophy of life and art.

Fellini's adherence to esoteric matters is at the root of the powerful expression of spiritual mystery in his cinema that blends memorably with Christian modes of storytelling in films such as *La strada* (1954), and that continues to find expression in a multiplicity of realized and unrealized projects covering a wide array of spiritual experiences, including "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna" ("The Journey of G. Mastorna") and "Viaggio a Tulum" ("Trip to Tulum"). What makes esotericism unique within Fellini's work is its coexistence with an ambiguous and ironic tone, which is the effect of this filmmaker's comedic and acute awareness of subtleties of artistic representation. While Fellini represents his characters' experience of awe and bewilderment, he also calls attention to the process of mystification and illusion involved.

A Transcendental Foundation: The Collaboration with Rota and Pinelli

Fellini's inclination toward esotericism existed well before the 1960s, when his films took an introspective turn and when he met with figures such as Ernst Bernhard and Gustavo Adolfo Rol, who would define the director's creative relationship to esoteric matters. Fellini collaborated with two accomplished artists, the composer Nino Rota and the playwright Tullio Pinelli, who were both mentors and companions to him in crafting a means of expressing the supernatural and spiritual dimensions of life.

Fellini's well-known epithet for Nino Rota, "l'amico magico" ("the magical friend"), has a double significance, pointing on one hand to Rota's uncanny ability to channel musically the spirit of Fellini's films, and on the other hand, to the composer's connection to esotericism. Nino Rota was part of a late and still tonal Puccinian and verist tradition, which he was able to integrate within a vast array of popular and modern forms. The nostalgic immediacy of harmonic tonal music bespoke an antimodernist candor that was also part of Fellini's sensibility, a longing for a nucleus of metaphysical coherence, or as Andrea Zanzotto (2011a, 83) eloquently put it, a longing for a "primordial mechanism" springing "from sources so distant in time as to be historically unidentifiable … from the mysterious places where all keys are still scrambled." The rarefied simplicity of Rota's music contrasted with the atonal style and existential disorientation expressed by most of the Italian composers of his time.

Rota's fascination with spiritual and religious matters emerged very early in his dedication to the study of sacred classical music, which led to his masterpiece *Oratorio Mysterium* (1962), and later in his choice to compose scores for literary works dealing with spiritual themes. Furthermore, in the company of his friend, the philosopher and student of alchemy Vincenzo Virginelli, Rota spent some of his free time and resources in seeking out and acquiring a number of alchemical texts from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries (Virginelli 1986). Virginelli was a follower of the influential master of neo-Egyptian hermeticism in Italy, Ciro Formisano, also known as Giuliano Kremmerz, who was the founder of the Therapeutic and Magic Brotherhood of Myriam. In addition to sharing in Verginelli's study of alchemy, Rota set to music Virginelli's alchemical fable *Aladino e la lampada magica* ("Aladdin and the Magic Lamp" 1963–1965). Rota was the main composer for Fellini's films until his death in 1979. The oboe of Fellini's lunatic player in *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990), who accidentally stumbles upon a musical interval

traditionally known as *diabulus in musica*—a sinister dissonance that in the film evokes ghosts and invisible forces—is reminiscent of the haunting clarinet with which Rota had set to music Ugo Betti's *Lo spiritismo nella casa vecchia* ("Spiritualism in the Old House" 1950) and could be seen as a final caricatural homage to his lifelong collaborator.

From the very beginning, Fellini's relationship with Pinelli was based on a common search for a nondogmatic and noninstitutional transcendence, whether found within or outside Christianity. Both artists shared leanings toward the fantastic and the magical, as shown by mutual unrealized projects concerning the lives of saints and mediums. Pinelli's plays are typical of metaphysical Catholic theater, where representation is challenged by the attempt to stage the psychological and metaphysical complexities of human reality. Not unlike the works of the more famous Betti, Pinelli's plays explore the motivations and consequences of evil, thus focusing on intimate themes such as guilt and everyday redemption, often through allegories. Fittingly, in 1955, Achille Fiocco included Pinelli along with Betti, Diego Fabbri, Riccardo Bacchelli, and others in his study titled *Correnti spiritualistiche nel teatro moderno* ("spiritual currents in modern theater" 1955, 84–93). As the playwright and others observed, Fellini appeared to be the ideal director for Pinelli's work, one finally capable of representing the metaphysical tone of his writing.

Throughout Fellini's career, Pinelli was his chief partner in scripting stories relating to the supernatural and to the exploration of transcendence, with the notable exception of "Toby Dammit" (an episode of *Tre passi nel delirio / Histoires extraordinaires / Spirits of the Dead* 1968) scripted with Bernardino Zapponi). In addition to the best-known films, there are other lesser-known but equally revealing projects extending into the last years of Fellini's career. Around 1984, in an exchange of letters between Fellini and Pinelli regarding materials received from the occultist writer and journalist Paola Giovetti Tenti, the two began discussing a project inspired by the life of the medium Eusapia Palladino (Sainati, Fellini, and Pinelli 2008, 58–59). In a letter dated 1986, Pinelli proposed an idea for a film based on a novel by Thomas Mann, *Joseph und seine Brüder* (*Joseph and His Brothers* 1933–1943 / 1948); he assured the director that the story would express the combination "of divine and human, of illusion and intuition, of carnal and human love, and prophetic and mystical visions" (62–63). Their last work together, on *La voce della luna*, which was inspired by the novel *Il poema dei lunatici* ("poem of the lunatics" 1987) by Ermanno Cavazzoni, allowed once more for Pinelli's and Fellini's mutual desire to search the realm of the beyond. This desire is best exemplified by the presence of pathways into the unknown, such as the well at the opening and closing of the film, whence originate mysterious voices, and the hole in the walls of a country cemetery, through which the protagonist attempts to peek into the afterlife and communicate with the spirits.

Among their more successful collaborations, *La strada* can be used to exemplify their interest in the paranormal as well as the way their views differed on this topic. The memorable Osvaldo sequence, during the wedding feast at the farmhouse, contains the theme of mediumship that attracted both artists, which becomes evident when tracing the scene's development. Gelsomina is taken by a group of children to the unsettling, half-lit room of the farmhouse where a child is kept in isolation. Gelsomina is attracted by a creature who is, like her, considered different. Fellini's direction of this scene generates an otherworldly atmosphere of suspense, conveying a sense of mystery and awe for the child's unique nature and spiritual potential. Osvaldo's room catches Fellini's interest from the early stages of the scripting process, and on set, the room is transformed into a large space that Fellini has filled with peasants' work tools that have been turned into geometrical toys, sinister lights, and sacred images. In earlier drafts of the screenplay, Osvaldo was a paralytic child, and earlier still, he was an animal.[2] In this iteration, Gelsomina was taken to a stable, to see a trembling ox that she is told is mad because it sees ghosts at night. Gelsomina identifies with the poor beast because of her own fears of the night, and she begins to

wonder about death and tries to connect with the animal: "She looks into the ox's eyes, looks in the direction of the ox's eyes, as if hoping to see what the ox 'sees,' she is afraid." The scene continues as Zampanò arrives and Gelsomina assiduously interrogates him, with little success, about his beliefs regarding the existence of ghosts and the nature of the afterlife. The conversation between Gelsomina and Zampanò on this subject highlights Zampanò's materialism, as he values money over any abstract consideration—but also Gelsomina's growing awareness of the depth of human experience (Fellini and Pinelli 1954, 61–71).

From the beginning of their work on *La strada*, Fellini and Pinelli sought ways to underscore Gelsomina's psychic nature (empathy for animals and plants, ability to predict the weather, etc.), as various other scenes suggest—something encouraged by their serendipitous discovery of the historic account of "La piccola suora" ("the little nun") that would eventually become another project often surfacing in their correspondence. The story, found in a convent during the making of *La strada*, told of a nun who, with her spontaneous miracles, had attracted the attention of the Inquisition and eventually died in distress under the pressure of skeptic questioning (Fellini 1964, 100–101; Kezich 2006, 175).

What differentiated Pinelli from Fellini when it came to the realm of the supernatural was that while Pinelli framed the miraculous precisely within a Christian context, Fellini had, as Pinelli himself acknowledged (Pinelli, Zapponi, and Boggio 2009, 317), a "visione molto panica," namely, a vision that was characterized by a more general, almost pagan, sense of religious apprehension. Pinelli noted how Fellini could not conceive everyday life separate from a supernatural or hidden dimension, sometimes placing his total trust in those who claimed a special rapport with the afterlife, whereas Pinelli described himself as being somewhat more rational and cautious. It is likely that the blending of Pinelli's Christian religiosity with Fellini's looser form of spirituality played an important role in the creation of films that were able to reach a wide audience in the Italy of the 1950s and 1960s—one that was looking for unorthodox and flexible forms of Christianity.[3]

Bernhard and Rol as Guides to the Unknown

Fellini's encounter with figures such as Ernst Bernhard and Gustavo Rol is the consequence of—and helps refine—the director's proclivity for the esoteric. Bernhard was a German psychoanalyst and scholar recommended to Fellini by his friend, the filmmaker Vittorio De Seta. Bernhard's work blended Jungian theories, mystical Eastern traditions, and a cabalistic vision of the universe by which every event is endowed with a symbolic meaning. Some of the tenets of Bernhard's initiatory approach to therapy can be deduced from the essays collected in his posthumous *Mitobiografia* (1969), which reflect on the relationships among individual destiny, collective history, and myth. Bernhard had a dramatic influence on Fellini's work. In addition to introducing Fellini to the *I Ching*, an ancient divination tool that the director quickly embraced and used to seek guidance at challenging times in his career, Bernhard acquainted him with the practice of the illustrated dream journal, an idea derived from Jung's own oneiric diary called *The Red Book* (Jung 2009). Fellini was to record his dreams to be then discussed with Bernhard, whose interpretations and suggestions are sometimes summarized in the journal. After Bernhard's death, the director continued to attend to his dream journal with ever-growing fervor, eventually filling at least two large notebooks, the first dating from late 1960 to the summer of 1968 and the second from early 1973 to 1982. These notebooks became available to the public only in 2007 (Fellini 2007/2008),

when they were published as *Il libro dei sogni* (*The Book of Dreams*), which also contains some material post-1982. As will be exemplified below, this publication represents an extremely rich source for understanding Fellini's life and work. While initially serving a therapeutic purpose, this journal progressively became a bank of ideas from which the director drew for his work. Contemporary psychoanalysts have been quick to note that, composed in the first person, it embodies the director's search for his creative source as well as his identity and development as an artist (Guillard 2008; Camon 2008).

The death of Bernhard on 29 June 1965, while Fellini was filming *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965), becomes a central event in Fellini's dream journal. Bernhard had become a fundamental support in the realization of Fellini's artistic destiny, as it is eloquently suggested by a short dream entry dating 4 July 1965, where Bernhard offers the anagram of Fellini's name as FEDERICO FELLINI—GRANDE ARTISTA (Fellini 2007/2008, 146, 496). Another dream from 1965, explicitly relating to Fellini's desire and need to balance his comedic spirit with psychoanalytic insight in *Giulietta degli spiriti*, points to Bernhard's function in mediating between Jungian theories and Fellini's work: the dream zooms in on a large volume containing all Jung's doctrines in Bernhard's office and reports the therapist's judgment (either dreamed or real) that "the doctrinal aspect is not proportionate to the light fantasy of its story" (139, 495). Juliet's psychic odyssey to face and unmask the ghosts of her past leads her to not only greater emotional independence and self-dignity but also, surprisingly, an esoteric initiation, whereby, in the film's finale, she is granted access to a new domain of the spirit, populated by benign voices ready to guide her through a new metaphysical space that is beautifully rendered by the world of a Tyrrhenian *pineta* that seems in a magical state of suspension.

Bernhard is an important guide to Fellini in his desire to acquire a greater understanding of the possibility of the afterlife of the spirit. On 5 May 1965, when Bernhard was gravely ill and close to his passing, Fellini writes of him dying in *Il libro dei sogni*: his spirit rises high over his corpse and tightly holds the director's hand "as if witnessing the fact that the immortal soul is stronger than anything else" (Fellini 2007, 150, 496). Even after Bernhard's death, the director returns oneirically to his office in search of counsel and relives the event of his therapist's passing. On July 16 of the same year, Fellini, immersed in the "profound peace, serenity, clear and fragrant air" surrounding Bernhard's body lying on his death bed, explodes in a heartfelt and telling confession of his gratitude to the mentor: "I owe you the discovery of a new dimension, of a new perception of all things, of a new religiosity.... I forever thank you my brotherly friend, my true father. Please continue to help us bright and blissful spirit.... Goodbye true friend of mine, saintly true man" (155, 497).

In time, the figure of Bernhard changes, metabolized by Fellini's comedic mind, into that of a clown-like guru figure, a transformation that conforms to the director's undoctrinaire and ambiguous form of spirituality, marked by the coexistence of intense involvement and ironic detachment. On 20 January 1966, Fellini dreams of the dead Bernhard suddenly opening his eyes with a prankish smile during a formal commemorative ceremony and then, as a demonstration of the endurance of his spirit, rising and disappearing into space. Later, in the same dream, Fellini meets Bernhard dressed in "large blue and black striped clown pants" (Figure 10.1) and filled with "an overwhelming sense of humor" (Fellini 2007, 168, 500), and comes to an intuition that turns the tables between the living and the dead: "earthly concerns, stories, ideas and feelings, everything that the living do, think, suffer, and believe, appear to the dead as something absurdly illogical, incomprehensible, a pure abstraction, the folly of indecipherable ghosts" (168, 500). The alignment with the point of view of the dead can be a powerful creative stimulus, yet, due to the estrangement that it entails, it can also be an overwhelming step, even for an artist like Fellini.

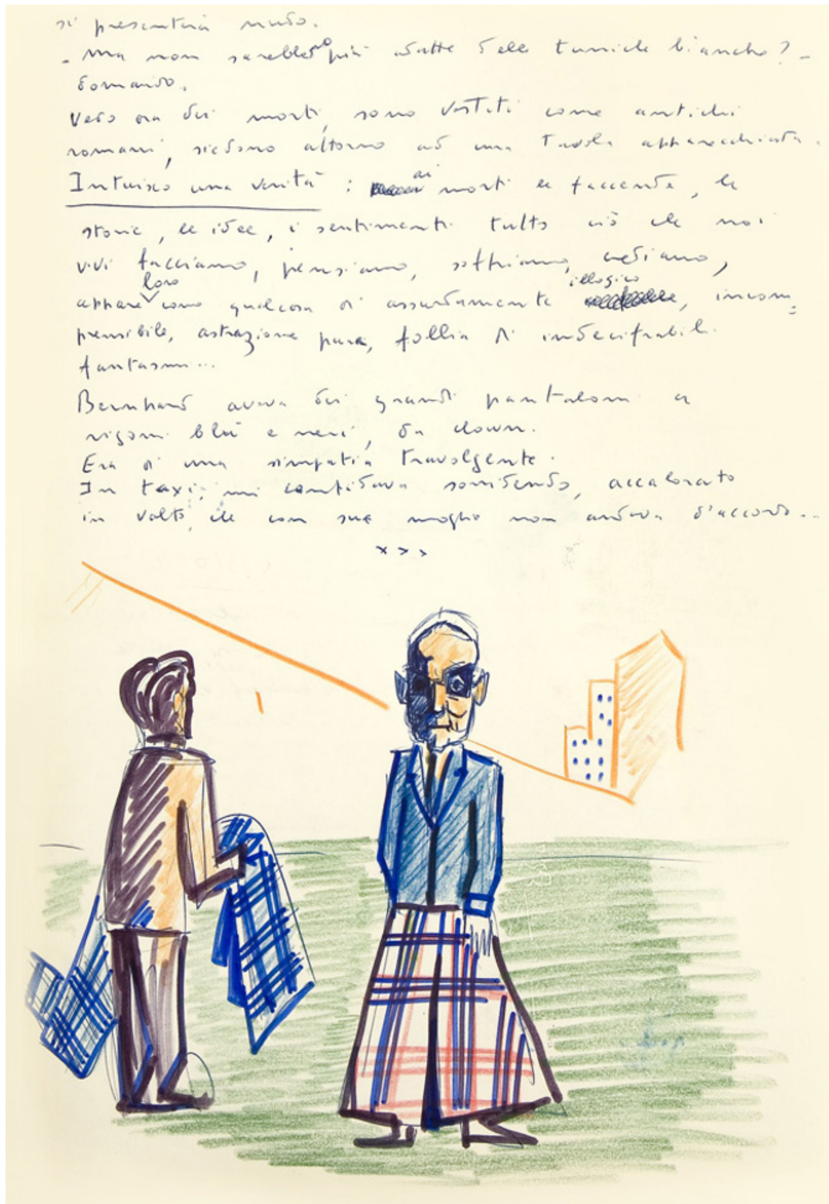

Figure 10.1 Fellini meets Ernst Bernhard dressed as a clown. *Il libro dei sogni*, 168. Cineteca Comunale di Rimini, Archivio Federico Fellini. @Comune di Rimini and Francesca Fabbri Fellini. Digital rights, © Guaraldi Srl. The original manuscript is preserved at the Museo della Città del Comune di Rimini.

The challenge of imaginatively inhabiting the beyond was, in the mid-1960s, already at the core of the director's troubled and never-realized project on the afterlife, "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna," first started in the spring of 1966. Even though Bernhard contributed significantly to the development of Fellini's vision of reality across the life and death divide, the role of mentor in this regard was taken on by Gustavo Rol, the famous seer from Turin (in a dream from 1970, Bernhard

transforms into Rol—Fellini 2007, 442–443, 557) for whom Fellini developed a profound reverence and whom he began perceiving as an arbiter of significant professional choices, especially when it came to his decision on the fate of "Mastorna." In a dream from 10 January 1966 (167, 499), Rol appears as the cab driver deciding on Fellini's itinerary, doing all in his power to keep Fellini from heading in the wrong direction.

It is well known that Fellini frequented mediums, psychics, and magicians of various types, with sincere curiosity and compassion for the personalities of these individuals. Fellini's trust in some of the mediums he met was in some cases profound and long-lasting, and he even accepted them as mentors in decisions relating to his work, a fact that is best exemplified by his relationship with Rol. Considered a sophisticated illusionist by some and as a true spiritual master by others, Rol was certainly the most famous Italian psychic of the time. Even though the scientific community never received sufficient satisfaction in testing the veracity of Rol's paranormal abilities, and his work also gave rise to less-appealing cultish phenomena, Rol left a lasting, stunning impression in the minds of his many friends and admirers. Among these were Fellini and some of his close collaborators, such as Nino Rota, Pinelli, and Dino Buzzati; notable figures from the art and business world, such as Guido Ceronetti, Valentina Cortese, Franco Zeffirelli, Cesare Romiti, and the Agnelli family; and other contemporary notables.[4] In spite of his extraordinary skills, Rol is often remembered as a humble and sober individual, a person able effortlessly to reconcile diametrically opposed spheres of life. When talking about his abilities as conduit or psychic, which he believed to be natural and latent in everyone, Rol liked to use the unpretentious metaphor of the *grondaia*, the drainpipe.[5] Rol's humility likely instilled great confidence in Fellini, himself concerned with encasing his lofty spiritual interests within the demystifying requirements of his comedic nature and the bulky machinery of cinema. Interestingly, Rol's tall, ubiquitous figure appears to be endowed with a shape-shifting quality in Fellini's dream entries, wearing mundane guises such as that of a shoemaker who listens carefully to his client (Fellini) and is able to offer him exactly the kind of new shoes that he is looking for (Fellini 2007, 184, 502).

Rol was known for clairvoyant medical advice, channeling the minds of great artists and historical figures, performing psychic experiments with cards, and materializing or dematerializing objects. Fellini underscored the beneficial influence of the psychic's work: "Rol's 'games' are an invigorating and comforting spectacle to anyone who may approach him with a true openness" (Fellini 1993, 89). Among Rol's alleged powers—for example, his ability to change an object's color and shape at will or have something hidden to him appear out of thin air—were the most radical and shocking, even though Rol insisted on presenting these powers as latent in everyone. Rol's demonstrations left Fellini with a mixture of wonderment and unease tied to the sense that the material world was liquid and unstable. Following one of Rol's experiments with cards, Fellini reported: "I saw a terrible thing that words cannot say … matter was breaking up, a gray and watery mud that decomposed itself pulsating a disgusting amalgamation where the black clubs on the card dissolved and resurfaced with red veins…." (quoted in Buzzati 1978, 47). In a dream recorded in 1975 (Fellini 2007, 312, 529), Fellini expresses his anxiety about the possibility of acquiring some of Rol's powers, something that in the dream leads him to leave behind his life and home, become alienated from all that he knows, and wander through a swamp where looms the ghost of folly (Figure 10.2). This terrifying perception of a magmatic immateriality underpinning "the real world" is not dissociated from that unique phenomenological instability dramatized in Fellini's films as in *Giulietta degli spiriti* and, most notably, in the unfinished "Mastorna," in which the protagonists' reality shifts among hallucination, dream, and paranormal experiences.

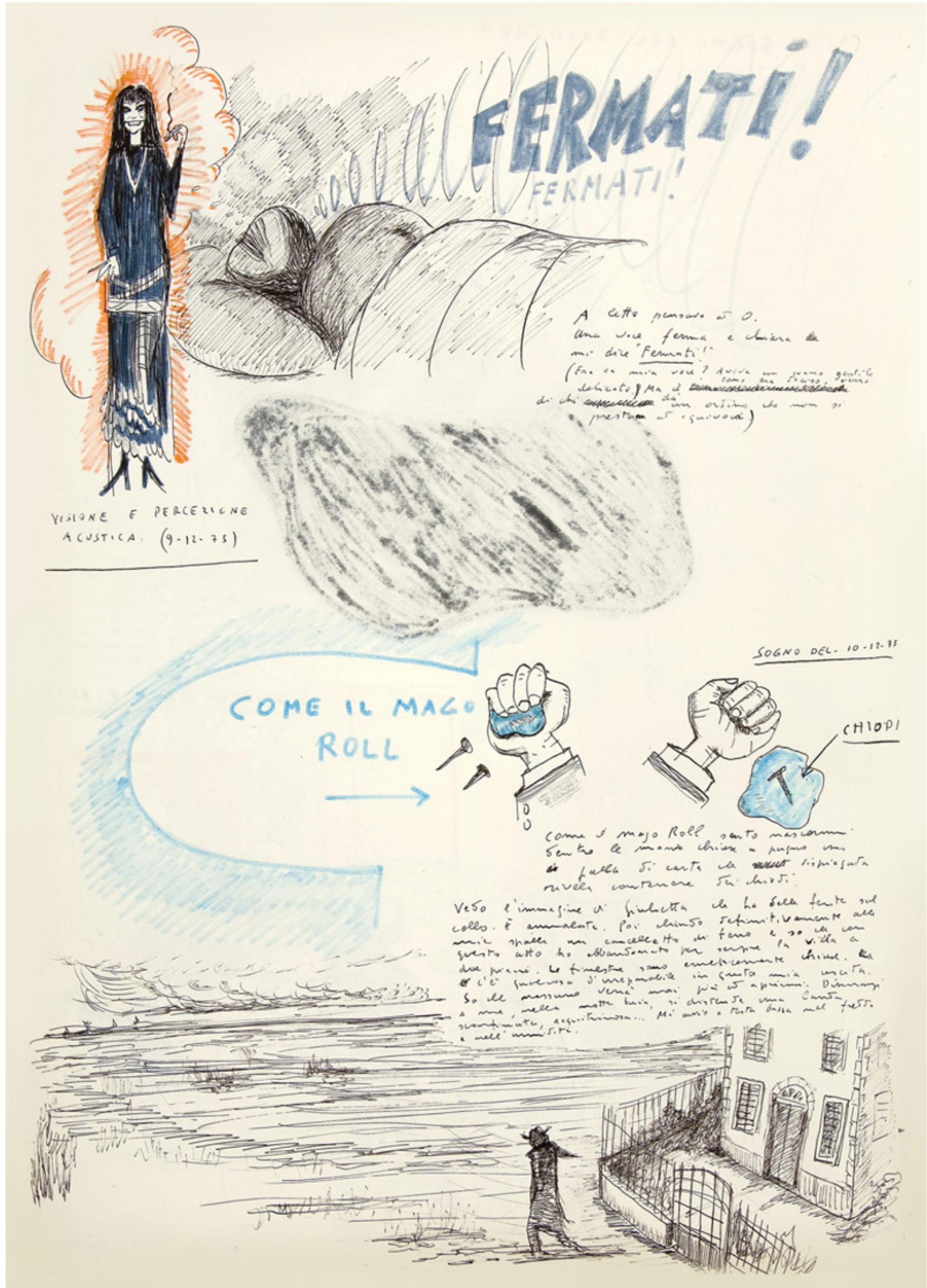

Figure 10.2 Second dream on page: Fellini expresses his anxiety in relation to Gustavo Adolfo Rol's powers, as a ball of paper becomes nails, Giulietta is wounded, and Fellini becomes alienated in a dream linked to the psychic. *Il libro dei sogni*, 312. Cineteca Comunale di Rimini, Archivio Federico Fellini. @Comune di Rimini and Francesca Fabbri Fellini. Digital rights, © Guaraldi Srl. The original manuscript is preserved at the Museo della Città del Comune di Rimini.

Ambiguous Journeys: Mastorna and Tulum

In a note accompanying the typescript of "Mastorna," Fellini (1965–1977) listed as one of the key motivations to his continued interest in the project the desire to "address critically (or with an ambiguous adherence) psychic phenomena, spiritualism, magic, rituals, and superstitions."[6] Indeed, "Mastorna," arguably the most personal undertaking for Fellini and the one that he developed with an unprecedented degree of independence from his principal screenwriters, serves as a vivid illustration of Fellini's complex and ambivalent fascination.[7] Another example is the unrealized "Viaggio a Tulum," inspired by the anthropologist Carlos Castaneda, whose mystic writings drew from his field work with Mexican shamans supposedly linked to ancient Toltec rituals.

Fellini's attempts to produce "Mastorna" were marked by a number of negative incidents, including difficulties in selecting a leading actor, a disastrous lawsuit with the producer, and a serious health crisis, all of which prevented the film from being made (Kezich 2006, 265–280). Even later in his career, Fellini never felt secure enough to finally undertake "Mastorna," in part due to Rol's opposing advice on this matter but also because of the complexities inherent in representing the afterlife, a theme that, as Fellini once noted, has an "aesthetic, fantastic and adventurous nature," one that is "stimulating" and yet "dangerous … for an artist's creative vocation" (Fellini 1993, 91). Perhaps Fellini felt like the protagonist in "Toby Dammit," the short film that temporarily replaced an attempt to make "Mastorna" in 1968. Toby is in peril of losing his head—a figurative risk for Fellini, perhaps—by challenging invisible forces and attempting to jump over a chasm toward the unknown. The possibility of making "Mastorna" never ceased to resurface for Fellini, especially in the late 1970s, but instead of being realized as a film unto itself, "Mastorna" would be scattered as fragments throughout the filmmaking that marked the latter part of his career (Casanova 2005, 53–83; Kezich 2006, 269).

The beginning of the fascinating, long, and tumultuous failed gestation of "Mastorna" is marked by Fellini's collaboration with the fantasy writer Dino Buzzati. At the onset, Fellini traveled with Buzzati to seek out and interview individuals across Italy who appeared to manifest extraordinary phenomena and to have firsthand knowledge of the spirit world. In Buzzati's words (1978, 39), this phase provided an "indirect psychological preparation" that "gave impulse to the magical charge that Fellini already had inside himself." At the same time, Fellini, being a master of representation and illusion, was well aware of the theatrical and deceitful strategies employed by some of the claimed clairvoyants whom he would meet ("where research cohabits with fraud," as Andrea Zanzotto [2011b, 121] said). However, even in such cases, Fellini was probably inspired by the ways mediums were able to evoke an aura of mystery around them. It is not surprising then that Fellini's films are characterized by the magnification of what Jacqueline Risset (1994, 41) has termed "the beauty of illusion." Fellini's decision to carry on this research with Buzzati was, of course, not coincidental, as the latter's writings, focusing on the overturning of normal human perspectives in the face of supernatural events and death, resonated very early on with the director.

The affinity between the two artists largely rested on the idea of representing a fictional journey into the afterlife.[8] Both Buzzati's novella *Lo strano viaggio di Domenico Molo* ("The Strange Journey of Domenico Molo"), published in 1938 in an issue of *Omnibus*, and Fellini's script of "Mastorna" describe the afterlife as a complex, confused, and fabulous city where the souls of the protagonists find institutions, bureaucratic hurdles, and characters similar to those found on earth. Both stories seem to demystify the afterlife experience, conveying an anticlimactic sense of disappointment. The souls inhabiting these stories manifest a Dantesque purgatorial nostalgia

for their earthly lives; they are uncertain of the rules of their new world and become prisoners in a waiting game for the vessel (a boat, a train, or an airplane) that will take them to an unknown destination that is a source of anxiety. Both stories end with the protagonist's return (real or imaginary) to earthly life and are written with the intention of generating a more honest perspective on life through the death experience.

The afterlife in "Mastorna" is, however, more complex than the one in Buzzati's story. As described in Fellini's script, it functions as a clear and cruel mirror of earthly life, where people's fears and desires are magnified and thus rendered more apparent. The limbic space in which the cello player G. Mastorna finds himself after dying in an airplane crash is controlled by a carefully designed educational system, as spirit doctors, guides, professors, clerks, and guards assist the dead through a personalized journey. For Mastorna, this entails facing people and situations from his past while recognizing the fact of his death, overcoming his limited understanding of sexuality and familial roles, discovering his true identity within a life lived with little authenticity, and finally no longer expecting any ultimate destination. When compared to Dante's model of the afterlife,[9] where various zones are structured according to the principle of the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, based on the moral and religious judgment of how souls have directed their love, Fellini's afterlife is organized according the logic of the Devachan, the astral domain of Tibetan-inspired theosophy, the multifarious kingdom generated by the soul's very desires and fears, where the spirit temporarily stays in order to dissolve the attachments of the ego.

At the highest point of his evolutionary spiral, Mastorna is taken to the head of a mountain pass, where a new journey must now begin. The script's ending memorably encapsulates the idea of life as an infinite journey into the unknown, reiterated by Mastorna's female spirit guide, who repeats to him something that another traveler had told her:

> And openly I pledged my heart to the grave and suffering land, and often in the consecrated night, I promised to love her faithfully until death, unafraid, with her heavy burden of fatality, and never to despise a single one of her enigmas. Thus did I join myself to her with a mortal cord. (Fellini 2008, 161)

These intense, singular, and absolute words actually belong to Empedocles, the Sicilian-Greek philosopher, as he prepared to cast himself into the mouth of Etna, according to Friedrich Hölderlin's Romantic (and incidentally unfinished) play *Der Tod des Empedokles* (*The Death of Empedocles* 1846/2008).

Empedocles's words, filled with humble acceptance of life's mortality and sorrow, can be interpreted either from the point of view of Mastorna, who is now surrendering to an idea of life as a continuous experience of discoveries in unfamiliar territories, or from the point of view of his spirit guide, the woman who is now suddenly seduced by a longing for the warmth and simplicity of mortal life. After having spent part of the night in a shack, embraced by the spirit guide, Mastorna awakes and leaves on the mysterious high mountain pass. Implying that our idea of the afterlife is only an imagined unknown that lies ahead, the script concludes with the female spirit guide fantasizing about where Mastorna may have gone. Consistent with her rekindled interest in earthly experiences, the guide imagines Mastorna walking through Florence on an early morning in spring, ecstatic at the spectacle of the simplicity of life, and entering a concert hall where he abandons himself to the music of his cello, accompanied by the grandeur of an orchestra.

The ambivalence toward esotericism so central to Fellini's work recurs in "Viaggio a Tulum," scripted, not surprisingly, with Pinelli, in 1986. The script resulted from a trip in 1985 to the Americas to learn about Mexican shamanism and to attempt to meet Castaneda (Kezich 2006, 359–364). Through the fictional transformation and coloring of autobiography to which Fellini is prone, the

protagonist is a film director constantly torn between continuing his journey into the foreign lands of myth and magic, and turning back to his familiar home. Fellini's deeply rooted ambiguous perspective is expressed in the way the protagonist abandons himself to, but also downplays and mocks, his experiences, as in the case of the meeting with a Mexican holy man, a figure who is presented as something "between priest-like and buffoon-like" within an atmosphere that is both "terrifying and silly" (Fellini and Pinelli 1988, 31–34). Finally arriving at Tulum, the director and his companions are guided by a shaman through an exhausting visionary ritual, which, together with a number of inexplicable events, leaves them in a state of confusion as they begin their return home.

From the scripts of both "Viaggio a Tulum" and "Mastorna," Fellini prepared storyboards for the comic-book artist Milo Manara (Fellini and Manara 2001). The comic version of Mastorna's journey, which selects the actor Paolo Villaggio as the protagonist, was completed only in part. The comic-book version of the journey through the Yucatan differs noticeably from the original script, especially in the end where the protagonist director, here embodied by Marcello Mastroianni, is held responsible for conveying through his film the ancient wisdom revealed to him by the shaman, a knowledge that is materialized through the beneficial influence of a girl's sensual beauty, which was emphasized by Manara's drawings (Fellini and Manara 2001, 61–76; see also Tripodi and Dalla Glassa 2010). Whereas "Mastorna" ends by balancing the quest for the transcendental with an appreciation of earthly simplicity and beauty, "Viaggio a Tulum" ends in the comic-book version by balancing traditional truths with modern doubts and lofty esotericism with more mundane eroticism. Clearly, the director's comical and demystifying bent is a consequence of his faithfulness to the wisdom that is potentially contained in the plainest, most simple, and earthly aspects of life, where the inebriating possibilities of the spirit world are reconfigured within human standards.

"Voluttuosamente Aperto a Tutto"

In the dream entry dated 20 August 1984, which is dominated by the image of the director sitting beneath a shimmering night sky in the company of his production manager Clemente Fracassi, Fellini (2007, 414, 553–554) observes: "All that we can do is try to reach the awareness that we are part of this impenetrable mystery that is creation. We obey its unfathomable laws, its rhythms, its changes. We are mysteries among mysteries." The director's interest in the esoteric and mediumistic world was certainly a consequence of his openness—by which the human being is seen as a creature of unexplored summits and abysses or as a "mystery among mysteries." Prompted to clarify his philosophy in more general terms, Fellini (1964, 102–103) stated: "I believe in everything and my capacity to marvel has no limits. I believe in everything because I want to fully preserve the freshness of my imagination, without tying myself to anything that might impose limitations on it … [I] believe in the existence of a reality that can be defined [as] 'invisible' only by those who do not have eyes to see it. I am voluptuously open to everything."

Fellini's career-long explorations into parapsychology cannot be dismissed as the mania of the "mad artist," an irrational or anti-intellectual figure; on the contrary, his sincere, self-questioning participation in, and study of, phenomena that are considered supernatural—supported by some of his most respected collaborations—reflect his desire to investigate the life of the mind and the spirit and to understand its potentials and limits. Fellini's perseverance in seeking out individuals who could guide him into unknown territory, such as Bernhard and Rol, reflected a Romantic desire to extend the artist's capacity to produce meaning in obscure and unfamiliar areas of human existence. The lyrical abandonment to—and, at the same time, satirical detachment

from—fixed conceptualizations of the meaning of life, present in scripts such as "Mastorna" and "Viaggio a Tulum," are rooted in Fellini's openness to the unknown and his belief in the infinite mystery of the ordinary. And these in turn produce the mixture of awe, anxiety, and humor that infuses the esoteric rituals and gurus that appear in so many moments of Fellini's cinema.

Notes

1 John Stubbs (2006) demonstrates how the conception of reality as ineffable leads to a "style of excess"—namely, a baroque accumulation in Fellini's choices in areas such as set design and makeup; Van Order (2009) examines Fellini's music and sound editing, finding that the recurring slippage between diegetic and nondiegetic sources functions as a parallel to the dynamic between fantasy and reality; Andrea Minuz (2012), discussing the way Fellini's films aesthetically elaborate issues of Italian national identity, confirms the modernity of Fellini's type of "skeptical religiousness" in his relationship to Catholicism; and Hava Aldouby (2013), in her analysis of the role of painting in Fellini's pictorial discourse, reveals the function of postmodern conceptions and representations in advancing Fellini's romantic vision of reality and his faith in the artist's subjectivity as the source of meaning.

2 The drafts of *La strada* referred to here are archived at the Lilly Library of Rare Books of Indiana University Bloomington.

3 For additional examples of the blending of Pinelli's Christian views and Fellini's broader spiritual inclinations, as well as a more in-depth account of Pinelli's contribution to *La strada,* see Pacchioni 2014, 24–48.

4 Additional testimonies about the relationship between Rol and Fellini can be found in Fellini's "Io sono aperto voluttuosamente a tutto" (Fellini 1964, 103–104), Fellini's "L'intervista lunga" (Fellini and Kezich 1965, 35–43), Kezich's "Quella sera a Torino con il mago di Fellini" (1994, 17), and Remo Lugli's *Una vita di prodigi* (1995, 141–143), which collects anecdotes reported by Dino Buzzati in his 1965 article in *Corriere della sera*. See also Maria Luisa Giordano's *Rol e l'altra dimensione* (2000, 166–182), which contains details regarding Rol's involvement in "Mastorna" and the medium's portrait of the director, and Renzo Allegri's *Rol: Il grande veggente* (2003, 199–210).

5 In 2000, the metaphor of the drainpipe was utilized to title Rol's posthumous collection of letters and writings, which also provides an overview of the seer's life and central ideas.

6 The note is now published (misleadingly) as part of the letter that Fellini wrote to accompany the first version of the treatment in the summer of 1965 to the producer Dino De Laurentiis, explaining his idea for the ambitious film (Fellini 2008, 205). This recent publication is based on the typescript archived at the Swiss publishing house Diogenes Verlag in Zurich. Though enclosed within the folder of the original manuscript of the letter and treatment, the note must have been written at a later date, probably during or after 1977. The note looks at the project retrospectively, addressing the first presentation of the project.

7 For various phases of screenwriting collaborations on "Mastorna," see Pacchioni 2014.

8 Buzzati also published an orphic tale of a descent to hell, *Poema a fumetti* (1969), which manifests the influence of his creative experience with Fellini. For a discussion of the connection between *Poema a fumetti* and "Mastorna," see De Benedictis 2000, while an analysis of the fusion of writing and comics as a common trait in the work of Buzzati and Fellini can be found in Gargiulo 2002.

9 For a more thorough comparison of Dante's and Fellini's visions of the afterlife, see Pacchioni 2016.

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11

Circo Fellini

Adriano Aprà

According to historian Mario Verdone (1970, 285), the English term "clown"—in Italian *pagliaccio* (from *pagliericcio*, in reference to his baggy outfit, or from the French *paillard*, "he who sleeps on straw," a man of inferior condition)—"means a man from the village." Verdone notes that "It is a deformation of 'clod' and derives from the Latin *colonus*: inhabitant of a colony, a settler or a farmer. In a broader sense, it is the equivalent of rude, clumsy, awkward." Ornella Volta (1970, 121–122), an essayist who collaborated with Fellini, says: "The clown—the true and authentic one, that is, the white clown—represents authority, while the Auguste stands for unbearable submission. The first is the law, the second is anarchy." She believes that the term "auguste" derives from the English word for the eighth month of the year and not the Italian "augusto," which means august in the sense of impressive, authoritarian. Therefore, broadly speaking, "the peasant who one midsummer day embodies the victim of the situation."

Fellini filmed *I clowns* (which had an "s" at the end also in the original Italian title) for RAI television in 1970. It was aired on Christmas Day that year (although it had been first presented in color at the Venice Film Festival) in black and white but in the original aspect ratio of 1.37:1, which was then altered for the cinema and for the first DVD edition to 1.85:1. As an accompaniment to the film, there was a sumptuous book, also called *I clowns*, which documents and, in a way, completes the film.[1]

This essay is based on the critofilm or visual essay, *Circo Fellini* (41'), that I made as an extra for the Blu-ray release of the film—in the 1.37:1 version and obviously in color—in 2011 by Rarovideo USA. It was later included, also in Blu-ray, in the Eureka edition (Masters of Cinema) in the United Kingdom in 2014.

I clowns was a failure with the public and critics alike upon its broadcast on RAI and release in the cinema, as well as when it was rereleased together with "Toby Dammit" (episode of *Histoires extraordinaires/Tre passi nel delirio/Spirits of the Dead* 1968) in *2 Fellini 2* (1977), in a version in which Fellini's voice was dubbed by noted actor, comedian, and dubber, Luigi Proietti.[2] The fact that it was made for television reduced its status to that of a minor work. And the controversy brought about by some circus performers at the time also did not help. The anomaly of being categorized—and somewhat confusedly so—as a genre film contributed to its relegation to the margins of Fellini's filmography. Is it documentary or fiction? No, it is neither, but rather an essay film; that is, a reflection both on the circus world and on Fellini's own cinema. In this sense, it is

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke,
Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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a self-reflexive film. It is something Fellini had tried, without memorable results in *Fellini: A Director's Notebook* (1969)—on the never completed "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna" project and on the preparation of *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969)—and in *Intervista* (1987). In contrast, he achieved remarkable results in *E il Casanova di Fellini?*, a film shot by Liliana Betti and Gianfranco Angelucci but, according to Olimpia Carlisi,[3] the film's "presenter," directed by Fellini. Watching it, we can tell that indeed it was. It is as if Fellini, having arrived at a crucial point in his creative activity, with the failure of "Mastorna" and in the interval between *Fellini - Satyricon* and *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976), returned to being a "journalist," as in the beginning of his career, this time reporting on himself. The desire to relive his carefree youth can be seen already in *Roma* (1972) and later in *Intervista*. It is a way of summing things up, of looking at himself in the mirror so as to return with renewed energy to working in the "big" cinema.

Fellini: A Director's Notebook also alternates between documentary and fiction with both genres filmed in the same manner, with a 16 mm handheld camera, zooms, and disjointed editing; with rough, directly recorded sound; and with director and troupe in the scene in the worst possible TV cine journalist style, despite the prestige of the crew (Pasqualino De Santis as director of photography, Ruggero Mastroianni as editor). While conjuring up the ghosts that surround the two films—the one shot and the one to be shot—a disorganized crew, like that of *I clowns*, encounters hippies and ancient Romans, who are in actuality exaggeratedly Felliniesque characters. Whether it is on the abandoned set of "Mastorna," at the Colosseum, in a childhood cinema that shows silent films on ancient Rome, among the Roman ruins with Genius the clairvoyant, in the metro with a professor (another anticipation of *Roma*), in the periphery with prostitutes and soldier-truck drivers, at the slaughterhouse of Testaccio, we do not see figures from the past but rather obsessions from the author's omnipresent unconscious. Even the visit to Marcello Mastroianni's villa in the first tract of the Via Appia Antica, which should belong to the "documentary" series, becomes the fruit not of reality but of Fellini's imagination. And the final scene of the audition, in which we encounter some of the faces from *I clowns*, serves Fellini's purposes not only in preparing for his upcoming film but also in concluding *Fellini: A Director's Notebook*.

Intervista, like *Fellini: A Director's Notebook* and *I clowns*, alternates documentary with fiction. In it, the two onscreen crews (the cinema crew working in 35 mm with Tonino Delli Colli and the Japanese TV crew employing 16 mm) seem as disorganized as in *Fellini: A Director's Notebook* and *I clowns*. This time, however, the method of shooting does not mimic television but is professional, even in the documentary scenes.

The beginning, after the introduction of the two crews, is documentary in style and continues being so even with the substitution of the original with a reconstructed "Casa del Passeggero"—from which the tram used to go to Cinecittà, but which was dilapidated and no longer in use at the time of the filming. "Documentary" prevails with the actor playing the young Fellini—Sergio Rubini—in make-up, and with executive producer Pietro Notarianni asked to replace the actor who was to have played a Fascist official but did not show up. When a fake tram, hauled by a car, with film cameras attached to it and the extras inside, leaves the Casa del Passeggero and passes the Porta San Giovanni, the film makes an audacious leap in time, from "documentary" to the fiction of the past in which Fellini the young journalist makes his first contact with Cinecittà. Obviously, even the documentary is fiction, or rather, it is documentary fiction. In other words, from the making of the film we go into the "real" film. Then, after the "fantastic voyage" toward the desired destination, "reality" and "fiction," Fellini's crew and the crews shooting in 1940 in Cinecittà,[4] the real film and the fake films, the present and the past, all begin to alternate and blend until Fellini's crew "enters" the set of an oriental film of 1940. We return to the present with the aspiring actresses, bit players or extras, on their way to Cinecittà from the metro. But what is the difference between yesterday's Cinecittà and that of

today? There is none. A big circus, a bit sleazy in both instances. Fellini's requiem for his own cinema? A testament film that Fellini leaves to his audience on his way of making movies? We are encouraged to think so by the pathetic scene with Mastroianni, Fellini, and Rubini in the house of a now large and aged Anita Ekberg (she was not yet so in her brief appearance in *I clowns*), watching with Mandrake-Mastroianni's testimonial "endorsement" (his Mandrake character is part of a television commercial or Fellini's parody of same), the "magic" projection of *La dolce vita* (1960). The chaotic penultimate sequence in the rain confirms that, for better or for worse, an era of cinema—or only that of Fellini?—has concluded. At the end of the 1980s, another Italian cinema was knocking at the door. Not that of Sergio Rubini and *Intervista*'s female protagonist Antonella Ponziani, two youths embodying nostalgia for the past, and not the one of redskins armed with spears/TV antennas besieging the last survivors of a cinema that has passed. It is an Italian cinema that, after the industrial crisis of the 1970s, after the decline of the "great masters," with no more ties to the past, becomes an orphan, looking over the edge and working under the radar, emerging in the 2000s and affirming with arrogance its existence against the nostalgia of the established forms of the past.[5]

As for *E il Casanova di Fellini?*—leaving to specialists the job of attributing it to Fellini or not—we are in the field of documentary without fictions, which is, at the same time, a wholly fictionalized documentary. Without doubt the presence of outstanding actors, such as Marcello Mastroianni, Ugo Tognazzi, Vittorio Gassman, Alain Cuny, Alberto Sordi, as well as Olimpia Carlisi,[6] who introduces them in the film—makes this, paradoxically, Fellini's most "stellar" work. It also entails an extravagant "*mise en scène*," implicitly confirming that only Il Maestro could have marshalled such star power to audition for the role of the protagonist of his film. Certainly, this was not within the competence of Betti and Angelucci, who—perennial assistant directors for Fellini—were credited as directors.

But let's go back to *I clowns*. In the aforementioned critofilm, thanks to Barry Salt's methodological instruction on stylometry in his indispensable *Moving Into Pictures: More on Film History, Style, and Analysis* (2006, 20–22), the statistical elaboration done for me by the Latvian website cinemetrics.lv, and the graphic one created by Simone Starace, I highlight some of the film's stylistic characteristics.[7]

The first chart (Figure 11.1)[8] illustrates the course of the film by following the length of each shot. In other words, it shows the rhythm of the editing, which is rather fast. The average duration of the shots (ASL, average shot length) is in fact slightly more than 7 seconds.

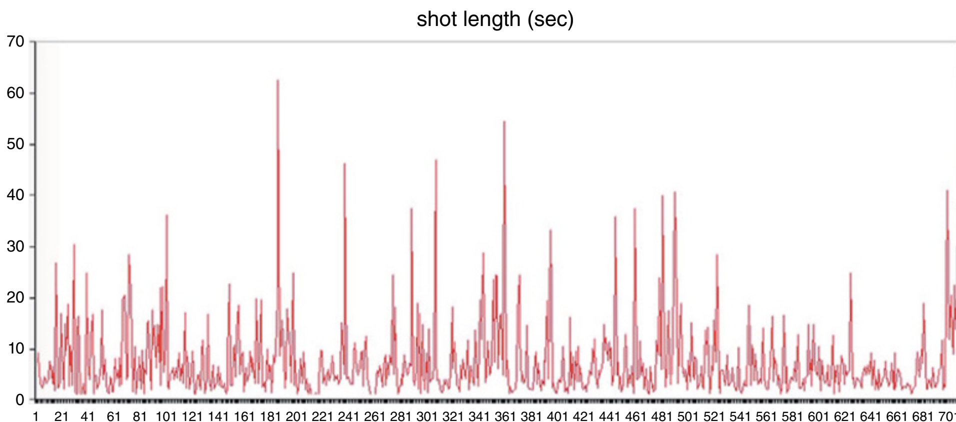

Figure 11.1

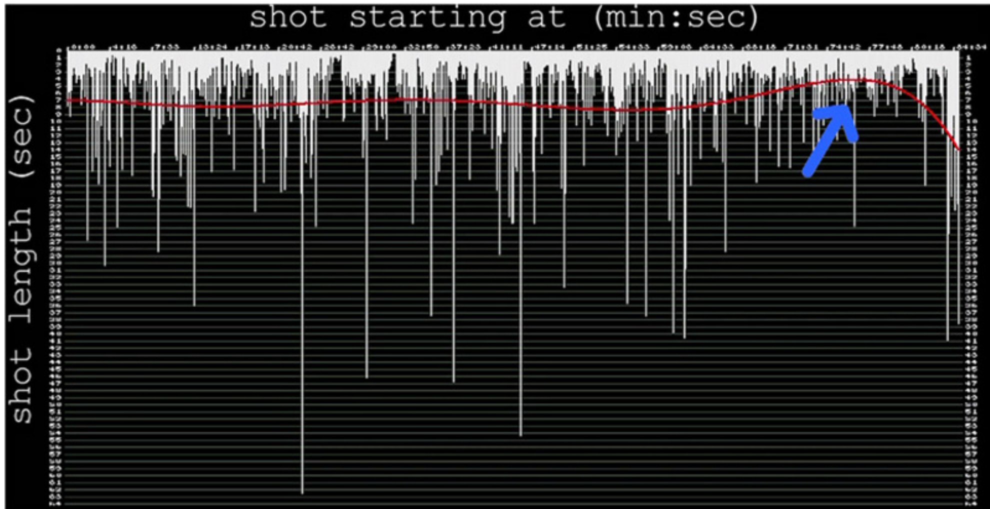

Figure 11.2

In the second chart (Figure 11.2), the film's 719 shots are seen from top down. The line that crosses them (the so-called trend line) shows the fluctuations of the rhythm from one scene to the next. As you can see, this line is essentially uniform since there are no major accelerations or decelerations of the film's pace, except in the scene of the funeral parade, in which there is a notable acceleration. In fact, the upward curve (see arrow) indicates a faster rhythm, which is followed by a deceleration for the clowns' farewell (the "plunge," with a more extended rhythm).

In the following histogram (Figure 11.3), we see the number of shots in vertical, and the different types of shots and shot scales in horizontal. In the pie chart, we have separated in top right the shot scales, that is, the shots in which the environment dominates, from the shots in which the human figure prevails. We can immediately see that there are more medium shots, medium close shots, and full shots (see arrow), meaning that the shots favor characters in action, something that is seen in silent slapstick films.

In Figure 11.4, we see the number of shots in vertical, and the types of camera movement, or nonmovement (the fixed shots), in horizontal. In the pie chart, we have separated the fixed shots, which are definitely predominant (there are about 450 of them), from those in movement. Here we can also say that the film favors fixed shots in which it is the characters in action that dominate and not the movement of the film camera.

In our last histogram (Figure 11.5), we can see in the small columns the 26 scenes into which the film can be divided. The darker columns correspond to the fiction scenes, the light-colored ones to the documentary scenes, while the striped, highest, column, which charts the long funeral sequence, is actually a mix of fiction and documentary. Fellini's TV crew mixes with both the cinematic (fictional) and the televisual ("documentary") shooting of the activity.

We can say that this stylometric analysis confirms some of the characteristics of *I clowns*. We ought to specify that this method, at least the way it is evolving, might allow us to compare this film to the author's other films or to other films from the same period or of the same genre. But this is not our goal here. This method could be more broadly developed and applied by scholars. Yet, even in this so-called pioneer phase, it reveals some interesting details, however elementary. It forces us to conduct a detailed analysis, to disassemble, so to say, an edited film. In our case, we can say that Fellini uses a "middle-ground" language, and, by favoring human figures instead of

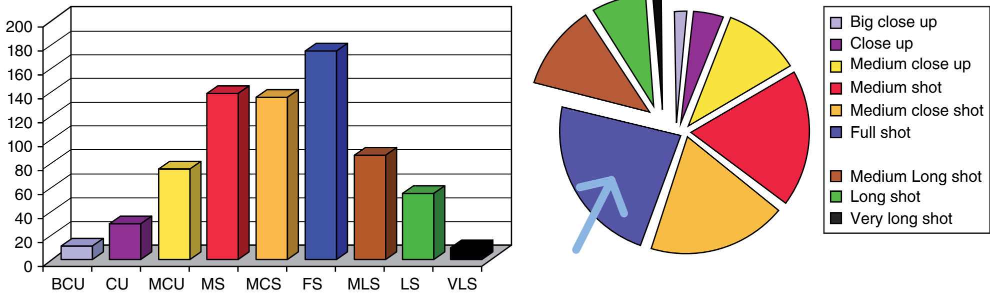

Figure 11.3

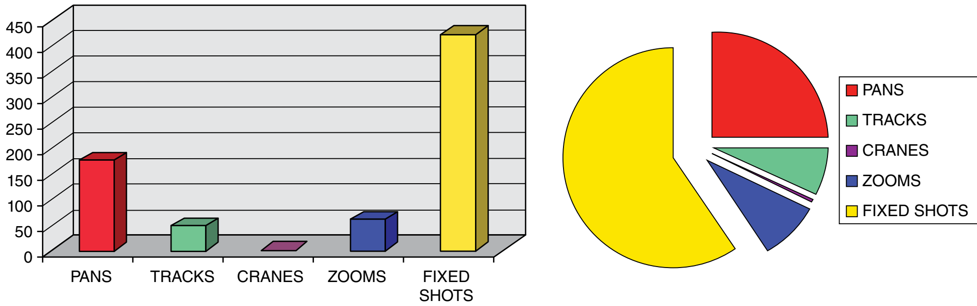

Figure 11.4

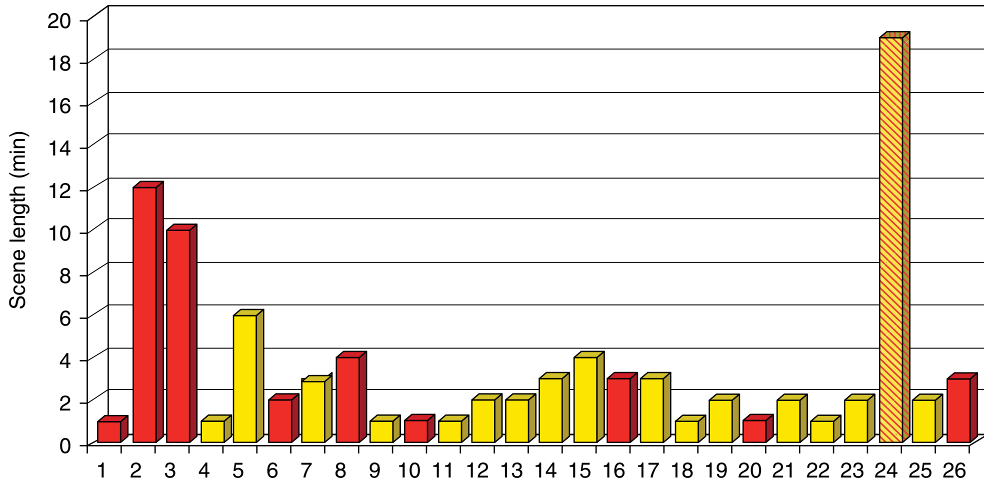

Figure 11.5

the background, he tries to be close to his characters, whether they are documentary or fiction in nature. In order to determine that this is a "television" choice, we would have to compare the data of this film to that of his other films. More intuitively than scientifically, we have advanced the hypothesis that this choice is the same as in the silent slapstick films, a genre that was very dear to Fellini and one that reflects the type of circus acts performed by clowns.

There is at least one more characteristic that should be considered: the diverse lighting strategy for the documentary and the fiction scenes. Fellini uses flat, "television" lights and pallid colors for the first; contrasting, "cinematographic" lights and vivid colors for the second. I do not think the presence of two directors of photography, Giuseppe Rotunno (not credited, who worked in the first two weeks) and Dario Di Palma, explains these differences. Rotunno told me that he had shot some fiction scenes (as well as documentary). I, therefore, must conclude that both of them worked on the two types of scenes.

Obviously, that documentary is also a "*messa in scena*": the crew that we see is not the real one of the film. But this is done to make spectators think that what they are watching is true, to make them believe it. In turn, the fiction scenes—in particular the reconstruction-evocations of circus numbers—are presented as "historical documents." And even though we know that what we are watching is not true, we believe it all the same; we want to believe it to continue our daydream.

Another important element is parody. Fellini makes fun of himself throughout the film. And along with himself, he parodies his crew, in part because it is a TV crew and in part because it is still a cinematographic crew. He—who was obsessed with providing his films with splendor, wonder, and the gushing spectacle of his imagination—here emphasizes deception, even charlatanism.

In fact, behind his circus are not only clowns but also the comics from vaudeville and cinema: Alvaro Vitali (the soundman but also the character Zig-Zag), Enrico Fumagalli (Jimmy Guyon), Carlo Pisacane (nicknamed Capannelle, the old man with the long beard), Dante Maggio (Camicia), Tino Scotti (the clown-notary), Riccardo Billi (the auguste orchestra conductor), Fanfulla (Luigi Visconti's pseudonym, the white clown who speaks at the funeral), Nino Vingelli, and others. This film is also a tribute to these performers, who are not clowns.

Regarding the interviewed clowns, we need to specify that, except those invited to Café Curieux with circus historian Tristan Rémy and those at the home of Pierre Étaix and family, all are dubbed, as was Fellini's usual way of working. Whatever the real Jean Houcke (the former circus director), Charlie Rivel (the Spanish auguste), Père Loriot (Georges Bazot's pseudonym, an auguste), and Bario (the pseudonym of Manrico Meschi from Livorno, an auguste) say is actually what Fellini makes them say and not necessarily what they really said.

The opening scenes of *I clowns* present us with a quick summary, almost a trailer, of the most typical circus attractions. We never return there. These scenes conclude with an extended, but just as synthetic, clown performance during which we see, from the back, the child, Fellini, seated in the first row. "That evening," Fellini's off-screen voice says, "finished in a brusque manner. The clowns did not make me laugh. On the contrary, they scared me. Those chalked faces with indecipherable expressions, those masks distorted in drunkenness, the shouting, the mad laughter, their absurd, atrocious jokes, reminded me of other weird and disquieting figures that live and fuss about in every provincial town." And here there is another gallery of clowns in plainclothes who prefigure some caricature figures from *Amarcord* (1974). However, what in Fellini's more ambitious films is developed to a state of excess and even condescension, in *I clowns* is merely sketched, like a preparatory drawing for a painting.

After this long fictional introduction, the documentary begins, with Fellini's "disordinato" crew preparing the film that we are already watching. At the end of the visit to Orfei Circus, we see the first "historical reconstruction," narrated by a clown in street clothes: the death of Jimmy

Guyon, who dies from too much laughter as he watches a number performed by Footit and Chocolat (the Englishman Geo Footit and the Cuban Rafael Padilla).

We then move to Paris, where documentary scenes alternate with fiction scenes, the latter of which are a reconstruction of the numbers performed by famous white and auguste clowns. There is the white clown Antonet (Umberto Guillaume from Brescia) and the auguste Béby (the Italian Aristodemo Frediani). There are the Fratellini: three Florentine brothers who made it big in France: Francesco, or François, the white clown; Alberto, or Albert, the auguste clown; and Paolo, or Paul, who is "the Candide of the situation, the simpleton who lives in the best of all possible worlds, always exposed to mundane misadventures," as Ornella Volta says (1970, 142). They perform three numbers: in an orphanage, a hospital, and a lunatic asylum. We also see a number by Dario the white clown and Bario the auguste, interspersed during the moving encounter with Manrico Meschi (Bario), and, finally, the short and disappointing—although nonfictionalized—archival footage of the auguste clown Rhum (Enrico Sprocani) and the white clown Pipo (Gustave-Joseph Sosman). Another film, that of the Fratellini in Pierre Étaix's house, rips as it is being projected. "Perhaps Tristan Rémy is right, perhaps the clown is definitively dead," concludes Fellini.

But contrary to the pessimistic ending of *Intervista*, *I clowns* does not end here. The long funeral "celebration" that follows—in which we recognize under their make-up some members of the television crew and the born-again Jimmy Guyon—is a hymn to the vitality of the circus; illusory, yes, but real on the screen. Here Fellini expresses himself in one of his most beautiful spectacle performances. And while circus may be dead, cinema is still alive.

While Fellini summons up a final reconciliation between a white clown and an auguste to the music of "Ebb Tide," which is as poetic as it is improbable (quite like his characters), I can imagine Federico—perhaps in the company of Giulietta, both of them blessed by their beloved Charlot/Charlie Chaplin—going to his paradise… as in a page from *Il libro dei sogni* (Fellini 2007/2008).

And we continue imagining that in their ascension to the artists' paradise, they are followed by those Fellini protagonists who are all feminine versions of the auguste: Cabiria the prostitute from *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952) Gelsomina from *La strada* (1954), born-again Cabiria from *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1956), Giulietta from *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965), Ginger from *Ginger e Fred* (1986). And the circuses *of La strada, 8½* (1963)*, Giulietta degli spiriti*…. And then, why not, all those scenes from his films that are as spectacular as the circus: the curtain raisers of *Luci del varietà* (*Variety Lights* 1950), the set of the *fotoromanzo* in *Lo sceicco bianco,* the carnival dance in *I vitelloni* (1953), the fashionable party in *Il bidone* (1955), the prostitute parade on Via delle Terme di Caracalla in *Le notti di Cabiria*, the party at the aristocratic castle in *La dolce vita*… etc., etc.

Notes

1 Re-edited in 1988 with a different cover but, strangely, without the "s" in the title. Renzi briefly speaks about the creation of this book in his *L'ombra di Fellini* (1994, 49–51). The Fellini Foundation in Rimini possesses the original screenplay of the film with slight differences in comparison to the one published in Renzi 1970, 361–407, and in Renzi 1972, 133–206.

2 But for other critical perspectives, see, among others (is it by chance they are all foreigners?), Pierre 1971(a) and (b); Burke 1996, 181–188; Rohdie 2002, 29–33; Deshoulières 2004, 201–216; and Manganaro 2014, 239–248, 267–269.

3 In conversations with the author.

4 When commemorating Cinecittà, both a real and a ghostly place, we should not exclude the memory of the short film by Domenico Paolella, *Ghosts of Cinecittà* (1940).
5 I have discussed this in Aprà 2017, 103–118.
6 Carlisi goes on to play Isabella in *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova*, 1976).
7 For a more profound understanding of the stylometric method, see http://kinolab.lettere.uniroma2.it/zangiku_monogatari/stilometria.html.
8 The illustrations are frame enlargements from my "Fellini's Circus" critofilm cited in the text.

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12

Fellini's Sense of Place

John Agnew

Introduction

There can be few film directors more associated with specific locales and venues than Federico Fellini. This is not just a question of how much Fellini's films are quintessentially "Italian" in their celebration of *italianità* or stereotypes thereof, but more especially the way in which geographical settings are protagonists in his films. This is perhaps most obvious in *La dolce vita* (1960), with its use of both iconic Roman locales such as the Via Veneto and the Trevi Fountain and less familiar but powerfully redolent locations set in the Roman periphery. But the selection of sites for filming is also central to the purported memorialization of Fellini's youth and childhood in Rimini in, respectively, *I vitelloni* (1953) and *Amarcord* (1974) (see Melandri et al. 2001).

Indeed, Rome and its surrounding countryside and the Adriatic town of Rimini, with the adjacent seacoast, where Fellini grew up, figure powerfully in many of his films as protagonists and backdrops. In particular, Rome's status as center of a once-great empire and as the contemporary headquarters of the world's largest Christian denomination endows its landscapes with meaning for audiences worldwide that most other places lack. Rimini, meanwhile, stands in for a provincial Italy that plays against the seeming universality of a city that is much more than simply a national or imperial capital like London, Vienna, or Paris (Boccuzzi 2000, 292). Yet Rome is also in many respects a modern city in the sense that most of its built-up area is the result of disordered growth since Italian unification and more particularly since 1945 (Agnew 1995; D'Eramo 2017). Fellini thus provides a vision of a peculiarly Italian cultural imagination that, in the words of Andrea Minuz (2015, 7), is: "tottering between universal myths—the Church, the Roman Empire—and hyper-local myths (the city-states, strong regional identities, and a sense of local rather than national belonging)." Minuz adds, "The universal nature of [Fellini's] visual creations is systematically interwoven with the particular nature of specific localities, passed on from one generation to another. Like the effects of a spell, this cultural heritage seems to be evoked from the depths of the Italian unconscious."

Yet, counterfactually, Fellini's reputation as an at least somewhat placeless filmmaker has deep roots that need to be exposed. To some commentators in the 1960s, his engagement with "real"

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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places is at best something of an on-again off-again characteristic. To one critic of Fellini's mid-career films beginning with *8½* (1963), his earlier films are by comparison "obsessively preoccupied with the *sense* of place, of physical location" (Bennett, 1964, 738; author's emphasis). The success of *La dolce vita* then gave Fellini "an intellectual blank check ... to indulge his whims as he saw fit" (739). Sense of place is thereby eclipsed by self-celebration of the auteur-director. Apparently, popular success led him up the postmodern garden path, so to speak. To another critic, Fellini was born fully postmodern because Fellini often eschews "the expectations of literary narrative and psychological realism" ... for it is "the language of painting that he most frequently employs" (Harcourt 1966, 9). It is thus recurring themes and images of the out-of-place (or bizarre) and purposeless meandering that give Fellini's films their "aesthetic charge" and "surrealist intensity" (Harcourt 1966, 10). The same critic later and more profitably emphasizes specific places in Fellini's films as representing the loss of community and the key roles of ritual, religious processions, and the ceremonial in everyday life as recording this loss (Harcourt 1972, 3). A sense of place thus figures into the films but it involves, particularly, sites of Fellini's "religious impulse," as illustrated by the final scene in *8½*, when Guido kisses the cleric's ring, the visit to the shrine in *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1956), and the Madonna sequence in *La dolce vita*—rather than bespeaking "place" in its own right (Harcourt 1972, 3).

In the case of both critics, what is missing, partly because their appraisals were offered early in Fellini's career, is much sense of continuity in the sense of place across his films or the ways in which, at his most postmodern, Fellini actively privileges spatial difference over temporal narrative. From Fellini's earliest to his last films, with a few exceptions, there is a drive to provide a "counter-history" to the "monumental history" of modern Italy. In short, Fellini precludes rigid distinctions between "before" and "after." It is in the architectural relics and Grande Raccordo Annulare ring road of *Roma* (1972), the open urban spaces and beaches of *La strada* (1954), the seascapes of *I vitelloni*, and the Via Veneto and EUR district in *La dolce vita* that Fellini not only finds his inspiration but locates his demonstration of the build-up of the alternative past into the present. That he recreated many of the specific sites in the Roman film studios at Cinecittà in order "to transfigure the reality and to joke around a little—or a lot" (Mariani and Barron 2011, 314) should not detract from the fact that even as he uses his sites as a "staging ground for fantasy" (316), he is also trying to represent the historical staging of places without depending singularly on their present-day appearance.

Here I want to argue for the unfixity of Fellini's sense of place, yet its obdurate persistence. Much more than has been previously recognized, Italian folk culture is key to understanding Fellini's sense of place, and the sense of place seems to disappear for him, as the force of community declines. Further, Fellini's use of place suggests alternative pasts that are camouflaged by present-day appearances. Despite the claims to the universality of ancient Rome, and the Catholic Church, Fellini's films deuniversalize them. All of these aspects of place are germane to Fellini's films whether they seem to be located in one place, many places, or no place.

More radically, the postmodern element in Fellini, most evident from around 1960—the self-consciousness of the auteur, the concern for the surfaces of life, the fragmentation of experience, and so on—leads to a world in which attention to space dominates the imagination (Anderson 1998, 56). In this regard, Fellini appeals acutely to the fact that audiences are increasingly open to visual-spatial rather than to historical clues and signs in making sense of their experience. The use of CinemaScope or "widescreen" in *La dolce vita* and other films allowed for the "great horizontal extension of the frame for staging numerous scenes with secondary characters as commentators on the film's action" (Vitella 2012, 29). Of course, the "spatial turn" can be overstated, as Huehls (2009, 5–6) says of so-called postmodern literature: "a mistrust of teleological progress narratives is frequently (and accurately) cited as a dominant characteristic of postmodernism" but "just

because postmodern literature fragments time and flattens history does not mean that it lacks a specific temporality or that it has rejected time as a viable mode of experience." Nevertheless, one good example of spatial command as the dominant modus operandi might be Steiner's living room (set in an apartment in the putative EUR) in *La dolce vita*, where a narrative connecting "orientalism, colonialism, Western constructions of gender and race, Oedipal family dynamics," and so on displaces the authority of the two dominant men in the room (Waller 2002, 5–6), but does so using a song sung by the African-American woman in the room to entice the viewer to "look away," as the song itself intones (Figure 12.1). Another example in the same film is the camera panning with a helicopter flying across the Roman hinterland toward the Vatican, carrying a statue of Christ. In this case, the film tentatively maps the terrain in which the plot, for what there is, will be spatially embedded. This is a liminal passage situating the city and its religious significance in a series of shots. In this way, "the choice of locales and the sequencing of shots of travel through the city work to build a simulacrum of space" (Mariani and Barron 2011, 311).

In this chapter, I will focus on *I vitelloni, La strada, Le notti di Cabiria*, *La dolce vita*, *Roma*, and *Amarcord* to examine Fellini's sense of place. I will also make reference to a later film *E la nave va* (*And the Ship Sails On* 1983) to suggest how much, even when motion and mobility are involved as key elements in his films, Fellini uses devices such as the place origins of actors and the venues located on a ship to unite figures with the mutable settings of their lives. Certain characters, such as Titta in *Amarcord* and Cabiria in *Le notti di Cabiria*, thus come to personify specific places as a means of stressing both the particularities of place and, on occasion, the instability of individual identity.

The filming of *E la nave va* draws attention to the longstanding role in Fellini's films of the soundstage at Cinecittà where he crafted much of his sense of place in lieu of filming "on location" as the popular phrase would have it. Perhaps one reason why Fellini has been viewed as a "placeless" director is simply that his film sites are often studio sets for imaginary feats even as the sets ground him in discrete, identifiable places beyond the studio gates. That these places may be based more, in the case of his Rome-based films, on Fellini's "memories of old Italian films than [on] the monuments of the classical city" (Theodorakopoulos 2007, 354) does not undermine the fact that their selection is a fundamental part of his vision as a director.

Figure 12.1 Spatial dynamics in Steiner's living room. *Source*: *La dolce vita* (1960). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Riama Film/Cineriz. Frame grab captured by John Agnew from the 2014 DVD version.

Fellini's Sense of Place

Lives, events, and social situations take place. Place, as Peter Wollen (1980, 25) reminds us, "is at the heart of film-making as well as film-viewing." As he argues, "Place implies memory, reverie (Bachelard's 'poetics of space' should surely be the 'poetics of place') and the imaginary. … Place also implies displacement, being elsewhere, being a stranger. Films are like imaginary journeys; the cinema is a magic means of transport to distant places." Yet, the more abstract term space is often invoked, as Wollen suggests, when the more concrete term "place" is implied. Places have specificity, in fact a singularity that the term "space" occludes in its emphasis on relative location within an overarching grid (such as latitude and longitude) (Sack 1997). Places are necessarily located somewhere, of course, but it is their intrinsic qualities as the sites of landscapes and the venues or locales of social interaction that bring about their overall significance for understanding social life. Space is not opposed to place as such, as in ideas such as *space* equals the global and *place* equals the local; it is rather dialectically related in the sense that place brings the universal into contact with the particular (Massey 1994).

Being sited, poverty and artistic creativity, for example, are encountered specifically in places but also betray traces of the spatially extended processes (colonialism, education, migration, institutional histories, etc.) that undoubtedly play important roles in producing them. In the movies, therefore, "places (and the images we have of them) grant us the experience of the minutiae of local life as well as a (frail, tenuous) purchase on the immensity of the global" (Rhodes and Gorfinkel 2011, xx). There are at least two consequences of this claim. One is that placing is inevitable even if only because places stand in for more abstract and wide-ranging social processes that are captured in them. Places simply cannot be avoided. The other is that any engagement with place is necessarily limited and capricious in terms of what it can capture about a place or more broadly. "Set up a movie camera in front of a place, any place (town, city, countryside). The place will be both exactly what the camera records and exactly what it cannot bear witness to. Any image of a place will be identifiable at least as *some*place, but no image can impart to us the whole place" (xx).

Fellini seems to have been quite conscious of his sense of place and willing to opine about it, contra the quintessential director of *8½* who never had anything to say to reporters about his creativity. But it is not something "separate" from his famous self-consciousness about making films. Places are encased within the subject matter but nevertheless frequently appear relatively undisguised in his essays and interviews. In the interviews recorded by Chandler (1995, 312–313), for example, Fellini speaks at some length about how his life and career were anchored first around the Fulgor Cinema in Rimini and then at the Cinecittà Stage 5 in Rome. He also recounts how much his experience with foreign filming, limited as it was, sent him back to Rome and to Cinecittà. "I found Rome and found *my* world," he says (his emphasis, 218). A sampling of his observations is worth providing to illustrate just how significant his sense of place seems to have been to Fellini.

The indelible link to the Via Veneto that Fellini established in *La dolce vita* serves as the entrée into a long essay on how he never goes there ("Well, hardly ever") but that then opens up a discussion about the intimate and emotional topography of Rome when he first arrived in Rome from Rimini as a young man (Fellini 1996, 67–83). In passing, he identifies the environs of Termini railway station (and its possibility of escape back home) with its "furnished rooms" and jumbled population of "frightened immigrants" and so on as the place against which he designed his Via Veneto, based in part around his "sense of inferiority" relative to its denizens. He explores how Via Veneto has been transformed by its association with the film (tourists haunt it looking for

paparazzi), how filming in situ became impossible for Fellini because one man kept cursing to disrupt filming (and this is why the director ended up moving a "slice" of Via Veneto onto Stage 5 at Cinecittà), and that his association with the street was "very vague: acquaintance rather than friendship." In another essay on Rome (Fellini 2015, 226–235), Fellini reflects on such metaphors of the city as a "mother" and the "infantilization" of its inhabitants. In making a film about Rome (*Roma*), he suggests that it is as exotic as anywhere else but also intensely familiar because he lives there. The attempt at capturing it inevitably falls short. "I prepared the movie with the same enthusiasm as always, I scrutinized the city, I went to root around in the most secluded spots, but in the end those places, that humanity, those buildings, that grandiose scenery I thought I'd gotten to know well, turned out to be completely fresh, untouched. In short, Rome remained spotless, completely alien to my film about her. I feel like making another movie, additional stories about Rome" (235).

Concepts such as modernization and globalization have often been deployed to convey the sense of increasing cultural standardization across space and over time be it at the national or global scales, respectively. As a result, different places can be seen as standing in for one another. Yet, as much research on the cultural differences between cities (Silver and Clark 2017), place and politics (Agnew 1987, 2002), and place and sexual identities (Brown-Saracino 2018) suggests, even as places change in their character and processes of constitution, they persist as the settings in which much of life is lived for significant numbers of people. Places are both made by us and make us (Sullivan 2017). In one of his longest and most memorable essays, "Rimini, my home town," Fellini (1996, 1–40) uses a visit to the hospital to frame his way of thinking about a film he wants to make (but never did)—"Il viaggio di G. Mastorna" ("The Voyage of G. Mastorna")—and to reflect on his hometown, the setting for *Amarcord*. He does not like going back there. But he must go on talking about it. He refers to its history as a minor seaside resort before the Second World War, the houses, school, his friend Titta Benzi, the clothes the children wore, peasants and townies, churches, fog, bars, ads for American movies, and the Grand Hotel. He recounts the visit to Rimini of Starace, one of the Big Fascists, the railway station and trains, and the history of the town as encapsulated in the names on the tombstones in the cemetery. He left in 1937, and when he returned in 1945, much of the town was rubble. He claims that Rimini was blotted out for him, so that Ostia near Rome became his substitute. That is where he made *I vitelloni*. It is "an invented Rimini," he writes, "more Rimini than the real one. It suggests Rimini in a theatrical, scenic and at the same time innocent way. It is my home, almost clean, almost without its visceral moods, without aggression or surprises. In other words, it is a filmic reconstruction of the town in my memory, into which I can penetrate—how shall I put it?—as a tourist without being involved" (Fellini 1996, 33). Still, Rimini is his real hometown; it speaks his dialect. Getting reacquainted with it—in 1967—now it is a major resort: "I droned on to myself about the new form my home town had taken on, all this unknown Rimini, this strange place that appeared to me to be Las Vegas, seemed to be trying to tell me … that it had changed and so I had better change as well" (Fellini 1996, 40).

Fellini is also well aware that there is a more microscale appreciation of place at work in his films. It is in landscape images associated with particular places much more than dialogue that Fellini found his métier in representing the stories he sets out to tell. In Damian Pettigrew's documentary about him, *Fellini: I'm a Born Liar* (Pettigrew 2003), Fellini refers to the importance to him of the placement of objects, and the vital role of light and shadow in conveying the meaning of scenes for the overall thrust of a film. Films such as *I vitelloni* and *Amarcord* rely heavily on sites such as railway stations and country houses at crucial moments in storylines in which the effects of light and shadow demonstrably make the points more than what the actors do or say. Consider, for example, the beach scene in *I vitelloni* and later the "forlorn" shadow cast by a building across

the railway platform as Moraldo turns toward it (Harcourt 1966, 9–10). Another example is the ritual wine bath scene in *8½*. As a self-confessed "visual person" (Chandler 1995, 253), Fellini makes the images in his films central in a way they are not in films that are "talky," organized around actors speaking rather than visual images located in particular locales. The Italian folk Catholicism that is key to understanding much of Fellini's sense of place, rests first and finally on what has been called the "cult of images" in counterpoint to the textualism and oral culture of both official Catholicism and, more particularly, Protestantism (see, e.g., Carroll 1996).

More specifically, in relation to a named place, in *Fellini e l'EUR,* a documentary from 1972 by Luciano Emmer, Fellini is shown wandering around the district, originally designed for a world's fair to be held in 1942 but not finished until well after the Second World War, trying to explain why he finds it so fascinating and hence why it has appeared in so many of his films from *La dolce vita* onward. It is provisional, rather like a film set, but also dream-inducing: "It's a district that both is and isn't there. The EUR was meant to be a certain thing.... I am fascinated by the provisional nature of the place; it's like living among the stands of a trade exhibition, say in Milan. You get the feeling you might wake up and find they've taken everything down and carried it all off" (quoted in Minuz 2015, 90). Alternatively, to capture the role of this place in Fellini's larger worldview, "it was a space in which to reconcile the irreconcilable tropes of progress and myth, rationalism and mysticism" (91). There is nothing nostalgic or celebratory about Fellini's sense of place, no yearning for better times or a world we have lost. Rather the sense of the past is colored by a skepticism that planned interventions, such as those he associates with Fascism, ever turn out as intended.

Fellini's Sense of Place at Work

Places figure in film plots and scripts in a number of ways. They can be the *subjects* of films, *settings* for films, *protagonists* within films, and *symbols* in which the place stands in for a cultural process or ritual important to the plot of a film (Helphand 1986). I draw on these categories heuristically to survey how place figures in Fellini's films; films can show up in several categories albeit not usually in equal measure.

Places are the primary subjects of *Amarcord* and *Roma*. The former is about Rimini as remembered from Fellini's youth. The town is central to the film. The other themes that can be seen flowing through the work are grounded in this "place." These range from the dismantling of the local social order under Fascism to the role of communal rituals (such as the witch-burning to celebrate the arrival of spring). Rimini grounds the male competition within the family in the memorable dinner scene and the adolescent sexuality, portrayed as a type of compulsion rather than free choice. The very landscape of the town—the stone buildings, streets, churches, and piazzas—defines a closed-in world that is being invaded by outsiders imposing a wider conformity upon it. The Lawyer figure in the film provides much of the narration about the town, which contextualizes the main characters: the boy Titta, his parents, his loafer uncle and his mad uncle, and his feckless grandfather. This is not a realist or straightforward empirical representation of Rimini, a documentary about the town as it was. It is much more about how desire and fulfillment are finally unrelated and planned interventions fail. Many of the scenes in the film focus on how much local identities are challenged from outside (by the Hollywood films advertised on posters, the arrival of the Fascist grandee, etc.). Two scenes emphasize the surreal interpretation Fellini offers to this challenge: the townspeople rowing out to see the great Fascist ocean liner the *Rex* emerging in foggy darkness out of nowhere (Figure 12.2), and the sudden bizarre arrival of a peacock in the central piazza of the town in the midst of a snow storm.

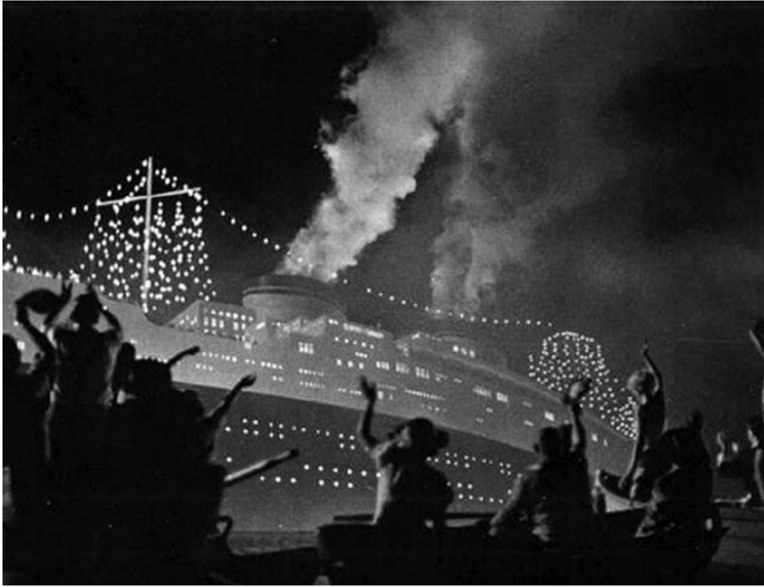

Figure 12.2 Local identities challenged from outside: the passing of the Rex ocean liner. *Source*: *Amarcord* (1973). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by F.C. Produzioni, PECF. Frame grab captured by John Agnew from the 2006 DVD version.

In *Roma*, Fellini portrays a city that is both sublime and decadent. While there is no leading character like Titta in *Amarcord*, Rome becomes the place in which Fellini, himself, the narrator/image-maker, situates an autobiographical encounter with the city, moving from childhood to old age (even if not in strictly chronological order). Rome becomes for him at once a love object and a city that promises a certainty and a national identity that are merely illusory. For a filmmaker like Fellini Rome is an ideal place from which to select and recombine evocative images. Its past completely haunts its present. As one critic makes this point: "Rome is a city where life and death coexist to the point of becoming nondifferentiated. The city becomes a haunted place of myriad geological layers of history and stories, which appear as in a cross-section before us …" (Szaniawski 2012). He points to the "contiguity of peace loving hippies" and ancient Roman monuments. In *Roma*, Rome is explored as a place through a set of apparently unconnected episodes each telling a story about or taking place in the city. Oneirically and realistically, scenes spill or segue into one another as Fellini captures locations from his youth and, moving forward in time, revisits them, creating a sense of the city's identity trapped between its layers. The city on its surface is devoted to spectacle, both mocked and celebrated: for example, the ten-minute long clerical fashion show set in the present and the music-hall sequence set in 1944 as fascist Rome is being bombed (Theodorakopoulos 2007, 359). Yet, this layering of spectacles simultaneously evokes the complexity of Rome's religious and political history.

More common across Fellini's films as a whole has been the director's take on places as settings in which social relations play out without any necessary rootedness or connectedness to specific recognizable or named places, as with his use of abandoned city plots or beaches. In this regard, place remains closely tied to the concept of community. If one persists, so does the other. If community declines, then place disappears. The idea of "placelessness" has emerged to signal this latter condition. Thus, airport terminals, fast-food restaurants, and highway rest stops,

indistinguishable architecturally from one another, are read as representing the demise of community and the death of place. The notion of community at the center of this association with place often implies a relatively closed world in which strong social ties enforce longstanding social norms and limit individual behavior. There are at least two ways to construe the loss of such an interdependence between community and place. Seen negatively, when this closed world is lost, only anomie and alienation remain. More positively, liberation from the norms and limits of community may be seen as providing the wherewithal for social change and upward social mobility by individuals who have the gumption to follow through. Such changes may require leaving town. Either way, however, the historic association drawn between place and tight-knit community is problematic. Places do not need to be essentially communal or extraordinary in any way to provide the locales and landscapes that truly inform their particularity. "Not only is there a singularity that belongs to the most ordinary and familiar of places … but even those seemingly genericized places—the shopping mall, the airport, the supermarket, the high-rise tower—whose character might seem otherwise to be erased by the globalized trappings of contemporary capitalism and its accompanying technologies, nevertheless retain their own singularity and so their own character *as places*" (Malpas 2017, 69–70, author's emphasis). Of course, the mythic loss of community can still fervently be believed in. But loss of place does not necessarily follow as its corollary.

This emphasis on the relative historical continuity of placement (embedding plots and characters in specific venues) comes with two important caveats. The first is that places are always embedded in broader spatial framings. The most important of these in recent history has been that of the nation. Thus, on both practical and political grounds, films made about places in Italy are dubbed "Italian." The ways places are considered and represented have various common referents in cultural traditions that spread across Italy historically, such as opera and *commedia dell'arte*. At the same time, crucial historical events in the history of Italy (late and difficult unification as a single state, Fascism, the "economic miracle" of the late 1950s and early 1960s, the years of protest and violence in the 1970s and 1980s) and that relate to Italy's peculiarities (such as being the seat of the Roman Catholic Church and having a long history of organized criminal groupings in some regions) pervade the places to which films must necessarily make reference (Dalle Vacche 1992). The second caveat is about the historical contingency of place. A film fixes a place. But places are always in transformation. The fixity is in fact momentary. Think of film images of Berlin with a wall through it that today, of course, no longer exists. As Rhodes (2011, 48) states: "place might be a word or figure better suited to name an experience of frailty and flux than one of permanence and solidity …. A single moving image will only give us evidence of how a place looked at a given moment in time. That moment in that place, seemingly fixed on film, gives us evidence of the lack of fixity. Film, however, like place, is a medium of flux, in which one moment collapses into and transforms the next, no matter what place the filming camera has found or where it has found itself." Concomitantly, Fellini's roots in the Romagna region show up in a number of his films but always in relation to the shifting relations between local/national/global influences, never in terms of an isolated and never changing world of the local (Miro Gori 2016). As with so many other Italian filmmakers of his generation, there is little or no romantic nostalgia for a lost past symbolized by a "special" timeless place recalled from youth (Morreale 2009).

This framing helps us understand why Fellini loves beaches and urban open spaces, presumably because they are places without clear identities but open to sudden visual surprises and [open] emotional responses that unsettle any easy definition of their meanings (see Mariani and Barron 2011). Indeed, it is exactly as settings that signal individual disassociation and social dislocation that this category of place has been important, particularly in films such as *I vitelloni* and *La strada*. It is the actual or potential tenuousness of attachment to place that gives both of these films their vitality and edginess. In the first case, the film could be seen as continuation, albeit filmed years earlier, of the autobiographical *Amarcord*. It relies on characters from Fellini's own

youth, a group of loafers from Rimini. Arguably, however, its main storyline rests on fusing two longstanding Italian self-stereotypes, idleness and effeminacy, in the ensemble of young males at the heart of the film. The putative Rimini is simply the setting in which the stereotypes play out.

In *La strada*, two somewhat different aspects of Italianness, that of popular Catholicism and local folklore, are represented in events and travels through rural Italy of two characters, the strongman-entertainer Zampanò and his purchased assistant Gelsomina. The film focuses on the precariousness of the life of traveling performers and the challenges of getting by on a daily basis when reliant on the reactions of audiences. The settings are not that different from those of the few nonurban Italian neorealist films. But as the film unfolds, there is a shift from a relatively ordered to what could be called a despairing landscape. The actual places are left vague but give the impression of spatial as well as social marginality: isolated towns, a convent, and open ground. Each represents the possibility of putting down roots in a homeplace, but that hope is always dashed. Beginning and ending as it does with deserted beaches, the film empties out the possibility of a future community that is strengthened and sustained by religious or social tradition.

Nino Rota's musical score plays a crucial role in weaving together the subtext of the film. Given the punctuated character of the film's scenography, this is absolutely vital. Rota's music is important to all of the films on which he collaborated with Fellini, but here a single theme unites characters across disparate *mises-en-scène* (Bondanella 1992, 11). *La strada* uses images of marginalized places and the haunting musical motif to construct a movie, akin to the fairytale "Beauty and the Beast," about how people marginalize one another but may also achieve redemption once they recognize their role in doing so.

Places can also be active protagonists, as they work in specific ways that are missing when they are either subjects or settings. What I have in mind can be illustrated by *Le notti di Cabiria* and *La dolce vita*. Rome provides the general setting for both of these films, but within them it is particular venues or locales that figure forcefully in the overall storylines of the films. In the first, it is the waste ground and new construction in the Roman periphery, plus a cameo appearance by the Via Veneto. Specific places matter inherently to the plot. The film opens as a small-time Roman prostitute, Cabiria, strolls with a lover in a scene that typically might end with a clichéd kiss. Not here. The lover pushes Cabiria into the Tiber and steals her purse. Scenes from the Baths of Caracalla evoke the quintessentially Roman location and the sexual history connoted by bathhouses from which the group of prostitutes to which Cabiria belongs ply their trade. She is also picked up on the Via Veneto and drawn to a religious procession. In a final attempt to leave the periphery, Cabiria sells her shanty there, hoping to marry Oscar, a new potentially significant other, who instead takes her to a cliff above a lake where he promptly robs her of her life's savings. In the end, she makes her way back to the road to town where she is joined by a group of young people dancing and playing music. She has gone full circle. The repetition of places across the circle of her life is thus intrinsic to the film. Pasolini (1957, 233) argued that in this film place was connected to character explicitly by Fellini's frequently providing a silent long shot of a location followed by another long shot of Cabiria coming on scene. Cabiria's environment is thus a significant protagonist in the overall structure of the film. The varied locales evoke a heartbreaking ecology of theft and betrayal.

La dolce vita provides the view from the center of Rome outward in counterpoint to the peripheral view inward of *Le notti di Cabiria*. This view of Rome is filmed from the perspective of the celebrities who frequented clubs and bars on the Via Veneto in the late 1950s and who were pursued in their doings by an army of reporters and photographers. The Via Veneto and a few other sites such as the Trevi Fountain and Steiner's apartment in the EUR, are central protagonists in the film. It is with this film that Fellini begins his shift from location filming in and around Rome and in the countryside of Lazio and Umbria to studio filming (e.g. Pelliccia 2008). Ironically, then, it is in moving to the studio and making a "new" Via Veneto that Fellini makes the street the protagonist in the sense that his camera now uses the set to delimit the world of the paparazzi

and the celebrities they chase. Dozens of other locations were also recreated in this way, including the dome of St. Peter's and several nightclub interiors (including the Baths of Caracalla, recalling that location in *Le notti di Cabiria*). Against these active markers of environmental stimulus, the people in the film are blinded by the lights of the photographers' flashbulbs and by the meaninglessness of their lives. The main characters wear sunglasses "as if to objectify their lack of insight" and "Marcello's [the main character's] downward spiral toward absolute degradation at the film's conclusion [an orgy in a villa near the beach at Fregene] may be predicted by the presence of a stairway in virtually every [other] episode of the film" (Bondanella 1992, 146).

Finally, illustrative of place as representing social order and its potential disruption when the normal routines of place are impossible, *E la nave va* uses a mobile place, an ocean liner, to present an operatic portrait of both the passing of ritual in modern society and the loss of a sense of collective belonging. The seeming artificiality of the ship as a container of "thin" social relationships provides the vehicle for representing challenges to the symbolic order that could not be shown so clearly by other means. An upper-class coterie of friends and fans have gathered on the *Gloria N.* to accompany the ashes of the operatic diva Edmea Tetua to the island of Erimo, her birthplace, where they will be scattered. Constructed and shot entirely at Studio 5 in Cinecittà, the ship forces the cast of characters, largely and unsurprisingly made up of eccentrics, to move around and collide as they engage in absurd acts. Surrealism liberates them from the confines of place and unsettles expectations of the conventional uses of spaces on the ship. Two crises threaten this place and its spaces. The first is the stink of a rhinoceros in the hold. The second is the arrival of a group of Serbian refugees fleeing to Italy after the assassination in Sarajevo of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria. An Austrian battleship appears and demands the return of the refugees. After the dispersal of the ashes of the diva, a refugee in a lifeboat may have hurled a bomb at the battleship, and the Austrians are seen to bombard the liner. Both ships presumably sink, but the ending of the film leads the audience into Studio 5 of Cinecittà. In an allusion to the theatricality of Fellini's cinematic vision, we see the cameraman working on the slanting deck as the liner sinks. Forced to see the film's artifice, we see workers shaking gigantic plastic sheets that represent the surface of the Adriatic Sea. The recreation of the ship as a container for expounding the passing of collective ritual bound by place is shown to be an illusion. The illusion, though, is devoted to revelation. The inventiveness made possible by the studio space works better at exposing the surrealism of real life than would documentary out "in the world."

In short, place in all its complex manifestations, including its presumed disappearance, is critical to an understanding of Fellini's films. It is entirely appropriate, then, that when Fellini died in 1993, "his coffin was laid out in a darkened Stage 5, where he had done most of his studio work from *La dolce vita* (1960) onward. It was guarded by Carabinieri, with a single light beamed onto it, as visitors filed past to pay respects and sign the book" (Forgacs 2008, 42). Fellini would have appreciated the placement.

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13

"Il viaggio di G. Mastorna": Fellini *Entre Deux Morts*

Alessandro Carrera

Ghosts of a Chance

Federico Fellini's "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna" ("The Voyage of G. Mastorna"), one of the most illustrious films never made, exists in fragmentary forms, some of which have been published. We have notes, a tentative script, an incomplete set for the first scene, a few shots in *Fellini: A Director's Notebook* (1969), a booklet of stills, and a comic book penned by Federico Fellini and Milo Manara that does not go past the beginning of the story.[1] Knowing that we are doing Fellini an injustice, we will nonetheless take the script as the final version of "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna," instead of the film that will never be.

"Il viaggio di G. Mastorna" was supposed to come after *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965). If *8½* (1963) and *Giulietta degli spiriti* still wove dreams and daydreams into a recognizable reality, the basic idea of "Mastorna" was to leave reality behind. The story takes place in a no man's land that only halfway through the script reveals itself as a prelude to the afterlife. In defiance of what was happening in the real world, in Italy, and elsewhere, Fellini wanted to engage in a solitary dialogue with mortality and eternity. In the time between *La dolce vita* (1960) and *Giulietta degli spiriti*, Fellini's dependence on astrologers, fortune tellers, clairvoyants, and psychics had increased. The argute, sarcastic screenwriter Ennio Flaiano was no longer part of Fellini's team because of disagreements that had surfaced after the release of *8½*. In June 1965, the death of Ernst Bernhard, the German-Jewish analyst who had initiated Fellini into C. G. Jung and the *I Ching*, struck a blow to the delicate balance between reality and imagination necessary to nourish Fellini's dreamworld. After Bernhard's death, Fellini was alone with his dreams and his soothsayers, some of whom predicted bad things and even death if Fellini were to attempt to make the Mastorna film. As if time were running in reverse, and as if art were taking possession of life, Fellini went through the same crisis that two years before had beleaguered Guido Anselmi in *8½*, but with no circus ring to save the day.

Fellini's principal literary source was Dino Buzzati's serial novel, *Lo strano viaggio di Domenico Molo* ("The Strange Journey of Domenico Molo"), which appeared in weekly installments of *Omnibus* in October 1938.[2] Buzzati's novella reads like a catalog of Catholic obsessions. A young man, Domenico Molo, believes he has committed sacrilege by omitting a

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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minor sin during confession. Suddenly he falls sick, dies, and finds himself in a purgatorial, bureaucratic, and chaotic afterworld where he must endure trials, judgments, and a waiting list for the definitive passage into eternity.[3] Along with Kafka, Dante was a major influence, and it is Dante's version of the afterlife, rather than Kafka's that provides the subtext for *Domenico Molo*. The atmosphere of Fellini's "Mastorna," in turn, is closer to Buzzati than to the merciless universe of guilt found in Kafka. Nevertheless, the plot of Kafka's 1917 short story "The Hunter Gracchus" (1971) offers a useful point of entry into Fellini's ongoing concern with the afterworld.[4] In literature and film, the talking dead can be divided into those who know that they are dead and those who do not. Gracchus belongs to the first category. He also knows that through no fault of his own (there is no guilt in being a hunter, he says), he will never be admitted into the afterlife.

Gracchus's fate is *tragic* in the modern sense of a tragedy that is denied catharsis.[5] Fellini was too intimately Catholic to aspire to that kind of tragedy. He usually gave his characters the possibility of redemption. Whether they embraced it or not was a matter of free will. It cannot be a coincidence, however, that "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna" is the story of a man who must learn that he is dead, or, better still, must learn how to develop a relationship with death.

It would be misleading to look for the traces of "Mastorna" exclusively in the films Fellini completed after he abandoned his major work. I shall argue instead that the "Mastorna complex," that is, the pervasive feeling that the only place Fellini's characters can inhabit is "between two deaths," is the foundation of his universe from the very beginning. Fellini could not make "Mastorna" for the simple reason that he had already made it. Like Mastorna, who does not initially know whether he is alive or dead, and perhaps would be better off not knowing, Fellini was better off not knowing that he had already created several "Mastornas." By bringing the Mastorna subtext to life, Fellini would have been at risk of outing his own unconscious, his fundamental fantasy of not having to choose between life and death, between "to be" and "not to be," or, better said, between the pleasure principle and the death drive.

Giuseppe Mastorna is a cello player on his way to a concert whose jet liner is forced into an emergency landing in a northern European city where people speak a language Mastorna does not understand. The airplane has not landed on a runway but in the middle of a square in front of a church that resembles the Cologne Cathedral (Figure 13.1). As he is taken to various places, Mastorna is assisted as if he were a novice recently admitted into a complex and mysterious institution. In scene 11, the unmistakable fact that his plane has crashed and that he is dead dawns on him.

In his *Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (*The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X* 1992, 242–290), Lacan introduces the notion of being between two deaths (l'entre-deux-morts) in relation to Sophocles' Antigone. Until we reach the end of the play, Antigone is not dead in the physical sense. She is aware, however, that she has been symbolically removed from public existence at the very moment she buried her brother Polyneices against the orders of her uncle Creon, and it is only a matter of time before she meets her final death. She does not claim to be innocent. Her only defense is that she has obeyed the divine unwritten rules of kinship and not the rules of the city, which have replaced the vertical aristocratic lineage of the *genos* with the horizontality of the *demos* and its merely human politics.

Lacan loosely follows Goethe's interpretation of the tragedy: Creon's rules and Antigone's claims do not represent two versions of the law, as the standard Hegelian reading goes. As characters, Creon and Antigone are both excessive, over the top. They want the impossible and are ready to sacrifice everyone who stands in their way. Creon is wrong in his obstinate denial of proper burial to Polyneices, and Antigone is not right, we might say, to the extent that what she does exceeds the boundaries of right.[6] She has been entre deux morts even before Creon has

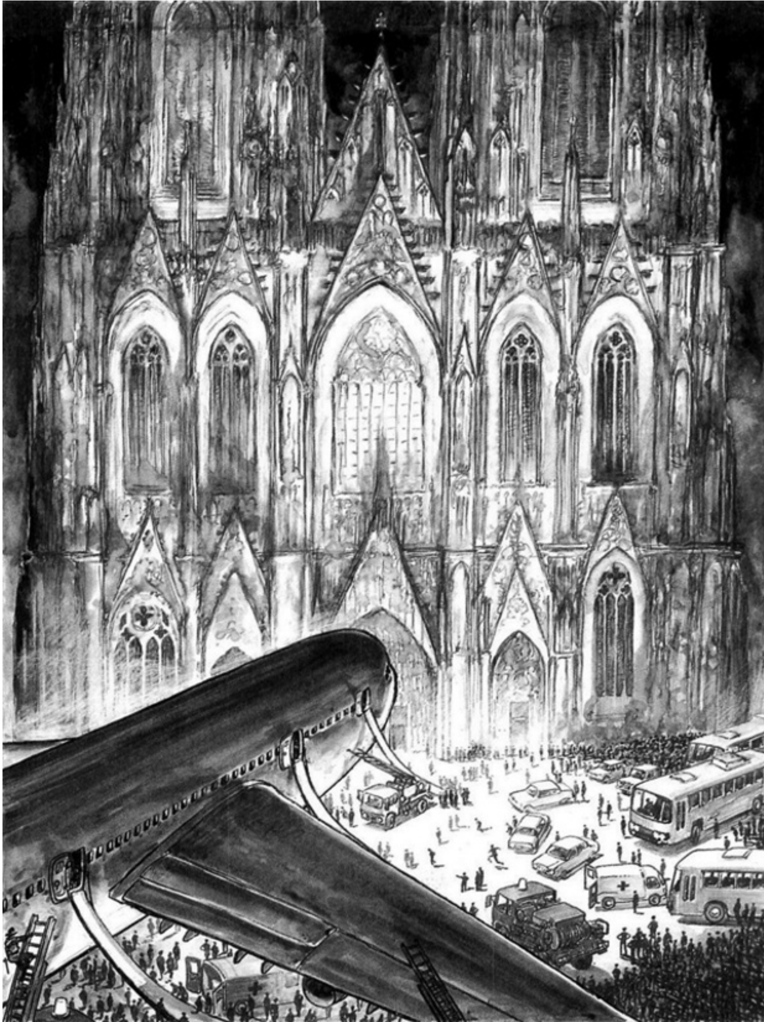

Figure 13.1 G. Mastorna's plane, emergency landed in a square in front of a Cologne-like Cathedral. Milo Manara, *Il viaggio di G*. Mastorna. Courtesy of Milo Manara.

sentenced her to be sealed away from the living. Fellini, however, is never that tough with his characters. His "innocent" avatars live only between two deaths, they have no other place—only they never know it, Mastorna being the exception.

Taken to an absurd ceremony where the "Academy Awards of the Eternal Father" are assigned, Mastorna rebels. Is such travesty what the hoped-for afterlife looks like? As some in the audience are sympathetic to his outrage, a group of freethinkers welcomes him. They have no intention of joining the afterlife and prefer to linger in an eternal limbo where they will be free to criticize the establishment forever. Mastorna is not satisfied with them either. Besides, his judgment is already in progress. He is given the chance to see his life as a confusedly edited film, in the company of people who are supposed to give him a pass or fail vote. They are not happy with what they see. To them, Mastorna's life looks as fake as a film. One of them tells him, confidentially, "It would

be sufficient to find a moment … even an insignificant one … in which you, precisely, were yourself…" (Fellini 2013, 49).

Ernst Bernhard (1969, 20–33) was fond of the word "entelechy" to describe the identity of finality and self-awareness. He drew the term from biologist Hans Driesch, who adopted the Aristotelian-Leibnizian term indicating the final cause—the "perfection" each being is supposed to reach—to highlight the autonomy of life from the mechanical forces of physics and chemistry (Driesch 1928). In Aristotle, *entelecheia* is almost a synonym for *energeia* (actuality, as opposed to potentiality). It is actuality in its fully formed shape (Aristotle 1998, 9.1047a30, 281). In Bernhard's fragmentary psychological cosmology, entelechy is both the "sense" (direction, purpose, meaning) and the "energy" that permeates life and nonlife. In terms of the individual, entelechy is *ethos*, purposeful life—life with a design (Bernhard 1969, 56).

Fellini incorporates Bernhard's entelechy in his own terms, mocking its metaphysical-existential pretense. Yes, Mastorna has done one authentic thing in his lifetime: one day he stuck out his tongue at a dog in a car traveling in the opposite direction (Fellini 2013, 115). As the only act that was entirely his own, that trifle is enough to save his day and perhaps his soul. He is then given a seat in a van where reassuring yet uncanny parental figures accompany him on the next leg of his journey. Mastorna's father, or someone who looks like his father, tells him that everything is ruled by chance and roles can always be reversed: "The combinations are infinite and you and I, dear Peppino, might have met in a café in Lindenstrasse in Berlin and become lovers" (118).

The intimation of homosexual incest is quite unexpected, but this is no longer a family affair; the total renunciation of the societal bond is at stake here. To quote Bernhard (1969, 22) again, the parental archetypes are nothing but "the latest figures of the infinite karmic chain." There is nothing necessarily autobiographical about them. Fellini, however, does not explore this road to chaos. The van carries Mastorna to a remote customhouse where a female spirit guide (a flight attendant who plays Beatrice to Mastorna-Dante) takes care of him and leads him to a mountain pass. There, the flight attendant recites to him a quotation from Friedrich Hölderlin's *The Death of Empedocles* in which the ancient philosopher pledges his heart to "the earnest earth / the suffering one," promising "not to scorn a single one of all her mysteries" (2008, 50).[7] Empedocles' commitment to earthly life spurs Mastorna to leave the spirit guide with whom he has spent the night and climb the mountain pass where a storm is raging. After Mastorna has disappeared, the spirit guide is left to speculate on what might happen to him. Perhaps he is now in a city that looks like Florence, so familiarly Italian, so different from the hostile, northern, gothic architecture he encountered after his crash landing. As if by chance, Mastorna enters a concert hall where he joins the orchestra and ecstatically plays his cello. His wife is also there. Through a large hole in the ceiling, the camera frames swallows flying freely through the serene sky.

In his conversations with Charlotte Chandler, Fellini said that upon his visit to the Cologne Cathedral, he heard the story of a medieval monk who could fly at the will of some spirit, with no control about where the spirit would take him. In the script, the spirit becomes an airplane, taking Mastorna where he was not planning to go. A comment Fellini made to Chandler links the story of the monk to his fascination with liminal states:

> I have always been fascinated by the experience of near-death. I believe in that moment some people learn the secrets of life and death. The price of that knowledge is death, but before the body dies, the truth is imparted to the consciousness of those who die in such a way that there is a lapse of time between their absolute death and their last moment of life, something like a coma. This was what I envisioned for G. Mastorna. (Chandler 1995, 289)

In the published comic book version of *Il viaggio di G. Mastorna* (Fellini and Manara 1995), Mastorna's liminality is graphically realized in Manara making him a traveling clown with the face of Paolo Villaggio, who starred in *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990). The story ends abruptly as soon as it becomes evident that he still does not know he is dead.[8] In the script, on the other hand, the open ceiling in the concert hall is the visual clue that Mastorna may indeed have joined the afterlife. (The same kind of clue reappears in *La voce della luna*, when Ivo Salvini looks up to a square hole in the ceiling of the graveyard he is visiting, and for a moment thinks he has found the opening that will allow him to communicate with the dead.) The issue then becomes the nature of the cognitive shift that occurs when Mastorna moves from the lower rank of the talking dead (those who do not know that they are passed away) to the higher rank (those who do).

A Vibration of the Light

Fellini's superstitious fears about the project that was dearest to him are well known. Biographers have chronicled his insecurities, doubts, second thoughts, convenient illnesses, and lawsuits; the tricks he played on others and himself, including the outright lies; his loss of hope and desperation; and the bad omens that scared him every time he set out to realize his "private" masterpiece. Initially, he planned to call it "*La dolce morte*" ("the sweet death") as a contrast to *La dolce vita*, and he invested a great deal of energy in preparing to make the film, not so much because he thought it had any financial potential but because he had faith in his artistic power. In the end, it became impossible to resume the work on "Mastorna," as he had cannibalized it beyond repair (Chandler 1995, 290). Bits and pieces resurface in almost every film that Fellini directed after he had given up on the project. Even the five commercials that he made between 1984 and 1993 show traces of "Mastorna." Buzzati, meanwhile, reworked the script into a graphic novel, *Poema a fumetti* ("poem in the form of cartoons" 1969).

"Toby Dammit," Fellini's segment of the anthology film *Histoires extraordinaires* (*Tre passi nel delirio*/*Spirits of the Dead* 1968), loosely inspired by E. A. Poe's "Never Bet the Devil Your Head" (1841/2006, 420–427), was chronologically close to the abandoned project. It transforms the Mastorna story into a horror film in which Poe's southern gothic sense of death clashes with Fellini's Catholic melancholy. The main character is a washed-up alcoholic British actor who lands in Rome to play a Christ figure in the first "Catholic western" ever to be filmed: an ideal matching of Sergio Leone and Pasolini. Later on, while he is trying to escape the hell of his spent glory and addiction, Toby Dammit is ostensibly decapitated by a wire stretched across the road, while he is driving a Ferrari at full speed over a broken bridge. "Whatever death Toby may experience in leaping the abyss, it is not physical. There is no sound of a crash, no wreckage, no Ferrari, no corpse. All we are left with are *symbols* of his death" (Burke 1996, 152). Toby Dammit's story is one of a "symbolic death and rebirth" (147), and Toby is a pure "spirit," a disembodied voice that only becomes physically incarnated when a reporter calls his name (153). Being aware of Mastorna's shadow, we may well wonder whether the airplane was not carrying an already-dead Toby Dammit who must go through an unconscious process of acceptance of his own death. Losing one's head (the seat of the ego) is, after all, the classic surrealist symbol of a superior level of awareness (Bataille 1985, pp. 178–181).[9] Steiner and Guido shooting themselves in the head in *La dolce vita* and *8½*, and the beheading of Lichas in *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969) mine the same symbolism.

Fellini's characters exist in their imaginary reality insofar as they lack some "knowledge in the real" ("savoir dans le réel") to borrow from Lacan (1973/2001, 308), some objective yet instinctive skill for orienting themselves in the world. They wander through the symbolic order without possessing its coordinates and without the slightest understanding of what it is about. The only consistency they can hold on to is based on this hole in their knowledge. As soon as they get a glimpse of the real beyond the symbolic (of the traumatic kernel of their existence, that is), we sense that they are too fragile to handle the truth of it. In oedipal terms, Fellini's male characters (Marcello Rubini in *La dolce vita*, Guido Anselmi in *8½*, Giuseppe Mastorna, and even Toby Dammit, who must play the Sacrificed Son) are overshadowed by the ghosts of their fathers. (True, Marcello's father is still alive, but he leaves the scene like a ghost.) One can say that Fellini's male characters are possessed by their deceased fathers (their Name-of-the-Father) even when we know next to nothing about those parental figures.

Unlike Kafka's Hunter Gracchus, who never met his fundamental fantasy and whose endless journey was meant precisely to prevent him from encountering it, Mastorna was in precisely the right position to discover the nature of his fantasy. As a dead man, aware of being dead, he might have the opportunity to reconfigure his subjectivity. Fellini did not allow that to happen in Mastorna's story. Nevertheless, there is a provocative similarity between the kinds of innocence expressed by Kafka's and by Fellini's characters. Gracchus is certain of his (it was the boatman's fault, he says), and in Fellini, nothing is ever anybody's fault. Fellini's characters may be good, bad, mischievous, or amoral, but they carry an uncanny presupposition of innocence as a birthmark.

This excessive innocence should make us suspicious. Gracchus doth protest too much, and Mastorna doth protest no less. Too much innocence means too much ignorance about one's own mortality and the oedipal conflict that ignorance entails. Freud had something to say about fathers who are dead without knowing it and about sons who claim that they are innocent of their father's death. A man who had assisted his ailing father had this dream: "*His father was alive once more and was talking to him in his usual way, but* [the remarkable thing was that] *he had really died, only he did not know it*" (emphasis in original). "He had really died," as Freud points out, means "in consequence of the dreamer's wish." The dreamer was the one who "did not know" that he had had the desire that his father would meet a merciful death (Freud 1955, 438–439). Perhaps it is no coincidence that Freud wrote *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899/1955) after the death of his father and that Kafka's relationship with his father was tormented.

As for Fellini, suffice it to mention the episode of *La dolce vita* in which Marcello's father envies the carefree life his son is living in Rome and tries to outdo him in savoir vivre, drinking champagne and having a good time with an attractive and rather maternal cabaret dancer. As a result, he suffers a near heart attack and abruptly decides to go home, barely saying goodbye to his son. Shortly before the crisis occurs, and while watching his old man turning into something akin to the "obscene father" that Kafka portrays in *The Judgement* (1912/2009), Marcello tells Paparazzo, "I really do not know him."

Marcello's father may be already dead without knowing it, or that could be what Marcello fears or unconsciously desires for him. It is a guilty thought, for which Marcello will receive severe punishment. The son in Kafka's *The Judgement*, being unable to compete with his father, collapses under the weight of the undead superego and takes his own life. In *La dolce vita*, Steiner's homicide-suicide, signifying the abject failure of the figure that Steiner initially represented for Marcello, is the film plot acting out Marcello's self-punishment. Left without a viable (super)ego ideal, Marcello joins *La dolce vita* to suppress the ultimate choice: "to be" (a man) or "not to be" (a man). He will live in a no man's land, surrendering to an eternal yet empty good time, a Peter Pan-like existence where no father will compete with him nor will there be any pressure to achieve a cognitive shift.

Lacan mentioned the final scene of *La dolce vita* twice, in the already-mentioned *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1992), and in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book X. Anxiety* (2014). In the former, after making clear that the film impressed him less than it impressed the audience of his seminar, Lacan speaks nonetheless of the "mirage" of the film, which "isn't reached anywhere except at one single moment" (253).

> That is to say at the moment when early in the morning among the pines on the edge of the beach, the jet-setters suddenly begin to move again after having remained motionless and almost disappearing from the vibration of the light … just like statues moving among trees painted by Uccello. It is a rare and unique moment. (Lacan 1992, 253)

The "vibration of the light" that Lacan sees in the pinewood scene is a visual motif that Fellini reprises at the end of *Giulietta degli spiriti*, when the protagonist, finally free from the ghosts of her past, leaves her house and walks alone toward the wood nearby. The first and most significant occurrence of this vibration, however, occurs at the end of *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957). Having barely survived the assault of her suitor by relinquishing all her money, Cabiria walks through a spacious wood and reaches a road where she is welcomed by young men and women smiling, dancing, singing, and riding on mopeds, who are visibly endowed with an angelic innocence that has nothing to do with the "guilty innocence" of Fellini's principal male characters. To understand fully what that vibration means, we must ask whether Cabiria has really survived her ordeal. Better, was she alive in the first place? Has she not, perhaps, been in the "lapse of time," entre deux morts, the whole film?

Fellini between Two Deaths

Fellini's characters feel that something is out of joint, but they have no understanding of what it is because their creator treats them exceedingly gently. To map Fellini's obsession with being entre-deux-morts, one must pay extreme attention to the smallest clues, including the slightest intimation of symbolic death found in films whose subject seems quite remote from the issue. Fellini's films have the structure of recurring dreams, adding detail over detail in an eternal return of never-exactly-the-same. Even an apparently inconsequential line such as Moraldo's cry in *I vitelloni* during the initial storm scene ("It's fantastic! It looks like the end of the world!") is enough to suggest that the whole film, marked by Moraldo's mixture of apathy and devotion toward his friends, can be understood retroactively as a journey through the land of the living dead. The "end of the world" has happened already. Moraldo suspects it; the others do not have a clue. The final tracking shots of Fausto, Alberto, and the others sleeping in their beds—seen through Moraldo's mind while he is leaving town on the train—reinforce his initial observation. To find the courage to step on the train, he had to fantasize an apocalyptic scenario in which he was the only survivor, so that he could leave without regrets and never come back. In *I vitelloni*, this idea is no more than a suggestion. The first Fellini character who fully inhabits entre-deux-morts territory is Gelsomina.

In the first scene of *La strada* (1954), when Gelsomina's mother sells her to Zampanò, we are already on the alert that the story occurs in a loop. In the past, the mother sold Rosa, another of her daughters, to Zampanò. Now Rosa has died, under what circumstances we are not told, and Zampanò has returned like an ogre who claims a new sacrificial virgin. But if the story is a loop,

and we don't know how many times Zampanò and the mother have had the same conversation, then Rosa and Gelsomina are effectively one and the same, and Gelsomina is as dead as Rosa. Yet Gelsomina will accomplish what her sister could not. She will change the ogre's heart, but only after she has died for good, far from Zampanò's sight, and without being replaced. We are not offered glimpses into Gelsomina's afterlife; we witness only Zampanò looking up at the sky and then collapsing on the seashore, where he curls up like a baby, possibly experiencing a spiritual rebirth.

The most complete development of the entre-deux-morts theme occurs in *Le notti di Cabiria*. In the first scene, Giorgio, Cabiria's fiancée, steals her purse and throws her into a river. Rescued by boys who had come to swim, she is taken ashore where some men try to revive her. One of the boys says, "I guess she's dead," and a man who has joined the group comments, "Don't you see she's gone?" When everything seems lost, Cabiria gasps, gets back on her feet, not particularly grateful toward her rescuers, and runs away in anger. What if she wakes up entre deux morts and does not know or suspect it?

Cabiria "dies" in the first scene, journeys through an unknown land where one adventure follows another, and the end of her story repeats the beginning: Oscar, her new fiancée, is about to push her into a lake to steal her money. This time, however, the turn of events does not take her completely by surprise. At soon as she sees it coming, she gives Oscar all her money and falls on the ground crying six times, "I don't want to live anymore! Kill me!" while he runs away. She is now what she was at the beginning: dead, but this time not resisting death. In Fellini, however, death is not the end. Cabiria gets up, walks through the wood, and meets the "angels" on mopeds.[10]

Unlike Moraldo and Gelsomina, who disappear from their stories, Cabiria takes us along in her first steps into the eternal life. The temptation to call it "paradise" is strong. Cabiria is too innocent to live outside paradise. In fact, Fellini's lesson in *Le notti di Cabiria* is that it is necessary to live as if we were in paradise. Every other choice is only a futile attempt to live the good life (*La dolce vita*) while being entre-deux-morts. Yet, we must resist calling it paradise, at least for now. The religious connotation of the word would not allow us to understand what *kind* of eternal life Cabiria has joined.

First, she had to renounce any claim on her primitive accumulation of capital. The money she had in her purse is of no use in an eternal economy, one not based on the anticipation of the future, or on an increment of value. Cabiria has taken the long way of labor to go slowly back to the economy of eternal life. In the end, when she looks at the camera, Cabiria seems happy, *eternally* happy. The film's last frame, the *interpellation* it entails, which blatantly breaks one of the rules of cinema, has generated a substantial literature. "Not only do Cabiria's eyes embrace the visible, they gaze unto the unseen. [...] In acknowledging the audience, Cabiria sees what is present but (logically) invisible" (Burke 1996, 97).[11] In other words, she is now pure gaze.

The sea monster that appears toward the end of *La dolce vita* looks into the camera too, as Paola does in the final shot. What Cabiria and Paola have in common may seem easy to grasp, but the monster? After we are told that the monstrous fish, like Christ, has been dead for three days, the camera frames the fish's eye, which indeed does not seem to be dead. "And it keeps on looking!" Marcello says. What is it looking at? Who is it looking at?

Cabiria is looking at us from the site of eternal life; the fish-thing is gazing at us from the site of eternal undeadness. Cabiria has traversed her fantasy, has crossed over; she is no longer entre deux morts. The fish-thing, on the other hand, is a failed Christ who has remained trapped in the underworld. No longer an object of desire, as it was when Marcello was accompanying the Jesus statue being transported to the Pope, this Jesus-*ichthys* (Greek for fish, and the acronym of *Iesous Christos Theou Yios Soter*, Jesus Christ Son of God Savior) is now a repulsive source of anxiety. Its gaze is bound to follow Marcello no matter how many "sins" he will commit to keep Him, or It, at bay. The "disgusting object" (Lacan 1992, 253) will not redeem Marcello nor will it have the

power to sentence him to eternal torment. It will taint his desire, though; it will be both Thing and gaze, the correlate to Marcello's subjectivity as such subjectivity disappears: "Thing and gaze conflate in the *chose dégueulasse*, that 'sea-thing' with the rolled-up eye lying on the sand in the last scene of the film" (Menghi 2008, 69–70).

Young Paola looking, for a brief moment, at the camera in the film's final frame—after Marcello has left her and, with her, his last chance of salvation—is the beatific reverse of the gaze from the monstrous fish, but it is not in an antithetical relation to it. On the one hand, Marcello has always been subjected to a gaze. While he was having an argument with his fiancée Emma, in his convertible car on a deserted road at night, an immense, impossibly elevated set of spotlights illuminated the landscape—the same spotlights that had established their impersonal gaze over the previous "miracle" scene. Paola, on the other hand, is the only character in the entire film who really looks at him, except that her last move toward the camera, and not toward Marcello, hints that her look, too, is turning into an interpellation, a gaze. The fish gazes from the underworld. Paola looks from the upper world. The location of the gaze / look, however, does not conform to the high versus low hierarchy. The fish and Paola are not the same thing, yet they are the same "Thing." The promise of salvation gets its strength from the threat of damnation. Only by remaining "between two deaths" can Marcello postpone his encounter with them both.

Mastorna, on the other hand, is already destitute as a subject, already turned into a gaze, but without the ominous power that is usually associated with being a gaze. As Fellini told Dario Zanelli in 1966, "Mastorna looks at the world like a fish looks at human beings" (Fellini 2013, 6). The possibility that Fellini intended to make a film entirely from the point of view of the fish-thing is not too farfetched. But Mastorna knows too early that he is dead, gaining an awareness that deprives him of the narrative possibilities that the entre-deux-morts condition offers to Gelsomina, Cabiria, and Marcello. Yet he experiences too little to be an interesting character. Contrary to Marcello, he does not seem to be guided by any desire, and therefore he cannot absolve himself. What was his sin? That he was just an observer of life. "I haven't been a good husband," he says. "Once, I felt remorse, but I don't feel even that anymore" (Fellini 2013, 34). In Hamburg, he met a girl and missed the train, so he had to catch a flight. No one seems to mind his infidelities. No one seems to have anything to reproach him for. His spirit guide on the mountain pass, his Beatrice, has never been alive, knows nothing of life, and cannot make him cry the way the "real" Beatrice did with Dante. How can someone who has done nothing, except stick out his tongue at a dog, be forgiven? Where will he find the postoedipal gall to absolve himself? In a more conventional finale, someone would force Mastorna to commit a serious sinful act so that the entire machine of guilt, resentment, pride, confession, atonement, absolution, and self-absolution would crank up. By refusing to engage in such melodramatic machinery, Fellini may have created narrative problems that made the film unfilmable, but on the other hand he remained true to his post *Giulietta degli spiriti* refusal to create a problem (such as Guido's creative block in *8½*) and then take the credit for fixing it (the final circus scene).

Notes

1 See Fellini 1995, Fellini and Manara 1995, Zanelli 1995, Secchiaroli 2000, Casanova 2005, and Fellini 2008 and 2013. See additional information about and critical assessment of "Mastorna" in Bertetto 2016, Pacchioni 2016, and Fabbri 2016a and 2016b.

2 See Kezich 2006, 266. The final version of the story, "Il sacrilegio," is included in Buzzati 1984.

3 The butler of Molo's household, an old bachelor who is affectionate toward Domenico, knows that Domenico is innocent, for the butler himself told Domenico that he did not have to go back and confess again because of his omission. In a bizarre twist of events, the butler kills himself to reach the heavenly

court and exculpate Domenico, being aware that he will go to eternal damnation having taken his own life. The court, however, hails the butler as a saint and clears Domenico of his sin. When Molo is about to reach his final destination, he finds himself back in the world of the living, this time endowed with a greater awareness of the value of earthly life. The whole adventure turns out to have been a fever-induced delirium, yet while Domenico was lying unconscious, the butler really died, as Domenico learns upon waking up.

4 In a landscape quite reminiscent of Lake Garda, where Kafka spent time in 1909 and 1913, a boat carrying a bier is making its way toward a harbor. Inside the bier lies a man who says that his name is Hunter Gracchus. The mayor of Riva (Riva del Garda) asks Gracchus, "Are you dead?" Gracchus confirms that indeed he is. Many years before, while he was chasing a deer, he fell into a precipice and died. The mayor says, "But you are alive too." Gracchus says that in a certain sense, he is. After his death, the ship that was to carry him to the other side lost its way, the fault of the boatman. Every time Gracchus sees the gate of the afterlife shining before him, he awakens in his old ship, still stranded on the outside. The fault is not Gracchus's, but now it is too late (Kafka 1971, 226–230).

5 For this interpretation of modern tragedy, with references to Hugo von Hofmannsthal, György Lukács, and Walter Benjamin, see Cacciari 2009, 45–91.

6 Goethe does say that Creon, far from being a defender of the law, is guilty of a political crime, yet he does not say much about Antigone, except that she is a noble soul and the right is on her side. Conversation of March 21, March 28, and April 1, 1827 (Goethe 1998, 237–249).

7 The paragraph is the same Albert Camus chose as an epigraph to *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt* (1951/1992). It is safe to say that its gravitas would have been too unFellinian to reach the final stages of the production.

8 See Fellini and Manara 1995; Kezich 2006, 264–280; Fellini 2008; and Pacchioni 2014, 14–17.

9 "The Sacred Conspiracy" (1985, 178–181) is Bataille's comment on *Acéphale*, a drawing by André Masson (1930) representing a man with no head, his arms and legs stretched out like Leonardo's Vitruvian man, a dagger in one hand, a heart in flames in the other, his entrails a labyrinth, and a skull instead of the penis.

10 A similar awakening after the story seems to have come to its conclusion occurs in "Moraldo in the City" (Fellini 1954/1957), Fellini's treatment for an unrealized film that would have been the sequel to *I vitelloni* (Fellini 1983, 101).

11 See also Bazin 1971, Vol. 2, 92; Brown 2012, 78–115; and Schoonover 2014.

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14

An "Incapacity to Affirm": Fellini's Aesthetics and the Decadent Movement

Marita Gubareva

The terms "decadent" and "decadence" were often applied to Fellini's films, first by contemporary critics and later by film historians. Most of them simply referred to the imagery and thematics of corruption and disintegration, mainly in four films: *La dolce vita* (1960), "Toby Dammit" (episode of *Histoires extraordinaires / Tre passi nel delirio / Spirits of the Dead* 1968), *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969), and *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976).

Yet, from the very start, some critics used the words with a more precise meaning, referring to the Decadent Movement of the late nineteenth century. In his review of *La dolce vita*, published in 1960, Pier Paolo Pasolini spoke of "a return of the taste and ideology typical of the European literature of the Decadent Movement (*decadentismo*)." A similar idea was later expressed en passant by Renzo Renzi (Renzi 1994)[1] and, more recently, by Hava Aldouby, who spoke of the "reverberation of decadent painting" in Fellini's films and saw nineteenth-century decadence as "a major constituent of the art-historical matrix, which undergirds" films such as *Fellini - Satyricon* (Aldouby 2013, 94).

Even more interestingly, experts on the nineteenth-century Decadent Movement also point to Fellini as its twentieth-century reviver. Pierre Jourde (1994, 72), in his study of decadent literature, writes that "if one had to find … similar fin-de-siècle aesthetics and obsessions in the 20th century, one would have to look for them in the 1970s … for example in the cinema of Federico Fellini."

What is "Decadent Aesthetics"?

There exist almost as many definitions of decadence as of Romanticism. In art and literary studies, however, the term "Decadent Movement" usually denotes the works of a large number of European writers and artists of the late nineteenth century who share some distinctive features, such as a sense of fatigue, disillusionment, and a wish to overturn and "pervert" the existing paradigms rather than propose new ones. In other words, a decadent artist is not someone who belongs to a certain school, or circle, unified by a common program or manifesto, but rather

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke,
Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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someone whose works reflect a specific trend and a particular fin-de-siècle aesthetics. Among the many attempts to define this aesthetics, two main approaches can be identified.

The first is a descriptive one, its main aim being to identify the themes and images that recur in the cultural production of the period, both textual and visual: artifice (as opposed to nature); various aspects of sexuality (as opposed to love); closed spaces and repetition (instead of movement and progress); morbid fascination with illness and death (as opposed to vitality); misogyny; feminization of men, etc. Resulting studies are in fact compendiums of fin-de-siècle themes and images, such as *L'imaginaire décadent* ("The Decadent Imaginary," Pierrot 1977) or *Figures et formes de la Décadence* ("Figures and Forms of Decadence," de Palacio 1994). This enumerative descriptive approach corresponds well to the fragmented nature of the Decadent Movement and its texts, which are often themselves compendiums of decadent themes and obsessions. A classic example is the novel *À rebours (Against Nature* 1884) by Joris-Karl Huysmans, sometimes referred to as "a breviary" or "handbook" of decadence.[2]

The second approach is an attempt to find a common denominator to decadent aesthetics—and to analyze its roots. For example, Elio Gioanola (1977; 147, 154, 161), Fellini's contemporary, whose book was first published in 1972 and then again in 1977, sees decadentismo as "the art and philosophy of an existential crisis" due to "the wreckage of a world held together for over two thousand years … by faith in reason and by preservation of different other faiths: in God, in nature, and in progress." According to Gioanola, the decadent artist is "stuck between rejected traditional values and the impossibility of developing new ones." His art is aimed at "demystifying all the fake consolations and hypocrisies" and represents "a sort of systematic and progressive demolition." He links the upsurge of decadent imagery to the evolution of Romanticism (as did Mario Praz—1933 / 1970) and to the discovery of the subconscious.

Julia Przybos (2002) approaches the same subject from a slightly different sociohistorical perspective, drawing upon journalistic texts of the period in her analysis. She stresses a prevailing feeling of confusion (linguistic, philosophical, existential) in a time of "conflicting concepts and vanishing barriers," which results in a sense of fatigue and of "having seen it all" (hence, the profusion of images of Ancient Rome, Babylon, and the Tower of Babel). She also identifies a generalized feeling of uncertainty / indecision; constant revisionism that questions the traditional repositories of knowledge and truth; a tendency toward inconsistency and incoherence; as well as an emphasis on the transitional and the in-between (masks, androgynes, adolescents, automatons, phantoms) and on the blurring of boundaries (between adulthood and childhood, sacred and profane, life and death, nature and artificiality).

A few years earlier Jourde (1990, 13–22) had come to similar conclusions, though from a philosophical perspective, linking decadent aesthetics to phenomenological ontology and "existential psychoanalysis" in the works of Sartre, Heidegger, and Jankélévitch. While distinguishing between "primary," or "authentic," creations, and "secondary," or "decadent" ones, he sees, among the latter, a constant wish to "surpass themselves" and to "integrate their own negation," which results in an "incapacity to affirm" that can manifest itself in several ways. Subversion of common notions and overturning of traditional models lead to parody and caricature. At the same time, there is a predominance of form over substance, fragmentation, an "aesthetics of the surface," with an ensuing "baroque complexity" of superficial forms, as well as "recourse to the quantitative, such as exaggeration or reduction in scale, which produces the semblance of creation without being [so], for instead of creating new forms, one inflates or reduces the existing ones" (18). The absence of a clear authorial point of view, persistent ambiguity, juxtaposition and nonresolution of opposites, and the tendency to overload the text with endless quotations and descriptions could be regarded as yet additional manifestations of the same incapacity to affirm (Jourde 20–32).

However we choose to define the aesthetics of decadence—whether through a set of recurring images or in terms of "progressive demolition," "confusion," and the "incapacity to affirm"—this aesthetics is engaged by Fellini's cinema of the 1960s and 1970s.

The 1960s

La dolce vita (1960) marks a turning point for Fellini. As he enters a new decade, he sheds the last traces of neorealism, reinventing himself from a stylistic and thematic point of view. *La dolce vita* is also the first film of what might be termed an existential trilogy also including *8½* and *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (see Bertetto in this volume), and the first of Fellini's works in which we can discern a trace of decadent aesthetics.

It reincarnates some of the major decadent themes, such as decay of mores, fatigue, disillusionment, and the wish to destroy current myths. Rome is presented as a sort of modern Babylon (it seems that "Babylon 2000" may even have been one of the working titles of the film).[3] The confusion of languages, races, and religions that characterizes it is emphasized at several points: at the beginning of the film, when the image of the transported statue of Christ is abruptly substituted by that of a dancer dressed as a Thai divinity; during the "multicultural" dinner party at Steiner's; and with the burst of different languages in response to the dead sea creature at the end of the film.[4] Another typically decadent theme is the desperate search for new sensations as a remedy for boredom, as well as the substitution of love by sex, and, more generally, of feelings by sensations[5].

As in decadent art, women are perceived as vehicles of temptation and salvation (Sylvia, Paola) and as forces of nature (Emma, Sylvia). On the other hand, there is the weak and passive protagonist, "immersed in this flaccid atmosphere … that has a hallucinating and stupefying effect upon him," "more and more dissatisfied with the present, while ever weaker in his ability to react," "feeble", "unresponsive and without energy" (Taddei 1960). He is reminiscent of the protagonists in decadent literature, "subscribers to the Handbook of weakened men," as defined by Edmond de Goncourt (cited in de Palacio 1990, 246).

"It is useless to look inside these people, because there is nothing but void" according to Taddei (1960). As in the works of many late nineteenth-century writers, often fascinated with the formal, aesthetic side of Catholic ritual, religion in *La dolce vita* is reduced to form or spectacle, devoid of spiritual meaning (this theme will be later developed in *Roma*—1972—with its ecclesiastical fashion show).

It was predominance of form over substance and absence of a clear point of view (manifestation of the decadent "incapacity to assert", as defined by Jourde) that led Pier Paolo Pasolini, in his subtle analysis of the film, published in *Filmcritica* (1960), to liken Fellini to decadent artists. For him, Fellini:

> fully belongs to the great mass of works produced by the European Decadent Movement, of which it has all the characteristics. Its first characteristic, phonic complacency … has an equivalent in Fellini's visual complacency, which makes the images go beyond the function and become pure, with all the ensuing charm. The second characteristic of decadence, semantic amplification (*dilatazione*), is also continuously practiced by Fellini… he is all the time excessive, overloaded, lyrical, magical, or violently true-to-life, i.e. semantically dilated. … Fellini's vocabulary has all the characteristics of decadence: it is colorful, unusual, bizarre, highly literary, with expressive pastiches, coming from all sorts of tastes, all sorts of worlds …. This decadent type of culture implies first and foremost refusal

> of rationality and critical sense, substituted by technicality and poetics …. The little boy inside Fellini—to whom Fellini with diabolical cunning so willingly yields the floor—is a primitive, and therefore an adjective, and not a subject; he does not know how to coordinate and subordinate, but only how to complicate: that indeed is something he is very good at.

In spite of these single decadent traits, *La dolce vita* remains full of vitality, and though Pasolini disagrees with Fellini ideologically, he can't help admiring the film: "And yet, there is not one of these characters who does not appear pure and vital, always presented at a moment of almost sacred energy."

Toward the end of the 1960s, this vitality wanes, leaving space for "more decadence," or new decadent themes and images. "Toby Dammit" and *Fellini - Satyricon* are both based on "decadent" books. The first draws upon one of the *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1840) by Edgar Allan Poe, considered to be, along with Baudelaire, a forerunner of the Decadent Movement. The second is based on the Roman novel *Satyricon* (first century CE), where "Fellini's very choice of imperial Rome as a subject matter repeats the fin-de-siècle 'turn to … decaying Rome and Byzantium as historical metaphors for their own age'" (Aldouby 2013, 94, citing Jullian 1971).

The atmosphere in these films changes to oneiric and artificial. New decadent themes and images appear, such as feminization of men or perception of women as a threat, to which we shall return later—and the emphasis on the occult. This is the time when Fellini starts collaborating with Bernardino Zapponi, a lover of Gothic novels, which may have reinforced his interest in similar subjects. In "Toby Dammit," following Poe's story, Fellini reintroduces the motif of decapitation, an obsession with decadent writers and artists (see de Palacio 1994, 27; Jourde 1994, 50, 55). Moreover, he carries it even further in a decadent direction by replacing the male figure of the devil in Poe's story with the female image of the girl with the ball/Toby's head: literally a "femme fatale." The whole story can be read as a "progress into death" or as a "death as a way of being" state, so typical of decadent art and its obsession with the "morts-vivants" (Jourde, 54; Carrera in this volume). The film is also a perfect illustration of the decadent predilection for "in-between states" (between life and death, girl and woman, reality and dream).

A few years earlier, in his first color feature, *Giulietta degli Spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965), Fellini had already manifested his interest in psychoanalysis, occultism, and fin-de-siècle painting (Aldouby 2013, 22–51). It is, however, in the following decade that decadent aesthetics and imagery will be most fully manifested in his cinema.

Il Casanova di Federico Fellini

Il Casanova di Federico Fellini was a disappointment to a large part of the public and especially to the so-called "casanovists," the professional and amateur scholars fascinated by the historical figure of Giacomo Casanova, on whose memoirs Fellini's film is loosely based. The former expected to see an "irresistible lover of a long series of beautiful women" (Angelucci and Betti 1977, 27), the latter "an example of great vitality, a breakthrough figure, a great narrator, a wise man" (Fellini cited in Chiara 1977, 155). Fellini made sure these expectations were not met.

The film is, in fact, a perfect example of decadent inversion, where the myth of Casanova as a great seducer and adventurer is deconstructed down to its smallest aspects: instead of infallible seduction we witness failures; instead of conventionally beautiful women, we see female figures who provocatively defy conventional notions of beauty; instead of a young and vital Casanova, we encounter a middle-aged, heavily made-up man whose exertions are often emphasized more

than his limited accomplishments, and who is reduced toward film's end to an aged and decrepit figure.

This deheroization of Casanova is not dissimilar to that of Don Juan, along with Faustus, Marcus Aurelius, and other cultural icons, at the end of the nineteenth century. In decadent literature (de Palacio 1994, 123), Don Juan is almost always old, weak, and either impotent or exploited by women; lovemaking for him is no longer associated with pleasure but rather with hard work and suffering, just as for Fellini's protagonist. In general, decadent culture represents males as weak—often as Pierrots, the decadent image par excellence of compromised and vanquished virility. According to de Palacio (1990, 240, 245–246), one can count up to a thousand Pierrots in fin-de-siècle art and literature who function as symbols of the "demolition and defeat of masculinity," subjugated, manipulated, and even devoured by Colombine, who turns into a "femme fatale." The white-faced pantomime character becomes the incarnation of the decadent anti-hero, as reflected in the title of the collection of stories by Albert Giraud, *Héros et Pierrots* (1898), where "the dawning of Pierrots" is seen "as a response to the twilight of heroes" (Palacio 1990, 240). Heavily made up and dressed in a dialectic mixture of black and white, as if divided "between innocence and experience, virtue and vice, masculinity and femininity, Pierrot … is constantly about to lose his identity, his soul, his body, or his gender," and become "merely a surface, a mask, a shadow" (Jourde 1994, 42–43). In this light, the fact that in Fellini's original script Casanova makes his first appearance dressed as Pierrot acquires particular significance. Pierrot also symbolizes passivity and the night (as opposed to Harlequin, incarnation of activity and daylight), and in fin-de-siècle literature his face is often compared to the moon, another favorite decadent image, symbol of "a world reversed into a negative" (Jourde, 48). Fellini claimed that Donald Sutherland's "moonlike face" made him a perfect choice for his Casanova.

There also exists a decadent transposition of Casanova, in which, like Don Juan, he is turned into a Pierrot-like victim. *La femme et le pantin* (*The Woman and the Puppet* 1898/2013) by Pierre Louÿs is generally thought to have been inspired by the "worst" episode of Casanova's memoirs, the story of how the adventurer was manipulated, ridiculed, and almost driven to suicide by a young woman called La Charpillon. This least heroic episode of the memoirs also becomes central in Fellini's film. Conversely, the most heroic episode is reduced to a short and static scene. Casanova's escape from the Piombi prison—proof of his willpower and extraordinary determination in reconquering freedom, his "best story," which he published as a separate book during his lifetime and that made him famous in his day—becomes reduced to Casanova sitting and crying on the prison roof under a full moon, *obliged* to leave his beloved Venice (Figure 14.1).

Even two of Casanova's "best" love stories, those with the nun M.M. and the mysterious Frenchwoman Henriette, are interpreted in a way that makes him appear the victim of the situation, a puppet in the hands of others. The former uses him to entertain her lover De Bernis, who is secretly watching, while Henriette uses him to reach Parma, where she mysteriously disappears, leaving him in tears. The expression "slave of sensation" ("forçat de la sensation"), coined by the late nineteenth-century writer Jean Lorrain (quoted in Décaudin 1980, 9), fits Fellini's Casanova like a glove. While Marcello in *La dolce vita* substitutes pleasure for love, this character follows further in the footsteps of decadent heroes, who, digging deeper into the shadows of human nature, show us that debauchery is not only "deadly for love… but also …deadly …for pleasure" (Bourget 1883/1993, 12).

In contrast to the dynamic, adventurous world of Casanova's *Histoire de ma vie*, the world of *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* is largely stagnant. This Casanova seems to be traveling in his own imagination rather than in reality, and in that he reminds one of the imaginary travels of des Esseintes in Huysmans's *À rebours*. More generally, Fellini's world here suggests the stasis of decadent art and also abounds in closed spaces, as if reflecting the protagonist's wish to hide from the

Figure 14.1 Casanova's escape from the Piombi prison is not only less heroic in Fellini's film than in the *Histoire de ma vie*, it is antiheroic. *Source*: *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (1976). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Produzioni Europee Associati. Screen grab captured by Frank Burke from the 2008 Blu-ray version.

reality of the world. According to Gioanola (1977, 127), the main spatial image of decadent aesthetics is the spiral: symbol of closed-upon-itself circularity, repetition, useless accumulation, emptiness, no way out, and no meaningful development or catharsis. This same image will be associated with Fellini's film, by the director himself ("the film presents itself as a closed narrative, with its own 'spiral circularity'… don't ask me what this means"—Fellini 1976), and its reviewers ("a film coiled upon itself, with any possible opening sealed"—Amiel 1977—reflecting "a life that rotates spirally upon itself, aimlessly consuming itself until death"—Dosse 1977).

In decadent literature, nature is often perceived as boring or hostile, and thus substituted by art and artifice. In Fellini's film, nature also appears as hostile: in the few scenes that supposedly take place in the open, the character faces rain, wind, and snow (just like the character of *À rebours*, who is exposed to unbearable heat, pouring rain, or ghastly wind, every time he ventures out of the house, and thus takes pains to substitute artifice for "inclement nature" [Huysmans 1884/1977, 227]). Everything supposedly natural is artificial. Venice is recreated in Cinecittà, with the Rialto Bridge whimsically located near the bell tower on St. Mark's Square, and the famous storm scene on the lagoon created with black plastic sheets. This substitution is not hidden to create a realistic illusion, but, on the contrary, revealed to enhance fictionality, and the process is greatly enjoyed by Fellini: "Even Casanova's gondola is simply an idea of gondola. That plastic groundsheet is the sea. We shall inflate it from below. I find all these details very amusing" (quoted in Angelucci and Betti 1975, 38). All this reminds us of the decadent "passion for simulacra," as described by Francoise Gaillard (1980, 131–132):

> By an understandable phenomenon of denial, the rejection of the real can only be made through its consciously faked duplication. As if the only way to get rid of the obsessive reality, from which one would like to escape, were by its displaced reproduction—for it is in this displacement that regained control is found. … As opposed to realistic illusion, which tries to erase all that points to its fabrication, in order to create the effect of presence, of transparency of the real, decadent

> imitation highlights all signs of deception.... The copy is only accepted if it points to its irreducible difference. It is within the space of this difference, this discrepancy, that the decadent finds his enjoyment.

The way Donald Sutherland's face was "modeled" and turned into "a medallion profile" according to the drawings of the director, who provocatively claimed he wished to work on his face as if it were "wax" to make him look like a "crustacean" (Fellini 1976), brings to mind Huysmans's description of how the protagonist of *À rebours* had his turtle "embellished" by incrusting its shell with precious stones so as to sublimate nature into art.

In decadent aesthetics, "beauty cannot realize itself completely without denying itself" (Jourde, 71). In his rejection and inversion of received ideas, the decadent artist replaces the notion of beauty with that of bizarreness, extravagance, eccentricity, or even monstrosity—these adjectives abound in texts of the period. As do oxymora: a decadent can find something "repugnant and exquisite," is attracted to "magnificent horrors" and "terrible pleasures" (Huysmans 1884/1977, 223, 193). In Fellini's film, strangeness also takes the place of classical beauty, while attraction and repulsion, pleasure and suffering, often merge. This strangeness often borders on typically decadent morbidity, an attraction to images of illness, corruption, and death, or rather a "death in progress": some reviewers perceived the film as "a catatonic carnival in a mausoleum," with its "depiction of human beings as hysterical corpses who don't have the sense to lie down and moulder" (Kroll 1977), and saw "in its magnificence the adornment of death" (Chazal 1977).

The world of *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* and that of the Decadent Movement are inhabited by complementary feminine creatures. In decadent art, with its demolition and defeat of masculinity, the woman is often portrayed as a potential threat, and images of women tend to fall into either the "diabolic" or the "angelic" category; the satanic and ferocious or the worn-out and submissive; a terrible force of nature or a purely spiritual, asexual creature; a "femme fatale" or a "femme-victime"; "Salomé" (but also feminized versions of traditionally male heroes, such as Satanella, Dona Juana, Fausta, Othella), or "Ophelia" (Fortichiari 1990, 67; Pierrot 1977, 163). The same dichotomy can be found in *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, though woman as overpowering or threatening figure tends to dominate—Casanova being the frequent victim of women—and culminates in the image of the "vagina dentata" projected by the magic lantern.

Along with this dichotomization, the typically decadent perception of woman as a threat engenders two other recurring themes: masculinization of women (as counterpart to feminization of men) and the wish to replace the real woman with an artificial one, which would allow the weak male to regain control. In fact, some images that at first glance appear purely Fellinian can already be found in decadent literature, such as the giant woman and the mechanical doll.

The former, performing in a circus where she arm-wrestles with men, (Figure 14.2), reminds one of the "athletic circus woman" who fascinated des Esseintes in *À rebours*. She is also reminiscent of Baudelaire's young giantess in the eponymous poem, "La Géante," where the poet wishes to have lived "in the times when nature, in powerful zest, conceived each day monstrous children," near a young giantess, "as a voluptuous cat at the feet of a queen," "to explore leisurely her magnificent forms; to creep upon the slopes of her enormous knees," "to sleep nonchalantly in the shade of her breasts" (Baudelaire 1857/2003, 64). It is interesting that Baudelaire's poem has been interpreted by psychoanalysts in a key that resonates with the images in Fellini's film, involving woman as mother and a desire to return to the prenatal state, to be engulfed by the woman as Jonah was by the whale. Furthermore, the infantilism of Fellini's giant woman who likes playing with her dolls has its parallel in decadent imagery, where the femme fatale is often a *femme-enfant* (Pierrot 1977, 160).

Figure 14.2 Casanova looks up at the circus giantess (draped figure screen right), who combines masculine strength with maternal kindness and childish innocence—and whose size makes her uncontainable within the frame. *Source*: *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (1976). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Produzioni Europee Associati. Screen grab captured by Frank Burke from the 2008 Blu-ray version.

The second famous image, that of the mechanical doll, Casanova's "ideal woman," recalls the decadent motif of the ideal woman as man's artificial creation, be it an android, as in *L'Eve future* (*The Future Eve*), the novel by Villiers de l'Isle-Adam (1886), or a machine, as in des Esseintes's ironically misogynistic passage in *À rebours* on the superiority of a locomotive's beauty to that of a woman. The latter will reverberate in the image of Marisa, the wife who transforms into a locomotive in Fellini's *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990). The "woman-machine" image can be read as another allusion to decadent misogyny, the ultimate reduction of woman to a soulless physical entity, but also to the typically decadent attraction for in-between, ambiguous, fleeting states: androids as both human and not, alive and lifeless at the same time.

This attraction to states of "in-betweenness" aligns with another aspect of decadent aesthetics: its representation of a consistent incapacity to affirm. Contemporary critics saw the film as a "caricature of an adventurer who sets out on a caricature of adventures, the caricature of a lover blocked in a caricature of love, all this amid a caricature of humanity" (Bory 1977), as "demystification and derision, raised to aesthetic principle" and as a "tremendous sniggering" (Billard 1977). There is also the typically decadent predominance of form over substance, with its tendency to accumulate, inflate, or distort existing forms as noted by Rémond (1977) in the film's "pervasive décor, supposed to fill up its flagrant emptiness."

It seems that Fellini himself is somewhat disturbed by the negativity of the film and this incapacity to affirm, when he says:

> Every now and then… it seems to me it is high time to have done with a complacent and anxious representation of "negativity," with alarmed and alarming reflections of dissolution and disintegration. One should find the strength to propose something … a character, an idea, a fantasy, which would be full of vital energy…. We've been talking for so long exclusively of the "negative" that it has grown into an exclusive, morbid dimension. … (Angelucci and Betti 1975, 50–51)

The same quotation, in which the author both acknowledges and laments the "complacent and anxious representation of negativity" in his film, brings us to the question of Fellini's difference from late nineteenth-century authors, whose representation of negativity was usually much more "complacent" than "anxious." It should be noted that some typical fin-de-siècle themes are absent from Fellini's oeuvre, such as the aestheticizing of sin (Carrera 2019, 114), or the idea of the "aesthetic fecundity of evil" (Pierrot 1977, 34). Moreover, the director's mirroring of decadent negation and derision is never complete. In a number of instances, Fellini, the twentieth-century caricaturist, asserts himself, criticizing the Italian male, contemporary society, and a certain existential model, promoted by the author of *Histoire de ma Vie* and supported by his apologists. The treatment of women in Fellini's films is particularly illuminating in this respect. Whenever the director uses some typically decadent, misogynist dichotomies, it is to critique and problematize them (see Waller in this volume).

As Frank Burke (1993, 169) noted in his analysis of Fellini and postmodernism, "the ruptures in the film's postmodern surface" can be seen "as the assertions of still-felt humanism—and a Fellini who cannot succumb entirely to a postmodern denial of subjectivity, coherence, and an accessible real." As we have seen, denial of coherence and an accessible real are fundamental characteristics of decadence—not just of postmodernism. One can thus say that Fellini's kinship with decadent aesthetics not only inscribes this highly original director within the broad tradition of European culture, but also raises the complex question of the relationship between nineteenth-century decadence and twentieth-century postmodernism.

Another interesting point for reflection is the fact that Fellini's cinema has sometimes been linked to the Baroque, or Neo-Baroque (for example, by degli Esposti 1996). While most often this term is used to refer to the fanciful complexity of forms and spectacular theatricality of Fellini's art, I think it correlates particularly well with Panofsky's definition of the baroque in a lecture of 1934, largely centered on Bernini's caricatures (the term "caricature" itself was coined by the famous sculptor). For Panofsky (1934/1995, 38), "baroque is the only phase of Renaissance civilization, in which it overcame its conflicts not by just smoothing them away (as did the classic Cinquecento), but by realizing them consciously and transforming them into subjective emotional energy, with all the consequences of this subjectivization." Energy, vitality, dynamism, sensuality, emotional involvement of the viewer, along with theatricality and a taste for make-believe and illusion, are all major characteristics of the high baroque. But while these characteristics can be found in *La dolce vita*, films such as *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, in their stagnancy, artificiality, continuous deconstruction, and bizarreness, are closer to decadent aesthetics.

From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Twentieth Century

More generally, what accounts for these aesthetic parallels? Why this return of decadent aesthetics and images in 1960s and 1970s Italy, which one can to some extent discern in the works of other contemporary directors, such as Luchino Visconti (though he follows a different trend in fin-de-siècle culture, sometimes referred to as "decadent aestheticism," best represented by Gabriele D'Annunzio)? Very briefly, a few hypotheses.

To begin with, it is possible to speak of similarities in the political and cultural context of both periods, characterized by similar tendencies: accelerated modernization, laicization, and urbanization; an upsurge of mass culture and consumerism; growing globalization with an ensuing confusion of cultural influences from all over the world; a growing skepticism about progress

caused by the ever more obvious underside of modernity; a moment of political disillusionment (in the aftermath of the Paris Commune and of 1968); a new wave of feminism and a wave of misogyny as an attempt to exorcise the growing emancipation of women, invariably perceived as a threat (on the latter see Showalter 1991). These factors culminate in a crisis in values, a certain pessimism, and a feeling that "all has been said and done." It is in fact surprising how well descriptions of the 1880s in France fit the 1970s in Italy (and vice versa): a time of "the downfall of all ideals and credos, especially political, as well as a decline of religious faith" (Fortichiari 1990, 66).

It is also possible to interpret an upsurge of decadent images as a response to a crisis of individualism. From this perspective, nineteenth-century decadence can be seen as both a development of Romanticism and disappointment in its values, just as the return of decadent images in the twentieth century coincides with postmodernism's disillusionment with the Cartesian subject and notions of the autonomous self.

Finally, the upsurge of decadent imagery in Fellini can be linked to a refusal of rationalism and (re)discovery of the subconscious. Eduard Von Hartmann published his *Philosophie de l'inconscient* in 1869, well before Freud. In fact, some scholars, including Elio Gioanola (1977, 28, 55), associate the birth of the Decadent Movement with this discovery of the subconscious, perceived as the only "certainty" and "reality" at a time when other ideals and beliefs—both those of the Enlightenment and of Romanticism—were undergoing devaluation. Fellini's interest in psychoanalysis dates from the early 1960s, when he met the Jungian psychoanalyst Dr. Ernst Bernhard. There may indeed be some connection between his growing interest in the subconscious and the proliferation of decadent themes in his work. As noted by Georges Simenon (Simenon and Fellini 1977), in an interview with the director shortly after the release of *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* in France: "You are a 'poète maudit' (a cursed poet), like Villon, or Baudelaire, or Van Gogh, or Edgar Poe. I call 'poète maudit' any artist who tends to work with his subconscious rather than with his intelligence … and who sometimes creates monsters, but universal ones."

The list of possible explanations for the striking parallels between Fellini's art and that of late nineteenth-century artists could be further extended. In this case it important to add just one detail: Fellini's early career as a caricaturist/cartoonist. Whatever movement or cultural trend the director may interact with, be it neorealism or postmodernism, decadence or the baroque, it is his temperament as caricaturist that attracts him to these identifiable styles and movements, but that also prevents him from fully immersing himself in any of them. He plays with them according to the needs of the moment, combining influences from art and reality, present and past, in kaleidoscopic patterns that are recognizably European, yet always different.

Notes

1 "Dissolution, a taste for deconsecration, the sense of impotence, the capacity to give life only to a fragment, the obsessive repetition of an unchanging condition… the quest for the divine in the mysterious, yet accompanied by an underlying fear to believe, the incapacity to commit oneself to action and the final resolution in an aesthetic catharsis, are among the motives that have induced various people to place Fellini within the story of the European decadent movement" (Renzi 1994, 10).

2 "A type (des Esseines), a life and art model (À rebours), artworks to be admired, from Gustave Moreau to Mallarmé and a rallying term, 'decadence'—that was enough for a collective awareness to emerge, rather than the formation of a school" (Décaudin 1980, 7).

3 Bondanella 2002, 75.

4 This impression of "a linguistic Babylon" was even stronger in the original soundtrack, before the dubbing, as confirmed by those who saw the original version. See Borgna and Debenedetti 2010, 280.

5 "The temptation of artificiality, for nature has already given all it could, recourse to all kinds of refinements and excesses, surrendering to neurosis, sexual transgression… to complete the picture [of decadence] one would just have to add a reference to drugs and 'artificial paradises'" (Décaudin 1980, 7). "Modern society is blasé. Man has seen it all, and has experienced all emotions…. To move him, one must act upon his senses.… This is the mission of Décadisme" (Charles Darantière quoted in Wagner 1980, 96).

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15

Fellini and Fashion, a Two-way Street: An Interview with Gianluca Lo Vetro

The Editors

GL: Premise: The relationship between Fellini and fashion can be divided into two parts. On the one hand, Fellini draws upon, and continually transforms, fashion, which is intended as the expression of contemporary reality. On the other hand, some of the greatest fashion designers have drawn upon Fellini's imaginary. While the relationship between Fellini and clothing has always been dialectical, fashion designers often cite his films philologically.

TE: In what context did Fellini establish himself? What was the relationship between cinema and fashion when he was taking his first steps?

GL: In postwar neorealist Italy, the cinema wasn't crazy about fashion. Actually, it was adverse. In *Roma città aperta* (*Rome Open City* 1946), the traitor of the rebel group is seduced and bought by a Nazi woman with a fur coat, the symbol of fashion as corruption. Coming out of the war, the imaginary was one of women without vanity, often poor, and, as a result, anything that had to do with fashion was virtually banned. Fashion began to make an appearance in cinema only at the end of the 1940s. In 1948, Valentina Cortese and Alida Valli left for Hollywood, highlighting to the press that they were wearing Schubert. In 1949, some tailors, such as Antonelli, Biki, and the Fontana sisters, presented their outfits at the Excelsior Hotel in Venice. Italian fashion was born, and it did not take long for it to supersede Hollywood influence in Italian cinema. With Michelangelo Antonioni's *Cronaca di un amore* (*Story of a Love Affair* 1950), fashion made an entrance into Italian postwar cinema as a defining element of being woman, an integral part of her personality. But the real turning point came with Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1960).

We should remember that, at the time, "fashion designers" in the modern sense of the term and the big Milanese labels didn't exist, and the few established brands, such as Gucci, gravitated toward Florence. In Rome, there were primarily high fashion couturiers, where the upper-class *signore* replenished their wardrobes. When Fellini arrived in Rome, he was inevitably influenced by this world and drew inspiration from it. He began to draw upon elements of contemporary culture, which he reworked.

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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TE: What precisely was the role of fashion in *La dolce vita*?

GL: According to Fellini (2013, 25, 29), the film was born from his vision of an aristocratic woman in a sack dress, which was fashionable at the end of the 1950s. He said, "It looked like a bag that covered women's bodies," making them appear to be, on the outside, "this marvelous creature, pure and full of life, but on the inside a skeleton of solitude and vice." Fellini affirmed that the sack dress in question was a Cristóbal Balenciaga model from 1957. The costume designer, Piero Gherardi, drew upon the world of haute couture in the days of "Hollywood on the Tiber." In the film you see some capes that could be by Balenciaga, but they're not.

Anita Ekberg's *pretino* (clerical) dress in the same film (Figure 15.1) is another important moment, demonstrating how attentive Fellini was to the times. It was the transfiguration of a dress that had been made for other purposes by the Fontana sisters (to make it, they actually had to ask permission from the Vatican) (Figure 15.2). Fellini probably liked the idea of the fusion between sacred and profane. In his film, Anita wears it with an anticlerical attitude, tossing the ecclesiastical hat down toward the streets of Rome.

Fellini didn't only siphon his surrounding world, he transformed it, creating an almost sociological relationship with clothing. Fashion didn't really interest him in itself, but only as an aspect of culture to rework. This is opposed to Visconti, who, approaching his work as a philologist, took period costumes and recreated them. In the dance scene in *Il gattopardo* (*The Leopard* 1963), Visconti had Claudia Cardinale place inside her purse the same belongings that women carried in the era represented by the film, and Silvana Mangano used her own fur coats while shooting *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno* (*Conversation Piece* 1974). In other words, Visconti never invented anything; he was merely great at reconstructing. Fellini, on the other hand, invented everything. In his own symbology.

In turn, he influenced the world of fashion. Anita Ekberg's famous *pretino* dress was later cited by various designers, from Krizia to Dolce & Gabbana, and before them by Yves Saint Laurent. But this influence was not limited to the catwalk. Now in Italian everyone says "il collo dolcevita" for turtleneck even if in the film this garment, then in vogue among the French existentialists, appears only once and not on Mastroianni but on a character called Pierone (Figure 15.3).

Figure 15.1 Sylvia wearing a pretino dress in her climb up the St. Peter's dome staircase. *Source*: *La dolce vita* (1960). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Riama Film in coproduction with Cinecittà and Pathé Consortium Cinéma. Screen grab captured by Frank Burke from 2014 DVD version.

Figure 15.2 Ava Gardner wearing an early version of the Sorelle Fontana's pretino dress. Image courtesy of Fondazione Micol Fontana.

Figure 15.3 Pierone wearing the "collo dolcevita" (turtleneck). *Source*: *La dolce vita* (1960). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Riama Film in coproduction with Cinecittà and Pathé Consortium Cinéma. Screen grab by Frank Burke from 2014 DVD version.

TE: And before *La dolce vita*?

GL: Fellini always attributed to clothing a potent symbolism, complementary to and explicative of his characters. Take his fanaticism for the hat, to which Paolo Fabbri (2016) dedicated a beautiful essay. Already in *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952), the hat is, for Fellini, a symbol of power, flaunted by the protagonist like a flag. And when he gets mocked, he loses the hat and it gets crushed. The paradox is that Fellini himself did not dress fashionably (at least at first), but clothes prove important for him, and not only in film, but in his life. After he lost a youthful mane that gave him the look of an artist, Fellini never took his hat off. Another iconic element of his was the scarf, which he considered an almost sacramental symbol of power. He draped it over himself and over his characters like a sort of priest's stole. He also loved to give women this accessory as a gift, and, at his request, he was buried with his red scarf around his neck.

TE: Could we say that, in a certain sense, Fellini projected his own personal style onto his characters?

GL: Certainly. Like him, his characters often wear coats made of English fabrics. Though more than his style, he projects onto his characters his obsessions (such as the hat, the scarf, or even glasses). But the symbolism doesn't end there. In *La strada* (1954), Giulietta Masina wears a feather cape. Witnesses tell me that she was in despair because it was made of rough, terrible materials. Not like fur, but feathers of a chicken (a bird that does not fly), smeared with shaving cream. All terribly symbolic. Fellini's cinema should be reread—his characters' clothing—in terms of their meanings. That is why my *Fellini e la moda* (Lo Vetro 2015) contains a chapter, "Modyricon," in which various stylistic elements that recur in Fellini's cinema (pearls, tailcoats, cloaks, tattoos, glasses, stripes, etc.) are analyzed, as well as their significance.

TE: Is *8½* (1963) important for defining Fellini's personal iconic woman?

GL: There is an interesting scene in which the protagonist is sitting with his wife, who is a woman of austere elegance like Giulietta Masina (played by Anouk Aimée), while his lover, Sandra Milo, is all rather crude display and flamboyance. And he says: "I would never go out with a woman like that," or something similar, distancing himself from this type of bombshell that in reality is his ideal woman. Because at the basis of Fellini's concept of elegance there is this dichotomy between Giulietta's simplicity, the woman who reassures him, and the hyper-woman, in the style of Anita Ekberg (here we could add an entire psychoanalytic chapter). Two icons of woman who, deep down, are not really women: they are either harmless sprites that reassure him, or temptresses who exalt him.

TE: Regarding his "iconic man," in particular the look of Marcello/Guido, how much did he contribute to men's awareness of the existence of fashion and the fact that nowadays men pay more attention to their look?

GL: To say that he incited men to be fashionable would be an exaggeration. Fellini didn't invent the look of Marcello in *La dolce vita*; he only captured a tendency, the "mod" look (that of the "modernists"), of London origin: black clothes with slim pants and a thin tie. A sign of modernity and of a break from the look of Gregory Peck, an old symbol of 1950s elegance, of American origin, with his pleated pants.

TE: How would you relate *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965) to our discussion?

GL: According to Angelucci (2014), this is another turning point, because from then on, "Fellini no longer absorbs reality like a sponge," but projects onto his films, onto the costumes, "his personal vision of the world." At the time, his set designer was still Piero Gherardi (who received Oscars for the costumes in *La dolce vita* and *8½*). Quirino Conti (2014), the great fashion philosopher, believes that Gherardi, and the composer Nino Rota, were the two keys to Fellini's success. Gherardi lent his brilliance to Fellini's films, finding synergy with him. Therefore, if we

mean fashion not as the clothing that we wear, but as intuition and creativity, *Giulietta degli spiriti* is a masterpiece of costumes. In fact, Antonio Marras, in his penultimate fashion show (Spring/Summer 2018), used Sandra Milo's swing as scenery.

Fellini - Satyricon (1969) is interesting more for its "customs" than for its costumes, for it legitimizes masculine homosexuality before its time. At the time, this aspect was ignored by the critics because it was too scandalous and embarrassing. But if you think about it, in the film there is a gay marriage. And in many Fellini films, starting with *I vitelloni* (1953) there are gay men. It's intriguing that the famous sweater with the high neck in *La dolce vita* is worn by the homosexual Pierone, played by Giò Stajano, generally considered the most famous homosexual in Italy at the time as well as a significant avant-garde figure—interesting proof that Fellini attributes to homosexuals an attitude of innovation.

Freewheeling in his inventiveness, Fellini was often ahead of his time. Even with those actors who seem like freakshow phenomena, such as the tobacconist of *Amarcord* (1974) or *8½*'s Saraghina. Today we would call them "curvy woman."

Later, in *Roma* (1972), he introduces an ecclesiastical parade, which encountered censorship. It was a prophetic display, foreshadowing, among other things, the cyborg contamination of human being and technology, and pairs of clergymen, precursors not only of all the doubles of *Ginger e Fred* (1986) but of cloning.

E la nave va (*And the Ship Sails On* 1983) is actually one of the first films in which Fellini uses real "fashion," referencing the Fendi sisters. The fashion house owned by the five eccentric sisters was a sort of cultural salon in Rome, visited by, among others, Visconti. (Carla Fendi [2014] told me that Fellini bought some scarves from her to bring to Giulietta on the night of his lifetime achievement Oscar.) Therefore, it was only natural that Fellini involved Fendi in the film, using their fur coats (another Fellini symbol) and travel bags. "Working with Federico was more tiring than giving birth," recalls Carla Fendi (2014). "He never lost sight of any particulars; everything revolved around him. Even the smallest detail." And for *Ginger e Fred*, other than a series of scarves, Fellini asked Fendi for a Mongolian lamb fur coat, because he liked the white long hair.

But he didn't use Fendi just as a supplier. One day, Carla Fendi came to the set of *And the Ship Sails On*. Seeing her, he immediately told her she would be perfect for a cameo in his film. Because she had very distinctive features. Her face also appears in Fellini's sketches. The fact that Fellini started out doing caricatures is prophetic, because deep down he was always more interested in facial features than in clothing. And he looked for extraordinary characters. Among his actors was Alvaro Vitali, the little guy with the crooked eye whom he adored, and then of course the women. The giantess Sandra Elaine Allen (*Il Casanova di Federico Fellini/Fellini's Casanova* 1976) who was so big, she couldn't travel in an airplane.

And this explains why, when he used real models in his films, he chose not the beautiful ones, but the particular ones, such as Capucine, Donyale Luna (*Fellini - Satyricon*) and Nico (*La dolce vita*). Their physical distinctiveness, together with their peculiar personalities, immediately dispels the stereotypical idea of cover-model beauty and instead spotlights atypical profiles existing within the fashion establishment; anti-model models virtually opposed to the system to which they belong. In this way, Fellini shows that he knows how to exploit the power of fashion, sensing the need for new standards capable of capsizing conventional perceptions.

TE: How much influence did the costume designers have on Fellini's work?

GL: The director often designed the characters' costumes and their details himself. He had, however, two particularly important collaborators: Piero Gherardi and Danilo Donati. Piero Gherardi was an incredible visionary; the commercial that he made for Barilla with Mina was

emblematic, with futuristic sets that could have been Lady Gaga's. Danilo Donati instead was a great "metallurgist," a craftsman of costumes. He could make anything. He would open up a workshop next to the set, where he would "forge" his marvelous costumes. I had the privilege of seeing the archive of costumes for *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* and *Roma*. Upon close examination, you realize that, on the garments for the famous ecclesiastical parade, the lace is made out of the cake plates of gilded cardboard, from the patisserie, and that the jeweled studs and the gold disks are halved Christmas ornaments and cropped containers of chocolate. Within these workshops, Donati made not only costumes, but also food. He would cook for the set.

TE: Is there a relationship between taste in fashion and taste in food in the world of Fellini?

GL: The issue remains unexplored, despite the fact that food can be increasingly considered fashion and Fellini always saw it as highly communicative.

One thing that is often forgotten, but extremely interesting: in the sixties, Diana Vreeland (1966), the legendary director of *Vogue*, did a series of stories with the title "A Second Fame: Good Food," about celebrity menus. With contributions by the likes of Alexander Calder and Man Ray, she also got a hold of recipes of Fellini and Giulietta Masina. Giulietta revealed the ingredients of her salsa verde and her spaghetti all'amatriciana, while Fellini provided the instructions for his sangria. Sangria appears in his films, and rumor had it that he would get his actors drunk on sangria before shooting scenes (for instance, Marcello in the famous Trevi Fountain scene). Who knows why sangria: perhaps because it's a mixture of things, and it's red....

Some years later, in 1972, Fellini designed the Christmas edition of *Vogue Paris*, entitled "Vogue Fellini" (the prestigious assignment was given, in other years, to Alfred Hitchcock, Franco Zeffirelli, Akira Kurosawa, and Martin Scorsese). On the cover, Giulietta Masina poses as a clown with a red tomato nose and a striped T-shirt. Clearly unconventional, the "cover girl" immediately escorts the reader into the circus world, ironic and at times grotesque. Even the photographers, one of whom was Tazio Secchiaroli, prototype of the "paparazzo," were not the big names in fashion typically used by *Vogue*. Marcello Mastrioanni appears in the magazine in Mandrake's clothes (as in the film *Intervista* 1987), and Claudia Cardinale features as the author of an advice column. Particularly interesting is the story by Danilo Donati, entitled "Food and Fashion," which is extremely relevant today. It begins with the costume designer posing in the kitchen with a sewing machine and a flask of wine, and it proceeds with a series of food-clothing inventions: strings of fusilli pasta that give the effect of strings of pearls, a cape made of big leaves of lettuce, and so on.

TE: Your "premise" talked of two parts to the relationship between Fellini and fashion.

GL: Here is the second act. We've already talked about how, rather than draw upon fashion, fashion entered his work as part of his re-elaboration of the contemporary world. Rarely could you say that Fellini used designer brands. He used a white shirt by Valentino in the parade in *8½*. In *La dolce vita*, there's a Gucci purse. Guest appearances. On the contrary, his cinema thereafter influenced the world of fashion. Fellini produced so many different ideas that many, even those with different styles, found in his creativity a piece of themselves. Whether it be a garment, an accessory, atmosphere, music: many designers, at least once in their careers, have paid homage to his cinema.

Maybe the only one to not have caught Fellini fever is Armani. The "king of the blazer," who dresses career women, is too concrete, too strict to let himself be captivated by dreams. He confirms it himself (Armani 2014) with these words: "Fellini has the grotesque as his cipher: an aesthetic code that does not belong to me." The hyperdecorative Versace, who embodies the exact

antithesis of Armani's style, has much more in common with the director. For Donatella Versace (2014), the director is one of those "geniuses who can only demonstrate their creativity by being excessive." Versace also loved fantasy, the concept of "clash," boldly contaminating icons of every artistic expression. Then there's Valentino, who shares with Fellini a passion for the color red. In 1994, he reenacted Anita's famous bath in the Trevi Fountain for his spring advertising campaign. Ermanno Scervino, in his Fall/Winter 2013/2014 collection for men, resurrected the Fellinian cloak. And Krizia, for the Fall/Winter 1991/1992 models, was inspired by Anita Ekberg's *pretino* dress.

TE: Which fashion houses, would you say, are closest to Fellini's cinema?

GL: Dolce & Gabbana, Etro, and Gaultier.

Dolce & Gabbana declare that with their collections they have "gone from Visconti to Pasolini, Rossellini, and of course Fellini, who is the most famous in the whole world" (Gabbana 2013). If we think about Fellini's cinema as a mixture of neorealism and surrealism, we can see right away what his affinities are with the two designers. In fact, in *La strada*, Anthony Quinn/Zampanò already dresses in perfect Dolce & Gabbana style. The sheath dresses that you see in *La dolce vita* (which had already appeared in *Le notti di Cabiria/Nights of Cabiria* 1956) are the same ones that the designer couple releases every season. The advertising campaign "Vita, Dolce Vita" ("Life, Sweet Life" 1992), in which Monica Bellucci and Isabella Rossellini reenact the most salient shots of the film, is yet another tribute to the director. Soon after, the designers brought to the catwalk a reconstruction of the Trevi Fountain and made a tribute to Mastrioanni in the form of a T-shirt inscribed with Anita's line: "Marcello, come here." From that fashion show on, their men become a reincarnation of Marcello, with his slim clothes, thin tie, and dark glasses. But while Fellini reconstructs the pleasure of Via Veneto in order to stigmatize the shadows behind the paparazzi's flashes, the two designers re-evoke it as an absolute emblem of the Italian *bella vita*, without any criticism. In 2005, they brought back Anita Ekberg's famous clergyman dress, and before that, in 1995–1996, they unleashed the rosary and the cross as unisex jewelry. In Spring/Summer 2012, they presented a collection that deliberately magnified female curves—"Saraghina style"—and recently, in 2013, they deliberately affiliated one of their collections with *Fellini - Satyricon*—from the big belts with contours of ancient coins to the gold-leaf Ephebian crowns, placed on the models' heads in a blaze of gold and colors. The fashion house even financed the restoration of the latter film, along with that of "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio" ("The Temptation of Dr. Antonio," episode of *Boccaccio '70*).

Etro is also truly "Fellinian." When in 1997 its models tumbled down a slide in the limelight, none of the journalists cited the scaffolds along which Mastroianni/Snàporaz slides in *La città delle donne*. And yet, Kean Etro (2013) himself admitted, "the idea for this alternative catwalk came straight from Fellini's film." In general, nothing conforms to order in the kingdom of Etro, and everything is reworked by the creator's fantasy: from product invention to press campaigns, and fashion shows that are always theater. Many elements of this fantasy realm recall Fellini: the glasses with a third lens on the forehead, an allusion to the "third eye" (Spring/Summer 1999), and the Turning Stripes collection (Spring/Summer 1997), with its stripes of varying widths. Moreover, there is a tight kinship between the phenotypes that Etro chooses for the catwalk—particular subjects and unique bodies, or *Etro-types*—and the characters chosen by Fellini for his films. The comingling of races in Etro also recalls the medley of skin colors in Fellini's films. But Etro doesn't stop at casting atypical models. In the Spring/Summer 1999 collection, models were immobilized on a catwalk that ran mechanically: static, like mannequins, rotating like dolls inside a music box, immediately recalling the mechanical doll in *Il Casanova di*

Federico Fellini. At the same time, Etro's "gigantic" collection, the umpteenth expression of a fantastical world where the conventions of space are blown up (Spring/Summer 1997), makes one think of "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio," in which Anita Ekberg descends from the billboard with her gigantic proportions.

Jean Paul Gaultier has explicitly declared that his stores were modeled after *Roma*, with its mosaics that peek out from cement floors. Since 1985, putting men in a skirt, Gaultier has expressed through fashion his professed faith in homosexuality. But Fellini, in the words of Angelucci (2013, 168–169), was also "infatuated" by diversity, featuring for the first time in his films different types of people "that before didn't exist in the cinema imaginary." In *La dolce vita*, he includes transsexuality and homosexuality in figures such as Dominot and Stajano, who, just like Gaultier, were excessively platinumized blondes. The other icon of Gaultier style, the corset, likewise recalls the Fellini imaginary. In *Fellini - Satyricon*, the goddess Enotea (Donyale Luna) wears two blunt metallic breasts remarkably similar to the steel nipples that Gaultier would later design for Madonna. But already in *Il libro dei sogni* (*The Book of Dreams*, Fellini 2007), in a sketch from 14 February 1966, Fellini portrays himself with two pairs of glasses whose surrealism and sexual suggestiveness anticipate Gaultier.

TE: Can you give any other examples of Fellini prescience?

GL: An avant-garde postmodern, Fellini was often ahead of his time. In 1997, Etro carried out their epoch-making campaign, in which humans and animals meld. But Fellini had already worked similarly on the human body in relation to nature. In a sketch from 1967 (Fellini 2007, 240, 513), there's a woman seen from behind, with a bunch of grapes instead of a hairy vagina. In 2012, Francesco Scognamiglio designed a body suit with five breasts for Lady Gaga, but in the billboard for *Roma* there is already a woman with three breasts, the hybrid of a nude woman of color and the Capitoline wolf. What is this? It's the interpenetration of the human body and the animal world. Fellini's cinema was ahead of its time in other ways. Just to cite an example with particular resonance: the comments by the luxury-liner guests in *E la nave va*, when confronted with Serbian refugees, anticipate the anti-immigrant rhetoric that abounds today, both in Italy and throughout contemporary industrialized countries.

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Part III
Collaborations

Milo Manara

"Visionary" is the attribute most often associated with Fellini. I have always found it inaccurate and restrictive. I picture someone hallucinating, seeing things that aren't there, a victim of mirages arising from his own overactive imagination, unable to tell waking from sleeping. In my view Fellini is best defined by the word "transfiguration"; that is to say, he doesn't see and make us see monsters instead of windmills, but through him the windmill becomes transfigured and displays before our eyes its true windmill nature, taking on the essence of "Great Windmill."

In all movieland Fellini is the only director who uses the movie camera for what it is: the third eye, the eye of enlightenment. Many great movies from other directors tell us engrossing, tragic, funny, exceptional stories. For Fellini, this is not what moviemaking is about. He merely switches on the third eye and, towing us along, witnesses the transfiguration of the universe.

To me he has always been some kind of Prometheus who steals fire from the gods and gives it to humans. He is the artist who has endowed humanity with a third eye. A religion, more or less.

Plot, intrigue, events are comparatively unimportant within Fellini's work. What counts is the wondrous unveiling of all things, the poignant disclosure of the secret core, the ineffable universal transfiguration that binds together human beings, animals, plants, things, in a gentle kind of animism, in the mutual worship of nature. (56-57)

V. Mollica, Fellini: Words and Drawings *(Welland, Ontario: Soleil Publishing, 2001).*

16

Ennio, Tullio, and the Others: Fellini and His Screenwriters

Giaime Alonge

In April 1964, on the eve of the 36th Academy Awards ceremony, where Federico Fellini's *8½* (1963) would win the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, Fellini was in the company of his main collaborators, all of whom were flying in business class, except for screenwriter Ennio Flaiano, to whom the studio had given an economy class ticket. After takeoff, Fellini apparently mocked Flaiano for his "inferior" condition, ironically offering him peanuts and a beverage only accessible to business class travelers. When the plane landed in Los Angeles, Flaiano slipped away and took a flight to New York City. This story has been often referred to as one of the reasons why Fellini and Flaiano, who had worked together from Fellini's directorial debut in 1950 to *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965), bitterly split in the mid 1960s. Fellini's main biographer, Tullio Kezich (2010, 256), dismisses the relevance of the episode: "This story of the director who would have made the screenwriter travel in tourist class has been dragged on for decades, developing into an article of faith for that small group of intellectuals who stubbornly believe that Flaiano was the secret and humiliated author of Fellini's films." According to biographer Fabrizio Natalini (2005, 195), on his return from the trip, Flaiano received an apology letter from *8½*'s producer Angelo Rizzoli "for what he described as an incident caused by haste, for which he was taking responsibility."

Moreover, Natalini underlines a few inconsistencies in the story as told by Flaiano and retold by others. But besides its questionable veracity and any role that it might have played in the dissolution of the bond between Fellini and Flaiano, this putative event is quite revealing about relationships between directors and screenwriters. In the history of cinema, some screenwriters developed warm relationships with their directors, at times even sharing the film's authorship on a fifty-fifty basis, as Cesare Zavattini did with Vittorio De Sica, or Emeric Pressburger with Michael Powell. Other screenwriters were less fortunate. In classical Hollywood, the screenwriter was usually the low man—or woman—on the totem pole. Legendary American movie mogul Jack Warner notoriously labeled screenwriters as "schmucks with Underwoods." For their part, the "schmucks" complained about and bitterly ironized the producers' vulgarity and the sad condition of the literati in the studio system: just read F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Last Tycoon* (1941) or Budd Schulberg's *What Makes Sammy Run?* (1941). The attitude of many European producers and directors toward screenwriters did not differ much from that of their American counterparts.

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke,
Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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Flaiano's sardonic description of the screenwriter could have been voiced by Hollywood colleagues, such as Ben Hecht or Dalton Trumbo:

> I know some producers who would write the script on their own, if they had time. Problem is they do not have time. And many directors do not have time either. In these cases, the screenwriter is "one who has time." But his work will be revised by people trusted either by the producer or the director—relatives who did well at school, doormen, secretaries, mistresses, in sum, by the so-called public. (Flaiano 1954, 46)

In the context of European modernist cinema, the movie script was often considered not very important, or even something that could hamper the director. This was particularly true in Italy, where Roberto Rossellini and neorealism fostered the idea that you could more or less make a movie by just improvising. It is not by chance that in Italian a very detailed script—that is, a script where shots and camera movements are precisely described—is called a "sceneggiatura di ferro," an "iron screenplay," an expression that inevitably conveys a sense of constraint. A too-detailed script is seen as a sort of straitjacket, something that limits the director's creativity. More generally, the notion of film authorship, as theorized by François Truffaut and his colleagues in the 1950s, presents a strong anti-screenwriter prejudice. According to the *Cahiers du Cinéma* crowd, a "real" director is a capital "A" Author who totally owns the film. In this theoretical framework, the sole role of the screenwriter, if any, is to help the director give substance to his vision. Why this downgrading of the screenwriter? Why not marginalize the cinematographer or the set designer as well? For two main reasons: on the one hand, the Truffautian director-centric politique des auteurs, which *The Village Voice*'s film critic Andrew Sarris would import to the United States as the "auteur theory," was centered on the cult of visual representation—and, cinematographers notwithstanding, the director was seen as responsible for the visual artistry of a film. From this point of view, writing was a suspiciously literary activity. In this context, "literary" is not a compliment; it implies that the screenwriter does not possess a truly filmic sense. In addition, the screenwriter is the enemy because, contrary to all the other creative collaborators, he can work without the director. He can even work *before* the director is selected. So, the screenwriter, at least in some cases, can aspire to share film authorship with the director, which is anathema to the auteur theory. While Truffaut focused his attacks on Jean Aurenche and Pierre Bost, the most famous French screenwriters of the time, somehow sparing their Hollywood colleagues (see Truffaut 1987), his fellow "young turk" Jacques Rivette advocated the suppression of the screenwriter role per se: "This question of the professional screenwriter is outmoded" (Bazin et al. 1957, 29). Federico Fellini's career as a whole could be seen as a progressive "outmoding" of the role of the screenwriter, going from a mainstream-cinema style of screenwriting to sketchy "poetic" scripts.

In this chapter, I will study Fellini's opus from the point of view of his attitude toward screenwriting and his relationships with screenwriters. In doing so, I will rely on interpretations of Fellini's cinema articulated by Bondanella (1992) and Kezich (2010), which convincingly present Fellini's filmography as divided in two major phases. There is a "prose" Fellini—from *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952) to *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957)—still linked to a classical mode of narration, with a dramatic structure not too different from that of a Hollywood film. And there is a "poetic" Fellini—from *La dolce vita* (1960) and *8½* on, more and more intent on exploring the possibilities of cinema as a mostly visual, almost nonnarrative, medium. I will analyze notable examples of Fellini's scripts from different periods.[1]

Writing with Pinelli and Flaiano—and Why They Split

Fellini entered the film industry as a screenwriter, a profession he practiced for about ten years. According to Bondanella's filmography (1992, 335–337), during this period Fellini contributed—credited or not—to 27 films, from Mario Mattoli's *Imputato, alzatevi!* (1939) to Roberto Rossellini's *Europa '51* (*Europe '51* 1952). It is not by chance that the most important filmmaker with whom he interacted during the first decade of his career was Rossellini, with whom Fellini worked on five movies: *Roma città aperta* (*Rome Open City* 1945), *Paisà* (*Paisan* 1946), "Il miracolo" ("The Miracle")—the second part of the episode film *L'amore* (1948)— *Francesco, giullare di Dio* (*The Flowers of Saint Francis* 1950), and *Europa '51*. Rossellini, as I earlier implied, was well known for his preference for loose scripts and improvisation. Fellini inherited this attitude, but he would not begin to put it into practice until *La dolce vita*. When he was only a screenwriter, as well as in the first decade of his directing career, his approach to his work was quite conventional.

Analyzing the script of Alberto Lattuada's *Senza pietà* (*Without Pity* 1948), written by Fellini and Pinelli along with Lattuada and Ettore Maria Margadonna, Bondanella (1992, 57–59), though drawing an inaccurate analogy, underlines its precision:

> A glance at a … typical sequence from the original manuscript … reveals that the script … departs in important respects from traditional Italian practice. It seems closer to a screenplay intended for the American studio system. … Written for a … standardized method of production that would never have tolerated the haphazard and provisional atmosphere characteristic of Rossellini's early neorealist films—the manuscript prepared by Fellini and Pinelli … contains numerous technical details.

Bondanella's monograph is one of the best researched books on Fellini, but as far as screenplays are concerned, it accepts a widespread but unfounded assumption that Hollywood scripts were "very detailed," more or less sceneggiature di ferro, while the scripts of European cinema, especially art cinema, were loose. This conception, often voiced by critics and film historians, both in Europe and in the US, is simply not true. On the one hand, in the so-called "golden age" of the studio system (from the 1920s to the 1950s), there were different models for scriptwriting, ranging from the specific-shot screenplay (where every shot is described) to the master-scene screenplay (organized in scenes, where specific shots are not described, but obliquely evoked). At least until the 1940s, there were no standard rules even about the format of the screenplay. In classical Hollywood, scripts in which all shots and camera movements are indicated were relatively rare. They were used by a handful of directors, such as Ernst Lubitsch or Alfred Hitchcock, who worked alongside the screenwriters. When the screenwriter was not in touch with the director, he or she was less specific, because writers knew perfectly well that, on the set, the director was going to have his, or in the rarest of cases her, way. As proof, one can read Darryl Zanuck's memo from May 1947 (Behlmer 1993, 142), addressed to all Twentieth Century Fox directors, executives, and producers: "Directors should, in a larger measure, plot their shooting in advance. An unnecessary amount of shooting time is now consumed … figuring how a scene is to be staged and how it is to be photographed."[2]

Rossellini's loose scripts and improvisation were exceptions in the context of the Italian film industry, which, since the silent era (see Alovisio 2005), practiced a relatively detailed form of screenwriting, not very different from that of Hollywood. In fact, when Fellini starts his directing career, he keeps the same detailed script format he used with Pinelli. For example, if we read the screenplay of *Lo sceicco bianco*, we see that it is organized in numbered shots, where many camera

movements, camera positions, and sound effects are described. This is the scene where Wanda, the female protagonist, a young provincial bride on her honeymoon in Rome, goes to the Incanto Blu ("Blue Enchantment") publishing company, which serializes her favorite dime romance novels:

> 81.
> Wanda tiptoes to the door,
> her eyes seem looking for a
> name among all those plates.
> And suddenly they lighten, fixed…
>
> 82.
> … on a plate that reads: "BLUE
> ENCHANTMENT." (Fellini, Flaiano, and Pinelli 1952, 32)

The screenplay is written in traditional Italian format (in use until the 1990s), with the page divided in two parallel columns—images on the left and sound on the right—but the writing technique is very similar to Hollywood's. If we see the corresponding scene in the movie, we realize that it differs slightly from the script. On the wall there are just a couple of plates, and Wanda finds the one she is looking for right away. Moreover, she turns her back to the camera, so we have just a very short glimpse of her ardent eyes. To let us feel her excitement, Fellini makes the actress, Brunella Bovo, caress the plate, as if it were a holy relic. But this kind of deviation was and is common practice, both in America and in Europe, in mainstream and in art cinema. It is quite uncommon that the director strictly sticks to the screenplay during shooting and editing. A screenplay is an intrinsically unstable text; it is, to use Pier Paolo Pasolini's description, "structure that wants to be another structure" (Pasolini 1965, 188). The point here is that Fellini, along with his collaborators Pinelli and Flaiano, conceived a dense text of 270 pages, not just with a story and dialogue, but full of visual and sound suggestions, a rich source of material that the director could use—and transform—while shooting.

It is not just the style and format of Fellini's screenplays from the 1950s that do not differ much from those of mainstream movies; the narrative structure is basically a classical one. Discussing *Lo sceicco bianco* and *I vitelloni* (1953), André Bazin (1957, 84) writes: "Though their themes were specifically Fellinian, they were still being expressed within a framework provided by relatively traditional scenarios." In the 1950s, Fellini is part of the great modernist upheaval, that started after—and partially because of—neorealism, but what is modernist in his scripts is mainly the content: the way characters are built, not the way narration is structured. Films such as *Lo sceicco bianco*, *I vitelloni*, *La strada* (1954), *Il bidone* (*The Swindle* 1955), *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957) show a world where cynicism, violence, and greed triumph, a world where rascals and brutes take advantage of weak and naive creatures bound to succumb. It is a dark representation of reality, very far from that of Hollywood movies, or Italian mainstream cinema. Nonetheless, the narrative structure of these films is primarily classical, especially if we compare them with Fellini's films from the 1960s and 1970s, when conventional narrative—a series of logically and causally linked events, psychologically deep characters—almost disappears.

Let's take, for example, *I vitelloni*. Apparently, the story is composed of a set of relatively autonomous episodes, where the characters seem frozen in some sort of eternal adolescence, unable to grow and change—"change" being the keyword of classical narrative (see McKee 1998). But, in fact, characters do change. Moraldo is more or less the group's moral compass, or perhaps the least cynical member of the gang. At the end of the movie, he leaves the small town, breaking

the spell of provincial life. Fausto, in turn, who is the remorseless womanizer and the "worst" of the group, repents, providing a "happy ending" for Sandra and him—that is engineered by a classical narrative turn of events. After the umpteenth betrayal by her husband, Sandra has disappeared with their baby. Fausto and his friends fear she has committed suicide. However, Fausto discovers that she has just gone to visit his father, a development set up by an earlier and seemingly irrelevant visit of Sandra to her father-in-law. The couple reunites. Fausto seems determined to become a good husband, and the previously passive Sandra threatens (mostly in jest) to beat up Fausto if he betrays her again, signaling some change on her part as well. This is quintessential classical screenwriting: characters evolving in the context of a well-oiled narrative, where things seem to happen casually, but where every episode has a specific function in the overall textual structure.

In order to have this kind of structure, Fellini needed professional screenwriters, such as Flaiano and Pinelli, who played a pivotal role in his movies during the 1950s. At its origins, the story of *Lo sceicco bianco* was Pinelli's idea, as admitted by Fellini himself (1980, 49), while *La strada* was the result of a sort of "double vision," because they both had the same idea at the same time (58). As far as *I vitelloni* is concerned, it is probable that Flaiano contributed precious material because he had the same firsthand knowledge of petit bourgeois provincial life that Fellini had. While Pinelli came from a big city, Turin, Flaiano was from Pescara, in the Abruzzo region, a town more or less the same small size as Fellini's Rimini. In particular, the character of Leopoldo, the intellectual of the group, is inspired by Flaiano. The actor who plays this character, Leopoldo Trieste, even has a certain physical resemblance to Flaiano, while Riccardo Fellini, who plays Riccardo, is literally his brother's double.

Of course, saying that the help of Flaiano and Pinelli was crucial for conceiving the stories and characters of Fellini's films, or even for choosing the actors (Pinelli suggested Alain Cuny for the role of Steiner in *La dolce vita*—Fellini 2008, 55), does not mean that these films do not belong mainly to Fellini. The theory disputed by Kezich (2010, 256) that Flaiano was "the secret and humiliated author of Fellini's films" is unconvincing. The collaboration of Pinelli and Flaiano was very important, but Fellini chose them, and worked with them on the script from the very beginning, approving or rejecting the ideas they proposed. Film authorship is an intrinsically prismatic notion, because films—at least feature films—are made by a group of people, but the auteurist nature of Fellini's movies, even in the 1950s, is undeniable. If Flaiano's contribution was so vital, how was it that Fellini wrote some of his best movies, such as *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969) and *Amarcord* (1973), with other writers, such as Bernardino Zapponi and Tonino Guerra?

The more Fellini departed from classical narrative, the more he needed diverse collaborators. It is no accident that in the mid-1950s two new collaborators joined the group of Fellini's screenwriters. For *Le notti di Cabiria*, Pier Paolo Pasolini was hired as a consultant on Roman underworld slang, but his contribution went beyond dialogue, and he was credited as a "collaborator on the screenplay," which reflects a much greater contribution than mere credit for "additional dialogue." At the time, Pasolini was not yet a film director. He was a poet and novelist who had started to work as a screenwriter for Mario Soldati's *La donna del fiume* (*The River Girl* 1954), a movie to which Flaiano also contributed. Pasolini worked again, albeit uncredited, on *La dolce vita*, and then stopped working for Fellini, or any other director, because he was pursuing his own directing career. The second newcomer, Brunello Rondi, first worked on *La strada* and then became a stable presence in Fellini's filmography. Credited either as an "artistic collaborator" or a "collaborator on the screenplay" (only on *La dolce vita* was he both), Rondi worked on many Fellini movies, from *Il bidone* and *Le notti di Cabiria* to *Prova d'orchestra* (*Orchestra Rehearsal* 1979) and *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980).

As Federico Pacchioni (2014, 97–98) underlines in his book on Fellini's screenwriters, Rondi did not get along with Flaiano, who also disliked Pasolini. The conflict was such that Fellini had to work separately with each of them. There was evidently a problem of competition between old and new collaborators. But there was also a deep difference in their attitudes toward life and work. In 1965, the year of *Giulietta degli spiriti*, the last movie cowritten by Fellini, Flaiano, and Pinelli, Rondi published a monograph on Fellini. It is 400 pages, full of highbrow references, from Jean-Paul Sartre to Martin Heidegger. It is the kind of solemn book Flaiano would never have written. In the author's biography on the book cover, Rondi (1965) presents himself as some sort of a genius—a writer-playwright-director-essayist "among those who, in Italy, more extraordinarily have played a groundbreaking role." Rondi's pompousness is the opposite of Flaiano's sharp irony. In analyzing Fellini's films, Rondi systematically underestimates Flaiano's and Pinelli's contribution and criticizes Pinelli's "traditionalist" approach to the character of Steiner in *La dolce vita*. He considers this "moral guide-character" as belonging to an "old dramaturgy" (28). At the same time, Rondi repeatedly presents himself as Fellini's closest writing collaborator, going so far to call their relationship "telepathic" (29). But at the same time, Rondi says that Fellini "does not have and could not have collaborators" (27), a sentence that must have pleased Fellini. In his book, Rondi tries, on the one hand, to demonstrate that Fellini is solitarily in command of his opus, an author who does not need "traditional" screenwriters. On the other hand, he claims to be Fellini's only productive scriptwriting collaborator, precisely because he is so unorthodox. Rondi presents himself, both as author (when he writes/directs his own plays and films) and as docile tool in Fellini's service, when he acts as a writing partner. Not by chance, he never got a full writing credit— an "artistic collaborator" is more a consultant than a cowriter. He was so docile that he even worked as Fellini's ghostwriter for a famous letter of self-defense, "Letter to a Marxist critic" (Fellini 1976, 59–63), that in 1955 Fellini sent to the communist magazine *Il Contemporaneo*, which had attacked *La strada* (see Sanguineti 2005, 130).

Flaiano always cared intensely about his status as an author; he hated being overshadowed by Fellini and probably would never have accepted to ghostwrite a letter for him. At the same time, he had a healthy sense of humor, including in regard to himself, something Rondi clearly did not possess. Flaiano was too smart and self-aware to write something like "I played a groundbreaking role in Italian culture," even though he has been a much more relevant figure than Brunello Rondi, whose work, contrary to Flaiano's, is totally forgotten nowadays.

In the split between Fellini and his first screenwriters, questions of style and storytelling played a role. Feelings of pride and self-esteem, as well as clashing strategies of self-promotion, were involved as well. It is self-evident that the more Fellini departed from traditional narrative, the less he needed traditional screenwriters. But Flaiano and Pinelli were not completely opposed to Fellini's new approach to storytelling. Pacchioni (2014, 50–51) notes:

> While an overly dramatized and traditional plot structure was one of the elements of friction in the collaboration between Fellini and Pinelli, this was not the case with Flaiano, who, without doubt, was at home with Fellini's progressively more fragmentary tendencies. Flaiano's preferences for epigrammatic and fragmented narrative forms are a reflection of his intention to deconstruct the protagonists of his stories.

To support Pacchioni's claim, we can mention that Flaiano, when he had reconciled with Fellini (though he never worked with him again), deeply appreciated *Fellini - Satyricon* (see Ruozzi 2012, 152), which perfectly epitomized Fellini's new "deconstructed" storytelling.

Even Pinelli, in spite of what Pacchioni writes, may not have been totally averse to this new Fellini. In the interview he gave to Augusto Sainati in 2008 (Fellini 2008, 21), Pinelli commented:

> I think that the original idea of *La dolce vita* belonged to Federico. The novelty there was the fact that while all previous films had a novel-like structure, with a beginning, development, and an ending, with scenes all connected to one another, *La dolce vita* had not. In that period, I was writing a play, *Il giardino delle sfingi* ["The Garden of the Sphinxes"], which, for the first time as well, was organized through different tableaus and different characters, who all together produce a fresco effect. At the very same time, Federico was working on a fresco-film, which was *La dolce vita*. And my contribution to that movie was precisely linked to its fresco nature.

In fact, they went back to work together on new "fresco films," such as *Ginger e Fred* (1985) and *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990), even though they bitterly fought over the latter, precisely because of Fellini's refusal to write a traditional script, as I will elaborate shortly.

Fellini did not part company with Flaiano and Pinelli because he was bound to new nonnarrative film forms. As early as 1954, in interviews and public appearances, Fellini started to undervalue Flaiano's and Pinelli's contributions to his work. This is what Pinelli (Fellini 2008, 19) had to say about Fellini's speech at the Venice Film Festival, when he got the "Leone d'argento" for *La strada*:

> When the movie got the award in Venice, I was not there, but I listened to the entire ceremony over the radio, in the company of my mother. Federico thanked everybody—the costume designer, the set designer, the actors, everybody—but he did not say a word about me.

It is an alternative version of the "screenwriter-in-economy-class" story. The director is at the film festival, surrounded by fans and photographers, while the screenwriter is at home, with his mother.

A new fight erupted with the following movie, *Il bidone*. Again, Fellini publicly ignored his screenwriters. Flaiano, far more ill-tempered than Pinelli, was infuriated. The final showdown between Flaiano and Fellini occurred on *Giulietta degli spiriti*, and it saw an exchange of vitriolic letters (see Pacchioni 2014, 55). Pinelli's farewell was much more civilized. As Kezich (2010, 103) notes, Pinelli remained in contact with the Fellini clan in the following years, writing two successful TV mini-series for Giulietta Masina, *Eleonora* (1973) and *Camilla* (1976). It was because of Masina's trust in Pinelli's writing skills, Kezich recounts, that the screenwriter was hired for *Ginger e Fred*, Fellini's first movie starring his wife since *Giulietta degli spiriti*. But even if less vitriolic than Flaiano, Pinelli (Fellini 2008, 51) complained as well:

> Rome, April 25, 1955
> Dear Federico,
> You just left, and I read in *Il messaggero* the article, you know, regarding *Il bidone*. I would not be your old friend if I did not tell you that these frequent episodes don't just hurt me, but also profoundly annoy me.

From *La strada* to *Giulietta degli spiriti*, there were several clashes, both in private and in public. After offending his screenwriters by not mentioning them, thus provoking their anger, Fellini would apologize. In a letter from September 1954, Fellini (2008, 45) calls *La strada* "our film," clearly in order to appease Pinelli. In April 1955, Fellini (2008, 53–54) writes:

> No one more than I can understand your mortification and your anger because of the attitude of some journalists toward the screenwriters (the very same anger and the very same mortification I felt), but you know perfectly well that I do not deserve your reproaches on this issue. … Can you really believe that talking about the story [of *Il bidone*] I did not mention your name and Ennio's?

But no matter how many—private, never public—apologies Fellini could offer to his screenwriters, he was more and more an auteur, the "solitary genius," to use Jack Stillinger's (1991) expression, who could not stand sharing the authorship of his films. The draft of *8½*'s script held by the Cinémathèque Française (Fellini 1962; it is Claudia Cardinale's copy) is quite revealing on this point. The cover does not mention any of the screenwriters. There is only Fellini's name, along with a provisory title: "Film n° 8".[3] What follows is a six-page note, written in first person and signed F.F., in which Fellini presents his film, explaining that this script is incomplete because he is only able to express himself fully with images, not words. This text is just an approximation, "the maximum I can achieve as far as a written preparation for shooting is concerned" (Fellini 1962, not numbered but preceding p. 1). And it is not just this note. In the rest of this 235-page script, there are also passages where Fellini declares the intrinsically provisory nature of the script. On page 213, for example, a sequence is labeled as "not very clear to me." It is a type of deeply personal writing, not easy to share with professional screenwriters, at least of the caliber of Flaiano and Pinelli.

If Fellini's relationship with his first writing partners grew more and more difficult over the years, it is also because both, especially Flaiano, had their own reputations, inside and outside the film industry. Flaiano was always uneasy about not being valued highly enough by critics and the public. This is probably why he reacted so strongly to Fellini's provocations. Nevertheless, his literary status was solid. Flaiano won the prestigious Strega Prize with his only novel, *Tempo di uccidere* (*A Time to Kill/The Short Cut/Miriam* 1947), which is the most important work of fiction ever produced in Italian on the Fascist invasion of Ethiopia and, more generally, on the Italian colonial experience. Moreover, he was well known for his plays and short stories and contributed to some of the most important Italian magazines and newspapers, including *Il Mondo*, *L'Europeo*, and *Il Corriere della Sera*. Such a prominent literary figure inevitably cast a shadow on Fellini's claim to full authorship.

From Fellini's point of view, Pinelli was easier to handle. He was less turbulent than Flaiano, and his literary ambitions were milder—hence, his renewed collaboration with Fellini. But still, in the 1960s, when Fellini was emerging as one of the great names of international art cinema, even Pinelli was too much of an author for Fellini to keep working with him. In his youth, Pinelli had been a prolific playwright and some of his works, such as *I padri etruschi* (1941), were very well received. Young Pinelli was even awarded a prize by the Accademia d'Italia, one of the most prestigious cultural institutions of Fascist Italy. After the Second World War, while starting his new career as a screenwriter, Pinelli carried on with theater, working both in opera (*Le baccanti* 1948) and drama (*Gorgonio ovvero il Tirso* 1952).

Poetry, Improvisation, and Dubbing

Fellini's other writing partners were quite different. First, there are those whom Pacchioni labels as "the poets": Rondi and Pasolini during Flaiano's and Pinelli's tenure, Guerra and Andrea Zanzotto afterward. All literary figures, none was a screenwriter in the traditional sense. None of them wrote with Fellini according to the industry's standards, nor contested Fellini's authorship in the typical interaction between professional screenwriters and directors. Zanzotto, one of the most prominent Italian poets of the second part of the twentieth century, contributed to *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976), *La città delle donne* (uncredited, along with Claudio Magris, another prominent Italian intellectual figure), and *E la nave va* (*And the Ship Sails On* 1983). He also devoted a book to Fellini (Zanzotto 2011), where, quite tellingly, screenwriting

holds no importance. Zanzotto discusses Fellini's work in terms of images, symbols, and archetypes. He portrays Fellini as a director who does not need a script: "Fellini seldom really planned his films; he endlessly worked and reworked his scripts" (85). Tonino Guerra, a professional screenwriter who worked on many genre and art films, complied with Fellini's unorthodox approach to screenwriting. "A screenwriter such as Guerra actively participated in the constant shifting process of creative invention before and during shooting, acting as a sort of 'psychoanalyst' or `confessor' for the director" (Pacchioni 2014, 98–99).[4]

After the Pinelli and Flaiano era, along with the poets, Fellini worked extensively with a markedly traditional mainstream screenwriter, Bernardino Zapponi. Their collaboration started with the adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's "Never Bet the Devil Your Head" (1841) for "Toby Dammit," Fellini's contribution to the episode film *Tre passi nel delirio* (*Histoires extraordinaires/Spirits of the Dead* 1968). Afterward, Fellini and Zapponi wrote *Fellini - Satyricon*, *I clowns* (1970), *Roma*, *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, and *La città delle donne*. It was almost as intensive a collaboration as the one with Pinelli and Flaiano, with one big difference. While Zapponi was a traditional screenwriter, he did not have Flaiano's, or even Pinelli's, status. "Toby Dammit" was virtually Zapponi's debut in the movies, and as Pacchioni (2014, 79) puts it:

> Critics did not recognize Bernardino Zapponi's writing, unlike Pinelli's and Flaiano's work, a fact that Fellini most likely appreciated after his intense artistic and authorial negotiations with Pinelli and Flaiano. … Zapponi's lowbrow status as a writer and his proficiency in the popular genres of horror, science fiction, mystery, and eroticism appealed to Fellini's increasingly dominating authorial and psychoanalytical interests and galvanized his already natural inclination for popular culture.

Most of the scripts Fellini wrote with Guerra or Zapponi are relatively loose texts, clearly conceived to be "completed" during shooting. For example, this is the opening scene of *E la nave va*:

> The images we see often do not correspond at all to what Orlando is saying. Now, for example, why the image of the kitchen during a dinner rush? Fumes, fires, pots of boiling water, huge trash cans, and a frantic come and go of waiters who enter and exit very fast. (Fellini and Guerra 1982, 5)

On the one hand, the script mentions images (plural) that do not correspond to what the voiceover narration is mentioning. On the other hand, just one specific image is described: that of the working kitchen. What about the other images? This is a gap to be filled on set.

Nevertheless, among the scripts of the post-Flaiano/Pinelli era, there is at least one detailed text, not very different from the script of *Lo sceicco bianco* we analyzed at the beginning: the massive screenplay of *Fellini - Satyricon* (Fellini and Zapponi 1969): 465 pages, divided into 1253 shots. Some scenes in the movie are pretty close to what was written in the script. For example, Encolpio's opening monologue is composed of nine shots (3–6). In the movie, the scene is made of six shots that more or less follow the editing pace imagined on paper. Moreover, the lines pronounced by Encolpio are almost identical to those of the script. So, in this case, the screenplay was a blueprint for the shooting in a quite traditional way. On the contrary, the following scene, at the baths, is quite different from what Fellini and Zapponi wrote in the screenplay. The scenery is basically the same: "very large spaces, surrounded by mighty walls" (7). While in the movie these spaces are almost empty, in the screenplay they are populated by an assortment of humanity: a matron in the swimming pool; a young slave "with a hooligan face" (8) massaging an old man; "Herculean young men, maybe off duty masseurs" (8) playing with a ball. Reading the script, one would imagine the camera panning on these characters. But in the movie, all this is reduced to one very brief shot: three "Herculean young men" playing ball in the background,

and an old man and old woman in the foreground, staring uncannily at the camera. This shot is so brief that we almost do not notice it. The script abounds with images and characters not in the movie, and vice versa. Even if the script is more than 400 pages, Fellini's *mise-en-scène* is too rich, too abundant, to be completely described on paper. This script just offers an idea, sometimes vague, sometimes quite accurate, of what we will see and hear. The relatively rare pages that offer technical details are not necessarily those that were more closely followed during the shooting. For example, in the script, there is a scene before Trimalchio's banquet in which the guests are invited to visit the farm where the host's animals are bred. The farm's superintendent gives something of a guided tour, and the screenplay specifies that at times he is talking off screen (98). This scene is absent from the movie.

All this is not peculiar to *Fellini - Satyricon*, or to Fellini's work in general, and the script of *Fellini - Satyricon* is not much more "vague" than the scripts of Hollywood big-budget productions, such as *Gone with the Wind* (Victor Fleming 1939) or *Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola 1979). But other Fellini scripts, such as that for *La città delle donne*, are definitely less detailed (see Fellini and Zapponi 1980). The last fight between Fellini and Pinelli, on *La voce della luna*, was, as suggested earlier, caused by the fact that the director did not want to write a "real" screenplay. According to Pinelli, Fellini used just a treatment, largely improvising on the set. But in the end, he was not happy with the result, and accused Pinelli of letting him go prematurely into production (Fellini 2008, 24).

Improvising is by definition doing something that is not in the script. In the case of Fellini, improvisation went beyond the shooting phase. As usual in the Italian cinema of the time, all Fellini's films were dubbed. He did not resort to synchronized sound recording because he used to talk to actors while shooting. In some cases, the actors who played the scene dubbed themselves; in other cases, the work was done by different actors, or professional dubbers. Famous impressionist and comedian Alighiero Noschese dubbed almost every character of *Giulietta degli spiriti* (Sanguineti 2005, 16). Of course, dubbing was particularly necessary with nonactors, whom Fellini chose just for their faces. Starting with *Giulietta degli spiriti*, according to Fellini's dubbing director Franco Rossi (Sanguineti 2005, 27), Fellini would at times ask the actors just to count.

Mario Maldesi, another of Fellini's dubbing directors, debunks the legend of Fellini systematically rewriting his scripts during postproduction. He basically stuck to the dialogues present in the script (Sanguineti 2005, 41). But sometimes changes happened. For Fellini, dubbing was an intensively creative phase. Several lines of *Roma* come from Maldesi's childhood recollections (Sanguineti 2005, 36). If Maldesi somehow acted as collaborator on *Roma*'s screenplay, on *Amarcord*, screenwriter Tonino Guerra acted as sort of a casting agent, organizing for Maldesi a trip to Romagna, in order to find the right voices (Sanguineti 2005, 46).

Sometimes, the practice of ignoring scripted dialogue produced a true touch of surrealism on the set, the most exhilarating example being Trimalchio's banquet in *Fellini - Satyricon*. It is a long scene, focused on two characters: the nouveau riche Trimalchio and one of his guests, the poet Eumolpus. Trimalchio was played by nonactor Mario "Il Moro" Romagnoli, the owner of a well-known Roman trattoria. Eumolpo was played by a famous stage actor, Salvo Randone. During shooting, neither pronounced a single line from the script. Il Moro, who could not memorize the dialogue and was clumsy reciting the numbers, declaimed the menu of his restaurant. Randone, albeit an actor, could not memorize his lines either, but refused to enunciate numbers for professional pride, so he recited the lines of the Pirandello play he was rehearsing at the time (Sanguineti 2005, 12–14). The mixing of Il Moro's "tonnarelli cacio e pepe" with Pirandello lines is a perfect representation of the Fellinian blend of low and high culture. It is also a demonstration of the complicated relationship of script to film. If we compare the two, we realize that the filmed

banquet is basically as described in the script, but actions by some of the principals and extras, and portions of dialogue, were changed on the set or in postproduction.

As a "structure that wants to be another structure," the screenplay is an intrinsically temporary text. Differences, even big ones, between script and finished movie, can be found in many films. In the case of Fellini, this aspect of the script was exalted, especially in the second part of his career, after he parted company with Flaiano and Pinelli. The process went hand in hand with the disappearance of a traditional narrative structure, still present in the films Fellini made in the 1950s. To reiterate what I have noted above, though the break from Flaiano and Pinelli coincided more or less with the transition from "prose" to "poetry," it was not the result of a radical difference of opinions about film art and storytelling. Flaiano and Pinelli would have been able to participate in Fellini's new "poetic" phase—as Pinelli did on *Ginger e Fred* and *La voce della luna*. In the 1950s and 1960s, the problem was the status of Flaiano and Pinelli as screenwriters. While Guerra and Zanzotto certainly had literary—and in Guerra's case screenwriting —reputations, Zapponi, who became Fellini's principal collaborator, did not, and his "lowbrow status" (Pacchioni 2014, 79) ensured that collaboration with Fellini never called the latter's authorship into question.

Notes

1 I examined these scripts at the Biblioteca Luigi Chiarini of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia—Scuola Nazionale di Cinema (Rome) and at the Bibliothèque du Film—Cinémathèque Française (Paris), which I thank for letting me access their collections.
2 This is a complex question that I have addressed in my book on Ben Hecht and screenwriting in classical Hollywood (Alonge 2012).
3 There is no clear indication of what stage this draft represents. The cover just says: "1962." The script presents several differences from the movie, including the so-called "lost ending," shot but not used, of Guido riding on a train with his wife and with the figures who have populated his life—somewhat as at the end of *La città delle donne*.
4 On Tonino Guerra's eccentricity as a screenwriter also see West 1988.

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17

Fellini and His Producers: Strange Bedfellows

Barbara Corsi and Marina Nicoli

> Works of art are not defined beforehand. When I made films with Fellini, I used to ask him: "What does this film mean?" "I don't know, Dino. I'll wait for the film to come out and have the critics tell me what it means." In a certain sense, a work of art is something indecipherable. You cannot begin by saying: "I'm going to make a work of art." (Dino De Laurentiis, quoted in Della Casa 2003, 50)

This dialogue sheds light on the constant tension between art and economy, something that has characterized the history of Italian cinema, a sector whose industrial component is closely linked to its artistic one. And not only that. For us, the anecdote serves as a starting point for defining the contours of an analysis of Federico Fellini's relationship with producers. In De Laurentiis's words, Fellini is an artist who creates out of the mere necessity of creating, following his oneiric stream of consciousness, and De Laurentiis is a patient producer who is willing to respect the director's time and needs. By contrast, in a conversation with Charlotte Chandler (1995, 274), Fellini referred to De Laurentiis as a "destroyer":

> there are only two types of people involved in a film: those who make films and those who destroy them. Every time someone asks me, "What is the meaning of your film, Signor Fellini?" I immediately see a destroyer in him. The destroyers of films do not know how to accept the magic of cinema without subjecting it to an intellectual dissection. A biopsy that risks becoming an autopsy.

Contentious Cohabitation

Federico Fellini's relationship with his producers was contradictory, difficult, and in some cases, tempestuous. More than one project went through various offices before finding someone interested in financing it—this someone usually motivated by a mixture of admiration and diffidence toward the director's talent. Fellini met many producers in his career, hoping to obtain their unconditional support for his projects. But only five of them really count in terms of the number and importance of feature-length films made with the director: Dino De Laurentiis (*La strada*

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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1954; *Le notti di Cabiria/Nights of Cabiria* 1957), Giuseppe Amato (*La dolce vita* 1960), Angelo Rizzoli (*La dolce vita; 8½* 1963; *Giulietta degli spiriti/Juliet of the Spirits* 1965), Franco Cristaldi (*Amarcord* 1973; *E la nave va/And the Ship Sails On* 1983), and Alberto Grimaldi (*Fellini - Satyricon* 1969; *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini/Fellini's Casanova* 1976; *Ginger e Fred* 1986). With each one, a dialectic emerged between the attempt, on the part of the producers, to maintain financial and creative control of the project, and subtle maneuvering on the part of Fellini to indulge as far as possible his own imagination, pushing the limits given.

Fellini had conflicts with producers throughout his career, from the first projects—when the tensions were related to the films' alternating successes and failures[1]—to the more mature stage, when he had already become an established director. Fellini would fight for everything: for the films that he wanted to make, in contrast to those that the producers wanted him to make; for the time and costs required for his films; for the open endings and his habit of not writing detailed screenplays. He would fight because the producers did not like the actors he had chosen. Carlo Ponti and De Laurentiis criticized his choice of Giulietta Masina for *La strada*, while De Laurentiis abandoned *La dolce vita* because he wanted an American star instead of Marcello Mastroianni.

There was always an ambiguous and equivocal bond between the director and his producers, one that resembled an impossible marriage: a "capitalist conjugality," as defined by Manganaro (2014, 177), who sees in the opening sequences of *8½* the autobiographical metaphor of the director facing the dilemma of an impossible freedom, or better, "of a freedom that cannot but be fantasy… a liberty which must pass through a decision if he wants its possibilities to be realized. Guido-Mastroianni's final decision is not to make the film, a decision that is approved by the intellectual who supervises the screenplay: "You've done very well. Believe me. Today is a good day for you. I know, decisions are costly… [but] in the end, losing money is part of being a producer." Yet, to see the full picture, we must go beyond the classical configuration in which Fellini the artist is pressured by "film capitalism"; we must try see the producers' perspective as well, analyzing their motives and their attempt to reconcile art and industry.

Organization and Management of Human Capital in a Cinematographic Project

Creative industries such as cinema present certain peculiarities that render them a particularly challenging context from the organizational-managerial point of view (Caves 2001; Salvemini and Soda 2001). For the purposes of our analysis, there are two critical elements that help illuminate the relationship between economic and artistic interests that was particularly problematic in Fellini's artistic and professional life.

The first concerns the coordination of three very different professional areas (Castaner 1997; Glynn 2000): the artistic one (the actors, the director, the screenwriters, etc.); the managerial-administrative one (which includes the producers and everyone who supervises the organizational, economic, financial, and marketing activities); and the technical one (which includes professional figures who work, for example, on the set design, the costumes, etc.). The copresence of areas that are very different from each other creates many problems for coordination and integration (Knight and Harvey 2015). In this regard, Fellini's productions are emblematic, and the relation between the organizational dimension of his projects and the artistic one in most cases manifested as a clash of titans.

The second critical element is related to the importance of human capital in these sectors, which are known as labor-intensive: people are the real strategic resource and thus it is essential that they be gifted with an adequate stock of experience, knowledge, and competencies. However, within these organizations, the implementation of formalized human capital management systems is particularly complex, above all in reference to artistic figures, not only because of their frequent antisystem attitude (Florida 2002) but also because they are guided by motivations and career preferences that are obviously different from those of the film producer.

For the artistically inclined director, the film is primarily an instrument with which he can express his poetics, while the producer's main objective is to guarantee the survival of his business in the medium to long term, and to do so he will repeat the formulas that in the past produced good results at the box office. A famous director, well-known actors, the specialization of a certain film genre, and a mixture of repeatable practices from one project to the next are only some of the instruments that a producer uses to mitigate the risk linked to every cinematographic project, which in itself is uncertain and innovative (Jones, Hesterly, and Borgatti 1997), and for which the law is "nobody knows."

Fellini's Thoughts on Producers

In his writings and interviews, Fellini underlines many times the difficulty of reconciling his artistic needs with those of the production, something that created discord and ruptures, such as the one with Dino De Laurentiis after the interruption of the uncompleted project "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna" ("The Journey of G. Mastorna"). Fellini perceives, and describes himself, as an artist who works primarily to express himself, with his own style and without compromise: "I've been criticized because I shot films for my own pleasure. This criticism is valid because it is true. It is the only way in which I know how to work. If you make a film to please everyone, you'll please no one" (Chandler 1995, 102–103).

The moment in which the director believed he had finally found financial power and autonomy is when he established Federiz, a company that he founded in the fall of 1960 with Angelo Rizzoli (50%), Fellini (25%), and production organizer Clemente Fracassi (25%), following the enormous success of *La dolce vita*. Federiz was created to realize a new Fellini film and to do talent scouting on projects from young and innovative directors. But in 1961, it closed due to the evident incapacity of Fellini and Fracassi in their role as producers. They had refused proposals such as Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Accattone* (1961), Ermanno Olmi's *Il posto* (1961), and Vittorio De Seta's *Banditi a Orgosolo* (*Bandits of Orgosolo* 1961), all of which went on to be significant films in the history of Italian cinema. Fellini would recall, "25% of the company was mine, but I didn't know this meant 100% of the responsibility and 25% of the profits after the other partners declared that there weren't any profits" (Chandler 1995, 167).

Fellini's love–hate relationship with producers becomes evident in *Il libro dei sogni* (*The Book of Dreams*, Fellini 2007/2008), in which, upon the suggestion of his psychoanalyst, Ernst Bernhard, he takes notes on his dreams, starting from the beginning of the 1960s. In it, producers at times appear as greedy businessmen, anxious to take possession of his every film,[2] at times in seductive and salvific forms. Their offices are cages full of constrictions: those of PEA (Associated European Productions) are uncomfortable, narrow, dark, and poor. "Behind the desk I see Grimaldi, in front of him grayish shadows sit on benches, waiting" (Fellini 2008, 294/524). Rizzoli's Cineriz is a prison full of producers accompanied by lawyers, and in De Laurentiis's offices Fellini feels locked up as if in the Alamo.[3] Rizzoli and De Laurentiis are even imagined to be on the verge of death,[4]

although Fellini understands that if they passed away in reality, he would be paralyzed: deprived of the possibility of making films.

The depictions of his producers in *Il libro dei sogni* reveal a certain fear of losing them, and perhaps even a vague sense of guilt for not having sufficiently appreciated their perspective and value. Fellini understands this shortcoming when, after Rizzoli's death, he says, "I often have regrets, just as happens with a father when he is gone—and, having experienced a certain inhibition, been unable to come to know him outside the blockages of an institutionalized relationship" (quoted in Kezich 1996, 173).

In his public declarations, however, Fellini spoke in more aggressive tones about his financial backers. In August 1957, an issue of *Bianco e Nero* reprinted a long letter[5] that the director called "a ramshackle outburst that one day I'll disown" (iii). But he never did. The letter defined the producer as "one of the most typical figures of modern capitalism who alienates the life of his subordinates" (iv).

The year 1957 was a dark moment for Italian cinema. Fellini had no doubts that the main culprits of this situation were some of the producers. Commenting on the approval of a new law concerning Italian cinema, Fellini agrees with the authors (Sergio Amidei, Michelangelo Antonioni, Michele Gandin, and Pietro Germi) of an article in the pages of *Cinema Nuovo* who list, among the causes of the crisis, the lack of efficient commercial organization for selling Italian films abroad, the incapacity of the new law to solve problems, and the limits created by censorship. But above all they attribute responsibility to the producers:

> if I were to summarize my experiences and my impressions of these recent years, I think the main blame for the current crisis in our cinema lies with the producers. Which was the real criterion that guided their actions? Only one, if it can be called a criterion: the one of exploiting the work and the success of some very noble artists in order to impose and realize an inferior quality of production based on the absolute emptiness of ideas and on some elements of attraction that had to ensure them commercial success. (Cosulich 1957, 236)

Producer or Patron?

The contrast between film industrialists and film directors was very strong in Italy's immediate postwar period when laws had to be rewritten and film had to be reestablished on new foundations, after the experience of the Fascist regime. This does not diminish the fact that directors and producers found themselves side by side in the battle to defend Italian cinema from the invasion of American films. Although there were many common elements, the distance, more apparent than real, between filmmakers and producers was primarily ideological, increasing in times of crisis, only to vanish in moments when Italian cinema was successful. Fellini's position, when he attacked industry representatives, had nothing to do with ideology, nor did it seek any kind of political or party affiliation. Rather, it was an aristocratic position, inspired by the mythologized idea of the Renaissance artist: "I'd like to have a patron as in the old days, one that tells you: do what you want, do your best" (Chandler 1995, 103).

Fellini's need for obstacles and someone's opposition as nourishment for his creative side or, psychoanalytically, his need for a father to kill, can be seen in his relationship with Angelo Rizzoli: "He set himself up as a father figure for me. He was five years older than my father and he therefore mobilized some of my adolescent rebellious qualities" (quoted in Kezich 1996, 173). But he also continually speaks about the stakes of creative freedom that are always bound to jeopardize

the proposed budget. In this regard, Renzo Rossellini from Gaumont remarks, "There wasn't a pope great enough for Michelangelo and there is no producer great enough for Fellini" (quoted in Kezich 1996, 331), once again alluding to the metaphor of the Renaissance artist.

The fear of becoming a mere administrator of finance at the service of Fellini's artistic vision was something that producers felt very strongly. We sense this from the words of De Laurentiis and Amato. On different occasions they compare themselves to Rizzoli. "Rizzoli can afford to risk such a figure, he can afford to be a patron" says De Laurentiis shortly before ceding the *La dolce vita* project to the publisher-producer (Calderoni 1958, 8). Amato says (1959f): "full support for Fellini, but only up to the point where *our* submission does not lead to disappointment replete with financial consequences. Moreover, *you* [i.e., Rizzoli] can permit yourself to make films, I don't say completely, but somewhat for the sport of it" (italics ours).

Among Fellini's producers, Rizzoli was the one who most resembled a patron, even though, in reality, the publisher was well aware of his own financial power and of the kinds of pressures he could employ with filmmakers and coproducers, as we will see later. What is striking in Amato's letter is the word "submission." In their relationship with Fellini, it was inevitable for all producers to at least partially submit to the director's rules and his way of working in fits and starts, since the coherency of the project could be found only in his mind. The only way for the producers to stop the financial loss resulting from the many delays in filming was to cancel entire episodes outlined in the screenplay, as Grimaldi did with *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* when the expenses exceeded all the estimates. Trying to change the format of the film or edit the footage in a new way would have risked compromising the entire project as it had been conceived by the director.

Although Fellini's work method "might better be compared to the art produced in the workshop of a Renaissance painter" (Bondanella 2002, 2) than to an ordinary production, even one of an auteur, this does not mean that its influence on the economic framework of the film and on the production business was neutral. The industrial side of film production cannot but conflict with the unlimited freedom of an artist such as Fellini. Sometimes, as happened to Riama and Vides International, producers of *La dolce vita* and *E la nave va*, respectively, the experience of the Fellini production had such an impact on the corporate structure that the former could dissolve the latter.[6] We will examine the cases of these companies as two opposite examples of the Fellini–producer relationship: one characterized by the dialectical presence of a supervisor, and the other by its absence. In the 23 years that separate *La dolce vita* and *E la nave va*, many conditions had changed in Italian cinema, as well as in Fellini's professional life. By then the director had been consecrated as an undisputed master on an international level. One consequence was that his endeavors tended to become more extravagant and the producer more impotent.

Fellini's artistic and productive trajectory can be described as an ascendant phase, in which, after early struggles, his films obtained national and international commercial and critical success of unusual proportions for Italian cinema, and by a decline, in which the productions were becoming more and more uneven and public success more and more uncertain, although his fame as an auteur rose to "the archetypical case of the 'art film' director" (Bondanella 2002, 1), placing him in a sort of extraterritoriality with respect to the film industry, one that was, on the one hand, advantageous, and on the other, dangerous.

Both Frank Burke and Peter Bondanella agree on this crucial point in Fellini's "canonization": "the decline in Fellini's ability to mount films coincided with high points in his career as media buzzword and star" (Burke 1996, 17); "Federico Fellini had become synonymous in the popular imagination in Italy and abroad with the figure of the Promethean creative artist" (Bondanella 2002, 8).

The moment in which Fellini became—not necessarily by his own doing—the image of Italian genius and an export brand, the classical figure of the producer was eclipsed by Fellini's filmography and substituted by productive combinations that almost always included the participation of Italian public television and American financial backers. "He really took off with direct US involvement in his films," confirms Burke (1996, 17). Paradoxically, the two entities toward which the director expressed his hostility in those decades, the Hollywood system and television, were the ones that permitted him to continue working when the figure of the producer dissolved.

In those years, Fellini saw the disappearance, physical and virtual, of his most important producers: Giuseppe Amato died in 1964 and Angelo Rizzoli in 1970; Goffredo Lombardo stopped producing in 1964, and De Laurentiis moved permanently to the US at the beginning of the 1970s. The ones who came later, with the partial exception of Cristaldi and Grimaldi, seemed immediately to abdicate their role, deferring to the man who had become an icon.

Case Study 1: *La dolce vita*. The Producer Exists (Actually, There Are Two of Them)

The apex of Fellini the "young genius's" creative capacity is found in *La dolce vita* and *8½*, which were made at a not particularly young age of 40 and 43, respectively. Both films were produced by Angelo Rizzoli, who was a reference point for the director in the brightest phase of his career, which also included *Giulietta degli spiriti*. Rizzoli was also one of Fellini's producers who had a strong industrial apparatus, capable of both supporting the economic burden of Fellini's works and of promoting them synergistically through Cineriz distribution and his publishing house's magazines.

The engine behind the encounter between Rizzoli and Fellini in 1958—and a guiding spirit in the production of *La dolce vita*—was another, unrecognized producer, Giuseppe Amato. He was the first to intuit the novelty and the grandeur of the project, a merit that the director would later recognize in a letter to Amato (Fellini 1959c):

> Now that my work is coming to an end, I want to tell you that I will always be grateful to you for having set up that meeting with Rizzoli on that distant day and that I will never forget that you were the first and the only producer among many to have intuited what I wanted to do with this film.

Giuseppe Amato had plenty of experience in film, having covered all the roles— treatment writer, scriptwriter, actor, distributor—and he knew the American film industry very well, having worked in the US in his youth. As a producer he had worked on popular films and auteur films, such as Roberto Rossellini's *Francesco, giullare di Dio* (*The Flowers of St. Francis* 1950) and Vittorio De Sica's *Umberto D.* (1952). Many of them were produced together with Rizzoli in various forms of copartnership, and in January 1958 the two men founded a 50–50 joint enterprise, naming it with the first letters of their last names: Riama. *La dolce vita* was one of the first films that Riama produced, and it was Amato who deserves credit for it.

The project of the film began under the umbrella of Dino De Laurentiis Cinematografica, which since September 1957 had had an exclusive contract with the director. However, De Laurentiis had many reservations concerning Fellini's ideas and above all the cost, which was about 600 million lire. He could not afford it, although he had financed *Le notti di Cabiria*, which cost 300 million lire. But Fellini's new project was absolutely out of proportion with respect to the standards of Italian cinema in those years (the average cost of a film was 150–160 million lire).

It appeared that Rizzoli was the only one capable of taking the risk, both in the financial sense and in terms of entrepreneurial knowhow. Yet, it was Amato who had convinced Rizzoli to take that risk.

With an agreement signed on 28 October 1958, Riama took over the production of *La dolce vita*, paying Dino De Laurentiis about 20 million lire for his preproduction expenses plus the 63 million lire that De Laurentiis had paid Fellini for an exclusive contract that in one year had not produced any results. In the letter of commitment (Fellini 1958) that Fellini signed with Riama on that day, the production company stated that it wished to protect itself in the event of unexpected changes to the screenplay, on which it intended to have the final word.

The budget limit that Amato imposed on Fellini at that moment was 400 million lire, much less than the 600 million estimated by De Laurentiis. But already in January 1959, it was clear that this figure was unrealistic. After a violent verbal clash with Fellini on the budget ("Fellini behaved like a scullion"—Amato 1959a), Amato decided to stay behind the curtains of the production, delegating the organization process to Franco Magli. Yet, Amato knew that henceforward it would be difficult to keep the expenses within the intended limits. The official estimate presented to the ministry on 29 January 1959 was 666 225 million lire, of which 80% (532 980 lire) was the responsibility of Riama and 20% that of Pathé Films, the French company that coproduced the film and that imposed the clause of a blocked price: in the event of an excess, the expenses would be covered by the Italian party (Archivio Centrale dello Stato). Given the fact that the figures on the official documents for the ministry were always overestimated, it is possible that when work began Riama hoped to stay within 450–460 million lire, of which 250 million was borrowed from the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL) through a discount on the guaranteed minimum of 150 million lire for Cineriz distribution (Archivio Centrale dello Stato).

The difficulties in the relationship between the director and the producer began before shooting started (the first day of work was 16 March 1959). Amato foresaw Fellini's irresponsible behavior and wanted to convince Rizzoli to think twice and annul the contract,[7] while Fellini (1959a) immediately tried to exclude any other authority: "The films I make are mine from the beginning to the end.... I am the one who takes the risk. I need to be left alone and not be disturbed anymore."

The clashes between Amato and Fellini were endless, while Rizzoli acted as a mediator until he realized, as work progressed, that the cost of the project was going up and that the film would have an unexpected and risky length. Playing roles that saw them inevitably disjointed and on opposite sides, Rizzoli and Amato uselessly argued about the limits that they should give the film. Amato was very critical of the changes to the script and the cast that Fellini wanted, but once he saw the initial editing, he again was the first to understand the exceptional nature of the film and the need to support it to the very end: "I firmly believe that, given the type of film and the story it contains, its above average length is justified" (Amato 1959c).

The relationship between the two Riama partners, lacerated by Fellini's continual changes during production and by Rizzoli accusing Amato of negligence, arrived at a critical point in July 1959, the prelude to a breakup that was instigated by Rizzoli (1959): "The truth is that in business we can no longer agree.... You always have to be the one to do things, to decide." In fact, it was Amato who decided to give Fellini more time and means because he saw the value of what was already shot and Fellini's need to continue expanding the story to give consistency to his vision. The only order that Amato wanted to give him was to finish the film in time for its release by Cineriz, 15 November 1959. The launch, which was supposed to happen six months before with lavish publicity and photo services, was to create expectations on the part of the public and the theater operators, who were obliged to reserve the film with a guaranteed minimum and guarantee a prolonged run in the theaters with fixed playing times and increased prices. Amato

thought that the film had to be released simultaneously in 60 cities, in accordance with a "saturation" distribution method that was way ahead of the times and intended only for big events. To meet this deadline, in September, Leo Catozzo was called to give his estimate of the time needed for editing. The editor turned to Fellini and said: "It is possible but only if you do not interrupt the process by saying that you've dreamt of something or have a new idea" (Magli 1959). Catozzo's "only if" was ignored; the November 15 and December 15 deadlines were not met, annulling the contracts with the theater operators. Meanwhile the producer and director began fighting about alleged interference in production. Fellini (1959b): "I don't want to be disturbed anymore…. I need to work in peace…. If you want me to respect you as a producer, don't force me to publicly defend my dignity as an author." And Amato (1959d): "It's six months that you've been working in peace now, taking it away from others." Meanwhile, Rizzoli, frightened by the length and the complexity of the film, wanted to suspend its release in Italy (Amato 1959e). Finally, *La dolce vita* came out on 4 February 1960 in Rome and two days later in all the larger Italian cities. It received a clamorous response, and the success with the public was enormous, winning the film first place in the 1959–1960 film charts, leaving others far behind.

The cost of the film, which, together with *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* (*Rocco and His Brothers*, Luchino Visconti 1960), was called a progenitor of "auteur supercolossals" (Spinazzola 1974, 242), greatly exceeded the estimates, reaching the enormous figure of 877 324 980 lire. All the extra expenses were the responsibility of Riama, which had to spend not 532 million, as estimated, but 744 million lire (Archivio Centrale dello Stato). The substantial expenses, however, were quickly met thanks to high public attendance during very long runs in first-release cinemas. After only four months, the earnings on the national market were 1 700 000 000 lire (Archivio Centrale dello Stato). In the end, the Italian box office alone brought revenues of a total of 2 220 716 000 lire (ANICA, AGIS 1974, 18).

Despite *La dolce vita's* exceptional outcome, the accord among Riama's partners was compromised by the powerful tensions accumulated during production, and the dissolution of the company was inevitable. In 1961, after having ensured the film's foreign release and sales, Amato resigned as administrator and sold his share to Rizzoli. Shortly afterward Riama was liquidated, which in the end of December concluded the collaboration of Amato and Rizzoli.

Case Study 2: *E la nave va*. The Producer is Absent

Fellini's other film that ends with a destructive impact on the production company's shareholder structure is *E la nave va*. This case is different from the preceding one: it occurs during the decline of the director's career, when his name had nevertheless become a symbol of prestige. It is marked by the absence of the producer, Franco Cristaldi, and the inefficiency of the production director, Pietro Notarianni, in contrast to their earlier counterparts, Amato and Magli.

Franco Cristaldi knew Fellini well. They had produced *Amarcord* together in 1972–1973. Before the realization of that project, Cristaldi had established, on 19 April 1972, a film production company called F.C. Produzioni, from the initials of the surnames of Fellini and Cristaldi. They were 50–50 partners. In reality, in the legal agreement that brought the company into being, there were two figureheads who were replaced by the actual principals only a few months later, perhaps to give Cristaldi enough time to convince Fellini to become part of the organization he created. For the producer establishing a new company and directly including the author in the film's financial risk was a way to protect himself from any unexpected situations, and to distinguish the Fellini enterprise from the rest of his business, which was carried out by Vides Cinematografica di

Franco Cristaldi. However, these precautions were not enough to prevent another sizeable hole in the budget, which, despite *Amarcord's* great international success and triumph at the Oscars, left an impact on F.C. Produzioni for many years to come.[8]

For someone as attentive to organization and costs as Cristaldi, his experience with Fellini must have been a real ordeal. This is what he said:

> *Amarcord* began in an idyllic atmosphere… but during production Fellini and I fought tremendously because as usual, Fellini was not concerned with the costs and I tried to press him. At a certain point we stopped talking to each other, limiting our communication to writing (quoted in Biarese 1989, 63).

The film's excellent result reconciled the producer and the director, but Cristaldi still felt a certain diffidence toward Fellini.

In 1982, Cristaldi's second collaboration with Fellini began. Fellini intended to shoot *E la nave va* quickly, as usual. The project was the fruit of a coproduction that involved RAI1 and Vides Produzione of Cristaldi, which contributed 70% in coproduction with the French Gaumont and SIM (Società Investimenti Milanese) owned by financier Aldo Nemni, which put up 30%. Executive production was given to Vides Produzione, which was controlled by Vides International, a company that had been created with great ambitions and one in which Cristaldi had international partners. Vides International had already produced for RAI *Marco Polo* (Giuliano Montaldo 1982), a prestigious and costly TV series, which required a significant financial commitment from the company. The simultaneous production of *E la nave va*, with its explosion of the budget, ruined Vides International's plans. In its assembly of July 1983, it decided to cease its activity (Camera di Commercio e Artigianato[b]).

E la nave va started with an estimated budget of 6.9 billion lire, but another 800 million was added in case of "unexpected situations," very likely due to previous cases (Archivio CristaldiFilm [a]). Notarianni, who was an old collaborator of Cristaldi and Fellini's great friend, was in charge of executive production. All the shooting was done in Cinecittà, as the director wanted. A perfect, actual-size model of a ship was built in the studio. With promotional purposes, as production began, a six-episode special on Fellini with backstage footage was aired on television.

The entire operation was carried out to celebrate the author. Fellini was given the opportunity to shoot on premises that had the highest costs in Italy, and that, due to a long management crisis, often suffered from interruptions because of strikes. The film was promoted as an upcoming work of art from an undisputed master. Fellini was supported by an executive producer who did not know how to prevent or oppose any "unexpected situation."

Amid a series of problems, among which were terrible relations between the producers and Cinecittà, the estimated budget was again out of control, reaching a final figure of 12.1 billion lire, out of which 2 billion had already been spent on equipping Cinecittà (Archivio CristaldiFilm [a]). The high expense entries in the budget were the result of the many modifications made to the original project: a color film instead of black and white, direct shooting and an original edition in English, variations of scenes and the addition of entire sequences that were not included in the screenplay, the employment of an enormous number of international performers, the construction and preparation of new sets in Cinecittà, and an increased length (Archivio CristaldiFilm [a]).

That hypertrophic set, which transformed Studio 5 of Cinecittà into a huge shipyard, lacked a captain who could have managed the drifting boat. Cristaldi, who should have covered that role but who at the time was busy with other projects, recognized his errors privately somewhere between the end of 1982 and the beginning of 1983:

I should have been obstinate (either Fellini or Vides)

I shouldn't have trusted Notarianni

I should have imposed Bini [on the project]

I should have followed the film [i.e., its production process] more closely (Archivio CristaldiFilm [b])

From "either Fellini or Vides," we can intuit that Cristaldi was initially opposed to risking his company with Fellini's project and perhaps ceded because he was forced by his partners for reasons of expediency. A sound reason may have been the wish to maintain good collaborative relations with RAI, which, in that moment of crisis in Italian cinema, was the main financer of auteur films, in which Vides specialized and of which Fellini was the greatest representative. Another mistake was having entrusted the compliant Notarianni with executive production and not Alfredo Bini, who had proven himself on the set of *Marco Polo*. But the most significant thing for which Cristaldi reproached himself was the abdication of his role as producer—controller and mediator between the financial apparatus and artistic needs—thus giving the green light to the most dangerous director, in financial terms, in Italian cinema, who by now was an untouchable master.

Despite its grand television launch, *E la nave va*'s box office revenues in Italy and the US were poor. Meanwhile, as a result of financial and strategic disagreements, the partners of Vides International removed Cristaldi from the company, accusing him of having made investments that were too risky and of not having been able to appropriately manage the production. Concerning Fellini's film, Cristaldi confirms the accusation with: "If the Ship hadn't gone aground, nothing would have collapsed" (Archivio CristaldiFilm (a)).

Conclusions

How much does it cost for a producer to give a director full freedom for the realization of a film? Is it possible to satisfy simultaneously the two performance criteria, economic and artistic, that are usually in opposition to each other? Fellini's story is a perfect example of the constant and apparently irreconcilable conflict between the organizational and routine needs of production and the artist's need to give full expression to his imagination. For Fellini, realizing his poetics in his films is a question of identity, as it is for everyone who does creative work (Rostan 1998). For them the esteem of the professional community is more important than that of the organization in which they work (Badawy 1971; Goulder 1958; Organ and Green 1981).

When the esteem of the professional community and public success come simultaneously—and this happened in a significant manner in the central part of Fellini's career—the works obtain a magical equilibrium between economic and artistic performance, and both are compensated. This equilibrium, which is very difficult to obtain and maintain, can nevertheless produce the idea that the auteur can repeatedly enjoy success, and that therefore his or her name by itself is an important asset for a film. Fellini often intuited the risk of this unanimity of consensus: "*La dolce vita* changed the rules of what producers expect from me. They expect less provided the name Fellini goes before the title" (Chandler 1995, 170).

This phrase holds the key for interpreting Fellini's films for the last 15 years of his activity. As the example of *E la nave va* suggests, producers seemed to abandon attempts to be creative economic mediators with the director—partly because they were financially supported by state

television. The absence of a dialectic between producer and the filmmaker harmed the economic structure of the films, which became ever costlier and less remunerative at the box office, and the antagonism in the director–producer relationship that Fellini admitted he needed went missing.

The disappearance of the producer, simultaneously desired and feared by the director, is fully seen in Fellini's last film, *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990), which cost a record 15 billion lire, equivalent to today's 13.9 million euros.[9] This was one of the rare cases in which Fellini pronounced his esteem for the producers (Mario and Vittorio Cecchi Gori): "They've been perfect. I never saw them and they gave me everything I wanted" (Kezich 2002, 367).

Notes

1 Lorenzo Pegoraro, the producer of *I vitelloni* (1953), used to say that Fellini was "a madman who came to the world to ruin him and his family." In response, Fellini would write about him: "I cannot but think that he was mentally disabled" (Sainati 2008, 38–39).

2 "What else am I dreaming about in this period? That old Angelo Rizzoli in his will leaves his children and grandchildren the rights to use my films. And I hoped he'd leave them to me! It's useless, I think. He's always the old profiteer and I think I can see him in his greedy businessman aspect, the boar-like face, the red mustache, the hooked nose… But maybe I'm mistaken? His intention to leave me 25%, 15% of the rights to his films was a sort of surprise in the air" (Fellini 2012, 535).

3 In the summer of 1967, Fellini was working on the never completed "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna." That year Grimaldi knocks on the director's door to offer him collaboration: "He told me he wanted to make a film with me. I told him that I would be willing but I was a prisoner at Fort Alamo" (Savino 2009, 57).

4 "Hallways that resemble the offices of Federiz and the luxuriously furnished rooms of Rizzoli the billionaire. My brother Riccardo speaks politely to old Rizzoli and I realize that the old man is seriously ill, he's about to die… 'Call a doctor!' I yell, sincerely worried. But Rizzoli refuses, saying he feels fine…" (dream on 9 March 1961; Fellini 2012, 478). As for De Laurentiis: "I'm taking Dino to the hospital, he's completely paralyzed. He'll die in the hospital, I believe…Where can I go in these conditions? A paralytic, actually, without legs, I'm going around in a small wheelbarrow through long halls, looking for an exit (dream on 13 March 1975; Fellini 2012, 526).

5 The letter was written by Fellini to Antonio Spinosa, a journalist of *Il Punto*. Spinosa had asked Fellini about the relationship between director and producer.

6 An example that is similar to Fellini's case is the film *Heaven's Gate*, directed by Michael Cimino, produced by United Artists, and released in 1981. The film cost UA 44 million dollars, but at the box office it generated revenues of only 3.5 million dollars. The company suffered financially and in the end was bought by magnate Kirk Kerkorian, who united it with MGM, creating MGM/UA. After some brief success, this too again began to decline.

7 "The De Laurentiis case was already a precedent for us concerning how to act when you are dealing with a director with whom you can speak neither about production nor about economy" (Amato 1959b).

8 The company's 1982 financial report closed with a 49-million-lira loss (Camera di Commercio e Artigianato[a]).

9 As of mid-decade, 2010s, a high-budget Italian film costs between 5 and 6 million euros. ANICA data 2016.

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18

Masina and Mastroianni: Reconfiguring C. G. Jung's *Animus* and *Anima*

Victoria Surliuga

The *Anima* in Cinema

One can safely say that without Giulietta Masina and Marcello Mastroianni there would be a very different Federico Fellini from the one we know. In this essay, I shift the focus from the director to the two actors who made such a decisive contribution to his art. Where Masina and/or Mastroianni play the leading role in Fellini's films, we can see two "biographies" developing almost in parallel. Both characters chronicle the development of that part of Fellini's identity that he is willing to explore on screen, while at the same time, they can be appreciated on their own terms, without reference to their "author."[1] In the interaction between these biographies, Masina and Mastroianni manifest the Jungian *animus* and *anima* to which Fellini was exposed through his association with psychoanalyst Ernst Bernhard (Kezich 2006, 220–227).

In the post-World War II years, Jung's influence was as great as Freud's. Today, things have changed considerably. From the 1970s on, psychoanalysis has come under intense scrutiny because of its entanglement with patriarchal culture, and many revisions and reassessments have followed. The influence of Jacques Lacan and feminist psychoanalytic theory (Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Kaja Silverman, Teresa de Lauretis, and others) has amplified Freud's work exponentially. Jung, perceived as essentializing gender, embracing mysticism and esotericism, and entertaining ambiguous political leanings in the early 1930s, has meanwhile suffered in academic circles. While Jungian psychoanalysis is still alive (Noll 1994), Jung's theoretical discourse has limited currency among non-Jungians. My purpose is not to judge whether this devaluation is right or wrong. Rather I am interested in how Fellini put Jungian categories to use:

> What I admire most ardently in Jung is the fact that he found a meeting place between science and magic, between reason and fantasy. He has allowed us to go through life abandoning ourselves to the lure of mystery…. My admiration is the sort felt for … one of the great travelling companions of this century: the prophet-scientist. (Fellini 1996, 147)

According to Jung, *anima* is the feminine side of the male soul, and *animus* is the masculine side of the female soul—with soul here signifying not a metaphysical entity that outlives the body but

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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rather one's inner life, one's source of *anima*tion. As John Beebe (2001, 212) explains in relation to *anima* and filmmaking (and the description can be applied to *animus* as well):

> In film, as in no other medium, we can actually see the behavior of the [*anima*] archetype; in life, we know her far more indirectly, as moods, impulses, symptoms, and as a shape-shifting fleeting personage in our dreams .... In film, we can see the *anima* figure over time, in a more or less stable guise, at her strange task of mediating the fate of a protagonist. We are permitted to watch as the *anima* relates to the other complexes of a psyche.

Filmmaking, Beebe adds, is "a form of active imagination drawing its imagery from the anxieties generated by current concerns, and film watching has become a contemporary ritual that is only apparently ... leisure" (212). The condition of "active imagination," which is fundamental to Jungian psychology, is key to the constant play of *anima* and *animus* in Fellini's films. These terms are not simply opposed. Fellini often reverses stereotypical gender characterizations, with the aid of his actors. We have, therefore, a "feminine" Mastroianni—stereotypically passive, nonconfrontational, nonassertive, sometimes speaking with a strident yet subdued voice—in *La dolce vita* (1960), *8½* (1963), *Fellini: A Director's Notebook* (1969), *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980), *Ginger e Fred* (1986), and *Intervista* (1987). Conversely, Masina, despite the socially "weak" status of her characters, is active, assertive, and resilient. In *La strada* (1954), *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957), *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965), and *Ginger e Fred*, there is no shortage of men who put her down, yet she always fights back and exhibits agency, even when she seems not to react visibly. In *La strada*, she can be neither silenced nor neutralized, even by death. *Ginger e Fred* brings the two actors together for the first and last time, thus establishing a "syzygy," Jung's term for the linkage of the masculine and the feminine principles (Figure 18.1).

As Fellini's biographers relate, he had firsthand knowledge of Jung's autobiographical writings collected in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1961/1989) and of the essays "Marriage as a Psychological Relationship" (Jung 1925/1971) and "Picasso" (Jung 1932/1954, 135–141). It is very likely that he read much more, but it was not his habit to read systematically. Jung developed the concepts of *anima* and *animus* mostly in *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self* (1951/1959). According to Jung, the *animus* as the masculine component in the woman's psyche and the *anima* as the feminine element inhabiting the man's psyche are archetypes, primordial ideas, and are therefore recurring traits in all personalities. "Since the *anima* is an archetype that is found in men, it is reasonable to suppose that an equivalent archetype must be present in women; for just as the man is compensated by a feminine element, so woman is compensated by a masculine one" (Jung 1951/1971, 151). In the essay on marriage, Jung (1925/1971, 173) states:

> Every man carries within him the eternal image of woman, not the image of this or that particular woman, but a definite feminine image. .... The same is true of a woman: she too has her inborn image of man. Actually, we know from experience that it would be more accurate to describe it as an image of *men*, whereas in the case of the man it is rather the image of *woman*.

In her monograph *Animus and Anima* (1957/1978, 1–2), Emma Jung expounded on her husband's notion:

> [Jung] understands these figures to be function complexes behaving in ways compensatory to the outer personality .... However, the character of these figures is not determined only by the latent sexual characteristics they represent; it is conditioned by the experience each person has had in the course of his or her life with representatives of the other sex, and also by the collective image of woman carried in the psyche of the individual man, and the collective image of man carried by the woman.

Figure 18.1 Fellini's sketch of himself as Ginger-Masina and Fred-Mastroianni's puppeteer. A close look at their roles as Fellini's *animus* and *anima* reveals the relationships among Fellini, his favorite actors, and their roles to be a bit more complex than mere puppetry. Federico Fellini, circa 1985. Daniela Barbiani Collection, Rome. © Estate of Federico Fellini / SOCAN (2019).

Masina, who was well known before she appeared in any of her husband's productions, became, according to Fellini (1996, 105), the "true soul" ("*anima*," of course, is the word for "soul" in Italian) of his films:

> Giulietta is a special case. She is not just the main actress in a number of my films, but in a very subtle way their inspiration as well. This is understandable, as she is also my lifetime companion. Giulietta, I repeat, is not the face I have chosen, but a true soul of the film. So, in the case of Giulietta's films, she herself is the theme.

Masina, however, was not just the soul/*anima* of Fellini's inspiration. She brought a good dose of *animus* to her performances. Conversely, Mastroianni was said by Fellini to have maintained "a[n] intelligent openness which is almost feminine in his gentleness (quoted in Hochkofler 1992, 13). Fellini also declared, "[Mastroianni] is … an actor who conforms perfectly to what I want from him, like a contortionist who can do anything" (quoted in Reich 2004, 78). He could not say the same about Masina, who with all her *animus* strength would question every detail of the characters she played (Kezich 1991, 14).

As for Mastroianni's roles, a distinction needs to be made between *anima* as an archetype and *anima* as a complex, meaning the distinction (but also the connection) between Mastroianni-the-actor as the embodiment of Fellini's *anima* (the unconscious female aspect of Fellini's personality) and the *anima* that Mastroianni's characters project onto the women they meet.[2] *Anima* as

archetype is "a psychological/motivational pattern" (Frattaroli 2008, 173) whose universal features are represented in *anima*-myths of couples in love or in conflict (Eros and Psyche, Perseus and Medusa, etc.). If we reduce the *anima*-archetype to Fellini's individual features, we can see that his archetypal *anima* is present in his male characters' (and not just those played by Mastroianni) willingness to surrender to mythical, strong female figures, represented by, among others, Saraghina in *8½*; Oenothea in *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969); the motorcyclist in *La città delle donne*; and Marisa, "la locomotiva," in *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990). On the other hand, each individual has his or her own version of *anima*—his or her *anima*-complex, a stable pattern in one's personality (Frattaroli 2008, 173). The *anima*-complex is a "personification" of the archetype, a function supposed to connect the conscious and the unconscious. Yet, this function may fail, and the consequences are severe (A. and B. Ulanov 1994, 11). Because the individual *anima*-complex is a projection, and not altogether different from what Freud would call transference (Frattaroli 2008, 173–174), the individual man is not in control of what he projects. Once the projected *anima* is "out there," it talks back, it makes demands, and it may strike an alliance with the dark side of one's personality, which Jung calls the shadow. Jung notes that the shadow is constituted by "inferiorities" (Jung 1959, 8), and one of the principal *anima*-inflected "inferiorities" that plague the Mastroianni characters is performance anxiety—the other side of Fellini's devotion to Saraghina and the other archetypal figures.

Fellini scholars have addressed the *animus/anima* complex in his work. According to Carolyn Geduld (1978), Guido in *8½* mirrors the psychological type that Jung would call "extravert" (Jung's spelling), oriented toward his profession in the world and unable to adapt when reality does not conform to his aspirations. Giulietta in *Giulietta degli spiriti* is the "introverted" type, oriented toward internal reality, home, and marriage—and perceiving herself as unable to control external reality. Guido's extraversion and Giulietta's introversion fit the rather stereotyped roles that Jung assigns to husband (the "container") and wife (the "contained") in his marriage essay. The container, however, envies the completeness of the contained as much as the contained envies the boundlessness of the container. For Geduld, Guido is Giulietta's *animus* (Giulietta's extraverted unconscious that wants to be free and identifies with her rebellious grandfather) as much as Giulietta is Guido's *anima* (Guido's introverted unconscious that wants to be contained but finds out that no one and no thing, except his profession, is up to the task). Ultimately, though, for individuation—Jung's idea of healthy personal development—to be possible, both must reject containment by confronting a figure who represents it. Guido confesses to Claudia, his dream-woman, and also the perfect caretaker (she brings him water at the beginning of the film and tries to cater to his every need in a later fantasy), that she has no part in his film and that there is no film. Somewhat similarly, Giulietta activates her *animus* (largely embodied by her grandfather) when she says to her mother, "I am not afraid of you," which can be read as "I am no longer afraid that you will abandon me"—and then frees her girl-self from the rack to which she is tied, instead of leaving that task to her grandfather.

John C. Stubbs, on the other hand, does not subscribe to the notion of *anima* as merely the feminine side of the male psyche. An *anima* figure, he writes, is like a siren luring the male "to explore the stranger passions of male sexuality inside himself" (2006, 46). By relying on James Hillman's 1985 study on *anima*, Stubbs subdivides Fellini's *anima* figures into three categories. The first is the contrasexual role "in which the woman supplies things the man lacks" (58). The second is *anima* as Eros, or better, the longings that women evoke from males, ranging from physical gratification to love intrigue, and from religious devotion to wisdom. The third is *anima* as mediatrix between the unconscious and the conscious, which shows what is knowable and hints at what remains ineffable. Here, Stubbs (58–64) names the giantess in *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976) as the gatekeeper of the unconscious and Donatella in *La città delle*

donne, who, by shooting down the balloon representing an overdetermined image of herself as whore-bride-saint, brings Snàporaz back to reality. Stubbs does not entertain the possibility that Mastroianni and Masina can play *animus/anima* to each other, at least in Fellini's imagination. This is the possibility that Geduld has glimpsed and that I shall use in the following discussion.

Giulietta Masina, Fellini's *Animus*

United in private life and in work, Giulietta Masina and Fellini have long represented an iconic creative couple whose longevity survived Fellini's oft rumored and at times verified meanderings. They married in 1943 and lived together until Fellini's death in 1993. Their unique collaboration, interaction, and synergy resulted in seven films in which Masina appeared either in a secondary role or as a protagonist. Their combined achievements shine even more brightly if we consider Masina's complete filmography, and to what extent the films she completed with her husband stand out when compared to the lesser vehicles other filmmakers offered her.

Masina's movie career comprised 32 films, from 1946 to 1991. It began with an uncredited appearance in Roberto Rossellini's *Paisà* (*Paisan* 1946), where she can be seen in the Florentine episode as a young woman on a flight of stairs. She was not a newcomer to acting even then. Although she had not attended theater school (she majored at university in Italian literature), she had performed with a university theater company (sometimes with Mastroianni) and was a familiar name among war-time radio listeners as "Pallina" in *The Adventures of Cico and Pallina*, funny stories of a couple of dewy-eyed fiancées and then spouses, written by Fellini ("Cico"). Her cinematic career started in earnest with Alberto Lattuada's *Senza pietà* (*Without Pity* 1948). As young prostitute Marcella, in a postwar drama rife with black-market crime and racial tensions (the story revolves around the tragic love of an Italian woman and an African-American soldier), she won the Silver Ribbon for best supporting actress at the Venice Film Festival.

The brief role she played in Roberto Rossellini's *Europa '51* (*Europe '51* 1952) is less conventional. Befriended by Irene (Ingrid Bergman), who is still reeling after the suicide of her only son, she is "Passerotto" ("Little Sparrow"), a poor woman who has, adopts, or welcomes into her shack a number of ragged children. She is not a saint—she can be cunning—but she loves children and seems never to worry about how to feed or take care of them. Her name is a reference to the Gospel of Matthew 6:26 ("Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them"). Fellini contributed to the script of *Senza pietà* and had little or nothing to do with *Europa '51*, yet Marcella is not a Fellinian character while Passerotto is a nascent Gelsomina, without her unconventional wit but with the same instinctual capacity to connect. On the other hand, her role in Eduardo De Filippo's *Fortunella* (1958), written by Fellini and two of his longtime collaborators, Ennio Flaiano and Tullio Pinelli, is pure post-Gelsomina without the richness of Cabiria, no more than a spin-off with a fairy-tale happy ending that only Masina's skills make worth watching. At the peak of her fame as Gelsomina and Cabiria, virtually no director would dare to give her a leading role for fear of trampling on Fellini's ground. We must be grateful therefore to Renato Castellani who, with *Nella città l'inferno* (*…and the Wild, Wild Women* 1959), tried to give Masina a non-Fellinian part. Because the two leading actresses were Giulietta Masina and Anna Magnani, playing a naïve maid unjustly accused of theft and an experienced, hardened inmate who dominates her ward; there was great expectation that the film would be a battle of talents. A battle it was, but mostly because Magnani became jealous of Masina, abused her in several ways, and forced the director and the production to cut her role (Carrano 1982/2004, 218–220).

The film still has merit, and Masina's transformation from Venetian "servetta" to tough prostitute (the career she decides to embrace after she is released) is remarkable, missing scenes notwithstanding. In the end, however, the film did not advance Masina's non-Fellini career. After *Nella città l'inferno*, she made European films that few people have seen, and her only non-Fellini comeback was in Lina Wertmüller's early comedy, *Non stuzzicate la zanzara* (*Don't Sting the Mosquito* 1967).

She worked in Italian TV with two miniseries, *Eleonora* (1973) and *Camilla* (1976), written by Pinelli. Their great success is reflected in Fellini's comment (quoted in Chandler 1995, 279):

> During the time of her television series, *Eleonora*, she was surrounded by people in Milan wanting her autograph. I stood off to the side. I saw a woman point at me and say to her friend, "That must be her husband, Fellini."

Yet *Eleonora* and *Camilla* never appeared on videocassette or DVD. Masina's enduring legacy remains with the Fellini films in which she plays the leading role.

She was the patient life-partner in *Luci del varietà* (*Variety Lights,* Fellini and Alberto Lattuada 1951), the carefree prostitute in *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952), the simple but intuitive young woman endowed with mystical redemptive powers in *La strada*, the unsuspecting wife of a thief in *Il bidone* (1955), again a prostitute in *Le notti di Cabiria*—which expands on the role she played in *The White Sheik*—the deceived wife obsessed by "ghosts" in *Giulietta degli spiriti*, and the aged and retired dancer who has chosen an ordinary postperformance life in *Ginger e Fred*. She also appears briefly as herself in *Fellini: A Director's Notebook* (1969). The roles she plays in *Luci del varietà, Lo sceicco bianco*, and *Il bidone* are not necessarily marginal, but they lack the assertiveness and complexity of Gelsomina, Cabiria, Giulietta, and Ginger. Nor do they advance the *animus* theme in Fellini's work. The conjunction must be found in the metacharacter she created rather than in the single entities of Gelsomina, Cabiria, Giulietta, and Ginger.

Due to their lack of gender emphasis, the Masina characters seem to evade classic female-male characterization. Regardless of their social class, social status, or profession, their physical appearance is desexualized, but somewhat paradoxically her desexualized presence expanded the range of her acting. She didn't have to be seductive, even when she played a prostitute. In fact, she made clear to her directors that she would not perform lovemaking or kissing scenes because she found them ludicrous (Kezich 1991, 66). While her hesitancy might have been a product of her Catholic education—although she claimed that the Ursulines in Rome, whose school she attended, were more progressive than many would imagine—she must have understood, and we are in a position to appreciate, the radical nature of her choice. Accepting the fact that she did not conform to the 1950s cinematic idea of buxom and sensual Italian female beauty (Sophia Loren, Gina Lollobrigida, Silvana Mangano, among others), she was able to bypass conventional representations of femininity.

Masina's assertiveness in this matter conforms to the qualities of *animus* found in her characterizations for Fellini—and proved fundamental to her achievements as an actress. Moreover, Fellini must be given credit for insisting on giving Masina leading roles. The producers always wanted more glamorous leading ladies, but he made clear that Gelsomina and Cabiria had to be Masina and no one else. Both these factors speak to Masina's power as an actress, belying any simplistic critique that Masina's sexual "neutrality" was a failure in female representation or, worse still, a sort of female castration.

In *Lo sceicco bianco*, Fellini introduces one of the crucial characters in his filmography, "Cabiria", who will return as the protagonist, Maria "Cabiria" Ceccarelli, in *Le notti di Cabiria*. The early Cabiria is a lively woman who lives as a prostitute in the most detached way, as if her profession did not matter to her (here is where desexualization turns to Masina's advantage, allowing her to

avoid the stereotypes of the world-weary or golden-hearted prostitute). At night, in an empty Roman square, Masina has a brief conversation with Ivan, distressed because his new bride, Wanda, has left him to go seek the hero of her favorite photo-novel or *fotoromanzo*. When Ivan shows her photos of Wanda, Cabiria does not make fun of his naiveté. There is remarkable self-assurance in her approval of Wanda, delivered with the common sense she has learned on the street. Cabiria unsettles conventional female roles, particularly in conjunction with Wanda. While a new bride has apparently "left" her husband for "another man," a prostitute affirms the advantages of family life. And Cabiria proves much less interested in securing a client than prompting a performance from a fire-eater who appears as if from nowhere. The early Cabiria is the anticipation of both Gelsomina and the fully developed Cabiria, but also of Giulietta and Ginger.

Years later, in her interviews with Tullio Kezich (1991), Masina described her varying approaches to acting, depending on whether she worked with her husband or other directors. With other filmmakers, she read the script and tried to incorporate the characters to the best of her abilities. She also added details such as clothing, hairstyle, and gestures, so that she could inhabit them convincingly. With Fellini, the process of creating a character took a different direction. Never inclined to reveal much of what was going on in his mind, Fellini gave her only a sketchy outline, soliciting her opinions about it. Masina would then write long letters of critical assessment, with the understanding that Federico would take what he needed from her suggestions and discard the rest (Kezich 1991, 21). Sometimes the process ran smoothly; other times, there were disagreements. Unfortunately, Masina's letters, which would have been invaluable in assessing her artistic contribution, are probably lost. Several sources mention them, but none provides bibliographical or archival reference.

From Masina's comments on the subject (Kezich 1991, 2006), one can deduce that Fellini expected Masina to grasp all aspects of her part without asking too many questions—or any at all—as if information between them could be transmitted telepathically. He expected the same from Mastroianni, and the amiable passivity that was part of Mastroianni's personality never failed him. Masina, however, never accepted the roles that her husband gave her without questioning them, or even taking some distance from them. She cocreated Gelsomina, and she identified with Cabiria (her favorite character) and to a certain extent with Ginger. She never identified with Giulietta of *Giulietta degli spiriti* (Kezich 1991, 70 ff.). She never even liked the character: too submissive, too repressed. Watching her husband Giorgio leaving her for a younger woman without uttering a word was not who she was. "I would have smashed his head," she said (Kezich 1991, 70). And Giulietta's final liberation from the chains of marriage and her past did not seem so triumphant to her. She recognized the merits of the film, but she also pointed out that her husband could not really make a film from a woman's point of view (71). In an early treatment of *Giulietta degli spiriti* (Fellini 1994, 100–101), Fellini had even envisioned a scene in which Giulietta, in an ecstasy of "saintly" humiliation, would contemplate her husband and his lover in bed together. It is not hard to imagine Masina's reaction to the idea, if she ever had knowledge of it.

Giulietta's resistance to Fellini is one more indication of the role she played as *animus*, rather than *anima*, in relation to the director. As she confirms: "I am absolutely happy being a woman, but I have always kept some masculine features. I have more male friends than female friends" (72).

As for Fellini, he acknowledged that Giulietta's resistance to her character posited a challenge to him that ultimately helped the film:

> … one fine day, I made a discovery. Giulietta's resistance to the makeup, clothing, hairdo, earrings, her firm stands that other times seemed to me crimes against the character, intolerable interventions of femininity—this time they were functional. I shouldn't have become angry, because the Giulietta of this film was right to act this way, to show these aggressions. (quoted in Kezich 1965, 56)

The first five minutes of *Giulietta degli spiriti*, as analyzed by Frank Burke (1996, 138), offer the key to the whole film. She is seen from the back (she has no identity), and during her frantic search for the perfect wig and dress is seen only "in a succession of mirrors." The camera searches for her, never able to capture her face except as a glimpse from the mirrors, as if to underline that Masina/Giulietta is not entirely "there." Something is missing in the film and will be missing until the end, when Giulietta is free of her past and walks toward the woods, keeping her "soul" a secret from everyone.

The arc of Masina's metacharacter proceeds from destiny to choice and effectively entails the emergence and maturation of her *animus* qualities and her liberation from containment. Gelsomina is a sacrificial lamb from a dark retelling of *Beauty and the Beast*. Her destiny, her reason for existing, as *Il Matto* ("the mad one") fatally persuades her in the "pebble" monologue, is to redeem Zampanò. She is offered the choice to refuse to be a mere agent of salvation (she could join the Giraffa circus while Zampanò is in jail), but there are no real choices in a fairy tale. In *Le notti di Cabiria*, renunciation is the only choice Cabiria has. If she wants to survive the brutality of the world, she must give up her possessions, her house, and her hard-earned money. When there is only one choice, however, there is no choice at all. In *Giulietta degli spiriti*, Giulietta can be as dewy-eyed as Gelsomina and as impossibly trustworthy as Cabiria, yet she starts to fight. She cannot choose between her conventional marriage and her personal growth, because her husband chooses for her when he leaves her. However, she does not give up the struggle against her ghosts and her overwhelming mother (who is both real and a ghost), and she ends up victorious. However, her progress toward maturity—or, in Jungian terms, her journey toward individuation—is complete only in *Ginger e Fred*.

Masina's last film with Fellini bundles together the many threads that the previous incarnations of Masina had left loose. If Gelsomina was abused, Cabiria was robbed, and Giulietta was abandoned, here, in the film's final scene, at the Termini train station, Ginger is not under duress. She can afford to offer a loan to Fred, knowing very well that it will never be repaid, and she asserts her will in the relationship with Pippo/Fred. As Stubbs (2006, 169) points out, the Amelia–Pippo couple in *Ginger e Fred* harkens back to the Melina–Checco couple in *Luci del varietà*—with a different conclusion. Checco–Pippo-Fred tries to lure her to him again, emulating the sound of the ship's horn with which their routine began ("siren" that he is), but Melina–Amelia–Ginger has learned her lesson.

> Pippo, like Checco in *Variety Lights*, knows very well how to play on Amelia's emotions …. When he blows the [ship's] whistle, he calls up all the magic of their routine …. This time the Masina figure refuses to fall for the trick. Amelia throws up her arm and calls "Fred," but her arm gesture turns into a good-natured shrug. She smiles, shakes her head, and walks to her train (Figure 18.2).

Marcello Mastroianni, Fellini's *Anima*

Marcello Mastroianni, an enduring legacy of Italian cinema, had little theater-school training, remedied by an early experience on stage with Luchino Visconti's illustrious company in the late 1940s and 1950s (Dewey 1993, 17). He resisted attempts to typecast him and repeatedly distanced himself from the strict rules of method acting, preferring to direct his abilities toward interpretation rather than identification. "I can't abide a place like the Actors Studio in New York as an institution," he asserted. "I don't know what its purpose is aside from providing a place where one maniac can meet a whole lot of maniacs just like him" (79). Not surprisingly, Dewey reports,

Figure 18.2 Amelia-Masina can play along with Pippo at the end of *Ginger and Fred* but still "shrug off" lingering dependence on him. *Source*: *Ginger e Fred* (1986). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Produzioni Europee Associate. Frame grab captured by Victoria Surliuga from the 2007 DVD version.

he named Fellini as his favorite director because of his "enormous ability to see inside people and their faults. Actors are always good in his films because they don't play roles; they play themselves" (82). His early roles were "well-meaning innocents who get involved in situations bigger than they are" (11). Following *La dolce vita*, American journalists labeled him a "Latin lover," much to his displeasure. As he said in his quasi-autobiography, he resented his inability to control his public image. "This is an unpleasant aspect of my trade. The press takes hold of an image that does not belong to you in any way and keeps on using it…!" (Mastroianni 1997, 62). Displeasure and resistance in the face of journalistic stereotyping may explain, in part, why he chose to appear in films such as Mauro Bolognini's *Il bell'Antonio* (1960), Pietro Germi's *Divorzio all'italiana* (*Divorce Italian Style* 1961), and Ettore Scola's *Una giornata particolare* (*A Special Day* 1977), in which he played, respectively, an impotent male, a vile cuckold, and a homosexual—roles that did not conform to the stereotype of Italian masculinity.

There was a personal side to his choices as well. In an interview with Oriana Fallaci, he claimed that he had never liked himself from a physical point of view (quoted in Biagi 1996, 23), and Jacqueline Reich (2004, 1) reports that, "Rather than self-confident, Mastroianni appears self-deprecating; rather than heroic, he sees himself as the anti-hero; rather than a sex symbol, he looks to others as models of masculine beauty." Tellingly, he was never interested in working in Hollywood (Dewey 1993, 15).

Indifferent to the physical transformations other actors went through to fit a part, he adopted a tranquil normality as his ticket to authenticity (Seregni 2016, 19). Coming of age in the neorealist moment, he could act with the naturalness that people expected from someone picked up from the street as a nonprofessional. Using "normalcy" as a primary tool, Mastroianni was able

to create the "Mastroianni look," immediately identifiable as "a physical fatigue alluding to an even deeper moral ennui" (Dewey 1993, 47). His common and minimalist features made him a star in whom people could recognize themselves (Seregni 2016, 21). The ease that Mastroianni's acting conveyed led to misinterpretations about his commitment. As Fellini pointed out (quoted in Dewey 1993, 61), "the legend that Mastroianni is indifferent and lazy is nonsense. He spends hours discussing his role until he understands it thoroughly, extracting the most extraordinary nuances."

By the end of the 1950s, Mastroianni had already appeared in more than 40 films, including Luchino Visconti's *Le notti bianche* (*White Nights* 1957) and Mario Monicelli's *I soliti ignoti* (*Big Deal on Madonna Street* 1958), and he had received four Silver Ribbons for Best Actor at the Venice Film Festival. Yet he was not a star. Fellini recalls (Hochkofler 1992, 13) that Masina was indeed the first to mention Mastroianni to him. She had met him in 1948, when they shared the stage at the Centro Universitario Teatrale in Leo Ferrero's *Angelica* (Seregni 2016, 26). Fellini's producers were fixated on Paul Newman for the leading role in *La dolce vita*. Fellini, however, wanted someone less recognized, "a face with no personality—like yours" as he said to Mastroianni when they met at Fregene together with screenwriter Ennio Flaiano. Mastroianni asked to see the script and was given a drawing by Fellini depicting a man swimming, a siren, and a large human being with a snorkel mask, looking from the bottom of the sea at the swimmer's impossibly oversized intimate parts (the sketch is reproduced in Mastroianni 1997, 134). Mastroianni was planning to stage a Chekhov play, possibly with Luchino Visconti directing (Mastroianni 1997, 49), but chose instead to work for Fellini, obviously appreciating Fellini's odd humor. This eventuated in six roles in Fellini films.

It is interesting to speculate that, as Giulietta Masina represented the masculine and self-assertive side of Fellini's personality, the side that did not wish to be contained—in short, a kind of *animus*—Mastroianni represented a more compliant side, comfortable with and even desirous of containment—in short, an embodiment of the *anima*. In an interview he gave in 1983 (Fellini 1988, 213), Fellini expressed satisfaction with his and Mastroianni's relationship confirming that Marcello's passivity made him an ideal actor:

> Working with Marcello is a joy: tactful, easy, intelligent, he steps right into the character without ever asking questions, without even having read the scenario. "What fun is there—he says—in knowing in advance what will happen? I prefer to discover it day by day, even as it's happening to the character." He allows himself to be made up, dressed, coiffed up without objection, asking for only absolutely indispensable things.

This seems to imply the kind of relationship that Fellini, on some level, would have preferred with his wife Giulietta, as she contested the roles in which he cast her—particularly in *Giulietta degli spiriti*. By the same token, Marcello's devotion to Fellini made clear that he was quite comfortable putting himself entirely and repeatedly in the director's hands—mirroring his gravitation to roles as self-deprecating anti-hero. Consistent with the different roles Masina and Mastroianni played in our hypothetical Fellini "psychodrama," while the former's metacharacter progresses from dependence (Gelsomina) to relative independence (Amelia–Ginger), the latter's regresses from the socially mobile upstart journalist and PR man of *La dolce vita* to a door-to-door encyclopedia salesman who must solicit a loan from his partner of better days (*Ginger e Fred*).

As Reich argues (2004, 41), Marcello Rubini in *La dolce vita* is the embodiment of the passive *bella figura*, at once spectator and spectacle: "On the Via Veneto, his aim is to see and be seen." In the final scene, when Paola calls him from the other side of an inlet of water and he claims that he cannot hear her, the manner in which he kneels communicates Marcello's defeat in the face of

life, his degeneration from anti-hero to no hero at all. As a PR man, he will now fabricate celebrity, false heroes. He will still be "seen," but only as someone who makes other people more visible than he.

Whether or not he is Fellini's alter ego, Marcello's full significance as *anima* within Fellini's oeuvre is reflected in *8½*, in which film director Guido Anselmi experiences a creative block at the peak of his career. His association with the *anima* is played out, among other ways, in the scene when clairvoyant Maya probes Guido's mind and reads the words *asa-nisi-masa* (a kind of pig-Latin for *anima*). In the next scene, Guido's *anima* is split between Guido as child and all the women who take care of him, assuaging the performance anxiety that he is experiencing in his creative life—the same anxiety that Fellini felt after the success of *La dolce vita*. The self-mocking misogyny of the "harem" scene is the "adult" version of the asa-nisi-masa sequence, and on display is the same passive inclination on the part of the Mastroianni figure, as Reich (2004, 87–88) observes:

> Although appearing on the surface to tend to Guido's every whim, the women in actuality consistently subvert his authority.... In order to subdue the uprising, Guido brandishes the ultimate phallic symbol of power, the whip, ... and in doing so references his own weakness (the need of an outside object to re-establish order).... The scene's conclusion, rather than being triumphant, is infused with a profound sadness....

In *8½*, Guido's inability to complete his film parallels his fears around sexual performance. The reluctant "Latin lover," Mastroianni was indeed the perfect vehicle for Fellini's enactment of that crisis in conjunction with a critical assessment of masculinity.

Guido's *anima* complex is not only male passivity or passive aggressiveness. It has the more positive aspect of the desire for containment we noted earlier. Guido loves being enveloped by the women of his childhood and seeks to reproduce it in his harem. His relationship with the film is similar. And though he tries to rule both his harem and his filmmaking entourage (from producer down to crew), both provide containment that he cannot do without. The circus ring toward the film's end captures the will to containment perfectly.

Returning to the issue of the *anima* complex, projection, and negative (re)interiorization, many among Fellini's male characters are "shadowed" by performance anxiety. This issue is especially crucial in *La città delle donne*, which begins and ends on a train where Snàporaz (a nickname for Guido in *8½* and here the name of the Mastroianni protagonist) has fallen asleep. The film reworks and extends a scene originally drafted for the conclusion of *8½*: Marcello on a train, almost as in a dream, with all the characters of his unrealized film. In fact, Snàporaz faces the same psychological complexes that the circus arena scene in *8½* had managed to assuage. After all those years, Guido/Snàporaz has not become wiser. He seems to have less imagination and less courage than he had in his first incarnation. Despite the film's relatively light tone, *La città delle donne* is a merciless exploration of emotional deadlock. Instead of seducing the woman who lured him out of the train, Snàporaz is harassed by a large woman in a greenhouse and pretty much ridiculed by every other woman in the film (Figure 18.3). Elena, his wife, cuts him to pieces in a chilling dialogue scene that makes Luisa (Guido's wife in *8½*) seem warm and affectionate by comparison. Only at the end, when Snàporaz draws up his overcoat and falls asleep again, surrounded by "real" women, do we understand that his unexpressed desire is neither to seduce nor to be seduced but rather to be enveloped, contained. As Burke (1996, 330) says, "because [Snàporaz's] unconscious is woman ... everything that occurs to him will occur under the sign of woman." If Mastroianni is Fellini's *anima*, Snàporaz is the *anima* of Fellini's Mastroianni, and the first woman who appears in his dream is Snàporaz's *anima*, while the other women in the story

Figure 18.3 Snàporaz-Mastroianni befuddled and frightened as he is surrounded by a ring of energetic women on roller skates. *Source*: *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Opera Film Produzione/Gaumont. Frame grab captured by Frank Burke from the 2013 Bluray version.

are the *anima*'s *animae*, in an infinite chain that breaks (like Snàporaz's glasses) only when he wakes up. Paradoxically, this is the positive side of Fellini's *anima* complex. It softens the stereotypical distinction between activity and passivity. If the *animus* is more inclined to separate (Masina at the end of *Giulietta degli spiriti* and *Ginger e Fred*—though not *Nights of Cabiria*), the *anima* is more prone to connect (though the male desire to connect, especially with females, is fraught). Marcello just floats along trying to belong. Guido constantly imagines communities to which he might belong—the harem, the film world, the vision of all of his life's companions at the end. Snàporaz wants to be contained by the community of female gazes that he has in part created, but that extends beyond his dream world.

In *Ginger e Fred*, Mastroianni-Fred-Pippo Botticella is a charming loser. Less passive than Snàporaz, he wants other people to believe that he is still on top of his game as a dancer and entertainer, but he is ill-equipped to navigate the cruel world of TV entertainment—partly because he is just too old. He is also too sentimental. Both Pippo and Amelia want to feel again the thrill of their past partnership, but Amelia knows that the thrill is gone, while Pippo is too naïve, and at the same time too proud, to admit it. He wants to be recontained by the past, the illusions he has created about it, and his relationship with Amelia. But she won't allow it. *Ginger e Fred* shows that the *anima* complex of Fellini's male characters—the turning point being perhaps *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*—goes through a progressive deterioration of agency.

Fellini did not leave his Mastroianni *anima* at the Termini train station at the end of *Ginger e Fred*. In *Intervista*, Marcello comes back as himself, dressed as Mandrake the Magician (the comic book character that Lee Falk created in 1934), and in Anita Ekberg's house performs a trick that brings back the black-and-white days of Marcello and Sylvia wading into the Trevi Fountain. They both have aged. However, as Reich (2004, 146) argues, "Far from projecting his own anxieties about aging onto the female body, Mastroianni recognizes them in himself." As a magician, Mastroianni-Mandrake can resurrect the past, but he is unable to carry his magic into the future.

As the final stage of Mastroianni's metacharacter, Mandrake is a Pippo who has survived but not matured, having failed to achieve the relative psychic unity Masina's metacharacter reached in *Ginger e Fred*. At the end of his journey as Fellini's *anima*, Mastroianni-Mandrake stands for the reassuring world of make-believe, the only one where he can thrive.

Fellini is indulgent with his Mastroianni characters; they never go through the kind of hardships that the Masina characters must face. It is beside the point to assess how much of this indulgence is self-indulgence. Fellini's *anima* stands out as a sympathetic, yet unflattering, assessment of a masculinity characterized less by assertiveness than by an endless state of longing—a condition that Fellini, after all, had addressed since *Luci del varietà*.

Notes

1 My notion of "metacharacter" expands on the concept of "hyperfilm" introduced by Millicent Marcus (2002, 182–183) in her discussion of Fellini's complete body of films: "The unitary, ongoing creative project that links the artist's biography to his cinematic corpus at a relatively high level of abstraction and in which the author's life in filmmaking comes to coincide with the film of his life." Because I have shifted the accent from the director to the actors, the "metacharacter" they create does not coincide with the totality of their work but with personas that unite all the films of the most important director they have worked with.

2 A similar case for *animus* is harder to make. Jung has never been a fully systematic thinker, and the characteristics of *animus* and *anima* are not subject to perfectly symmetrical juxtaposition or opposition.

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Part IV

Aesthetics and Film Language

Italo Calvino

Fellini is one of the most intelligent and sensitive people currently involved in creative work. He has concreteness, which is the first gift of the poet; he has the capacity of the true narrator to gather in the smallest detail the uniqueness of people, settings, and situations; he has the artisanal devotion to his craft without which no concept can be turned into art. A man of vast curiosities, both intellectual and humane, who links them in the creation of an image of the world with its internal coherence and its own sense of both logic and mystery. Underlying all this there is a strong moral presence—strong in such a way that it has no need to declare itself or preach in order to make itself felt.

These qualities are certainly insufficient to fully define Fellini's genius as an artist, but they are the necessary conditions of that genius. I think that we have to start from this to explain for ourselves the extraordinary fascination of this "mago" of cinema.

Fofi, G. and Vanni, G., ed., Federico Fellini. L'arte della visione *(Rome: AIACE, 1993), np.*

19

"Io non me ne intendo": Fellini's Relationship to Film Language

Marco Vanelli

There is a moment in *I clowns* (1970) in which Federico Fellini and his ragtag little troupe find themselves in Paris, in the home of Pierre Étaix. They are there to watch a very old reduced-format film featuring the Fratellini, circus artists of the past. The projector jams, the rare film freezes, a frame burns, the screen remains white. Pierre Étaix and his father-in-law Victor Fratellini fumble around with the projector. Fellini, though not asked, pre-emptively declines to assist: "I'm sorry that I cannot help you, but I am no expert" ("io non me ne intendo" in Italian). It is a paradoxical joke spoken by one of the greatest directors of all time who claims not to understand cinema, or at least not its material, practical, technical side. But as often happens with Fellini, statements should not be taken at face value, but rather as attempts to deflect attention. And as we shall see at the end of this essay, Fellini will know how to change his attitude toward his own professional skills.

To discuss Fellini and his relationship with cinematographic language, it is important to raise a preliminary question: what conception did Fellini have of cinema? To synthesize, it can be said that there are at least two distinct notions expressed respectively in the films leading up to *La dolce vita* (1960) and those including and following this watershed moment in his life as an artist.

Although he never belonged to any school, group, or trend, Fellini trained professionally in the neorealist period alongside Roberto Rossellini, the director who was able to break with every established rule. As a screenwriter, furthermore, Fellini knew and practiced genre cinema in light of all the films, especially American, he saw as a child and as a youth. About these, he developed a certain idealized fantasy: the stars, the femmes fatales, the movies that celebrated the splendors of ancient Rome, the tortuous situations of French realism, the expressive freedom of cartoons, the lightness of musicals with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, the poetry of Chaplin, the bold choices of Welles, etc. And then, once he became a director, he was fascinated by other artists who were on the verge of international fame just as he was, in particular Akira Kurosawa and Ingmar Bergman.

All this and much more contributed to his cinematic development. But Fellini's true training unfolded inwardly, thanks to a sprawling imagination that sought a relief valve by way of the screen. Perhaps his real ambition was to give form directly to dreams, fantasies, and memories without resorting to a process of technical mediation. He did so with his drawings, of course, which for years remained a tool essentially for his own private use, but these lacked that narrative

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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competence that is, in fact, a characteristic of his films. As a result, cinema became for him the form most amenable to fulfilling all his needs—narration, expression, evocation, pure creation—even though he had to confront its limits.

Early on as a writer and screenwriter, he learned to invent a story and tell it on screen in audiovisual terms. During the first part of his career, Fellini's commitment was to tell the story, taking into account the traditional modes of cinema, but bending them to his own expressive needs, trying to force established ways and existing resources to go beyond what the public was used to seeing. After *La dolce vita*, thanks to its global success, Fellini begins to transgress every established rule of filmmaking without worrying too much about the narrative requirements of the public. Despite the constraints applied by producers, the "felliniesque," understood as bizarre, exaggerated, Baroque, becomes a trademark—almost an advertisement—of his "cinema of attractions." From then on, the imaginative dimension has the upper hand over the narrative one: the movies no longer tell a complete story, the characters begin to resemble functions and psychological types. Hardly any spectators watching a film of the second phase wonder what will happen next because it is not what is recounted but the process of recounting that becomes important. The narrative of the story's creation, the difficulties of those who are creating it—all become more essential than traditional plot.

In the films of the 1950s, natural and real environments are a source of inspiration for Fellini, who is looking not so much for precise topographical and historical identification as for an existential suggestiveness that those genuine environments inspire in him and therefore also in the audience. With *La dolce vita*, however, Fellini makes his triumphal entry into Cinecittà and declares it his personal kingdom. The need to reconstruct for the sake of practicality the interior of the dome in St. Peter's Basilica or a part of the Via Veneto stimulates him to such an extent that from then on he will draw less and less inspiration from real environments and instead shoot films almost entirely in the studio. This is what happens with *E la nave va* (*And the Ship Sails On* 1983), in which the studio itself is on full display with all its technological and artisanal resources. And Fellini not only makes use of the artificial scenery, the make-up, the narrative distortion, to stretch the limits of figurative meaning, but also wants the viewer to realize what he is doing, to take note of it, to enter and become familiar with another dimension that is no longer the simple realm of being told a story, but the experience of putting oneself in the shoes of the storyteller (or in the position of one who no longer knows how to tell the story, or no longer wants to tell it). In reality, this is also a form of narration, on a second level, where Fellini, talking about himself and revealing secrets of the profession to his audience, actually reinvents himself as a character, creates a "mitobiografia" in the terminology of his psychoanalyst Ernst Bernhard, and makes us feel the vertigo of the *mise en abyme* of story within story within story.

This distinction is a simplification, however, since Fellini's work is unique, due to his constant presence as an author and to his equally constant and persistently evident use of the tools that cinema offers for telling, expressing, describing, and reflecting. These tools, which form the foundation of film language, are ones that Fellini was able to use from the start of his career, even as he invented new expressive modalities. Fellini rarely wanted to discuss his own style, insisting on his ignorance regarding technical things and his indifference toward the practical aspects of his profession. Therefore, it is not surprising that, among critics, Fellini's name is not associated with a particular contribution to the evolution of the language of cinema (but see Waller 2002, 3–5). Rather, one thinks of his themes, the form of his stories, his transfiguration of reality, and the whole paraphernalia of his inner world. His name is not included with the likes of Welles, Hitchcock, Antonioni, or Godard, as a director notable for a particular way of framing, editing, or processing sound. In one of his few statements on this last element, in response to a direct

question by the critic Giovanni Grazzini, Fellini (1983, 82–83) proves willing to talk about his expressive choices:

> It is during the dubbing that I turn to the great importance of dialogue. … I feel the need to give sound the same expressiveness as the image, to create a kind of polyphony. … The important thing is that the character has a voice that makes him … expressive. For me dubbing is essential, it is a musical operation with which I unleash the meaning of the figures. Many noises from direct shooting are not usable. In my films, for example, footsteps are almost never heard. … There are noises that viewers add with their own internal ear, there is no need to emphasize them: on the contrary, if they are directly perceived, they are distracting. That is why the soundtrack is a job to be done on its own, separately, after all the rest, along with the music.

In the following pages, we will try to highlight the specificities of the expressive choices in Fellini's films in order to establish the foundations of his filmic language: montage, framing, color, camera movements, tricks, or strategies.

We will begin with a discussion of editing. In Fellini's films, editing is done with great care: it is used to signify, to establish rhythms, to narrate by means of interlocking and alternating shots, camera angles, and focal lengths, without unnecessary virtuosity. It primarily corresponds to what is called "montage," or the assembly of different elements to make the contours of the film come alive, an "additive" technique. As Fellini said (1983, 175), "It is like when Dr. Frankenstein made the stretcher with his monster, built from various anatomical fragments, rise towards the stormy sky so as to receive life from the thunderous bolts of lightning."

At times, however, Fellini used "cutting," which is a "subtractive" operation, splicing the frames according to a predetermined, more stylized, and experimental rhythm. Among all Fellini's works, there are at least two sequences that ought to be remembered because the editing differs from what Italian cinema had done until then. The first is *Luci del varietà* (*Variety Lights* 1950). Many argue that Fellini's contribution was primarily to the screenplay, while the work of directing the actors belonged to the codirector, Alberto Lattuada. However, this position does not take into account the stylistic impact the film presents in its opening, which depicts the local theater in which a vaudeville company is concluding its performance. The first thing that catches the eye is the use of kaleidoscopic editing that follows the rhythm of the music. When the orchestra strikes chords with echoes of jazz, the sequence quickly shows the almost liturgical event that is taking place: the "artists" on the stage, the smiling dancers, the participating audience, the orchestra that gives its very best. Thanks to the brevity of the shots, their rhythmic succession, and the close-ups and extreme close-ups, the viewer witnesses a transfiguration of the real, the first "miracle" of Fellini's cinematography, aimed at making people perceive how, even in a shabby little theater, among the third-rate actors on the stage and yokels in the audience, everyone can believe in the role they play or watch, as in a collective rite. The general stupor that overtakes the participants is highlighted in the repeated close-ups that reveal just as many psychological types, starting from Liliana, almost in a trance, lost in imagining herself as part of that fantastic world even if shown at its lowest level. The others around her, including the orchestra, are equally captivated by the dazzling smiles of the dancers and the twirling glances of the showgirls. In that apotheosis, it is as if they really feel they are on Broadway, among the actual skyscrapers that the background set design evokes and whose image will return many years later in the advertising poster for *Ginger e Fred* (1986).

We find another example of utterly innovative editing, responding to this sense of musical cadence, in *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952), when the small troupe of a "fotoromanzo" (a comic strip with photographs) is finally ready to take the pictures that will then serve to recount

an adventure of the Arabian hero with whom the protagonist Wanda is infatuated. The chaos of the set is similar to that of the cinema—which we will find in Fellini's subsequent films. There is a director who shouts orders with his megaphone to a group of technicians, extras, supporting actors—and "divi" who turn out to be vulgar, distracted, undisciplined. But the moment the shooting begins—as if they had begun shooting a film—the triumphant music of Nino Rota starts to infuse the whole sequence with rhythm. The editing makes this rhythm its own and dedicates a shot to each character in the scene. These character shots are primarily fixed, alternating with those of the director who continues to give orders to the photographers. Here, too, a kind of liturgy is enacted, and a miracle takes place. However ridiculous they all are, however minimal the "artistic" level of that work may be, whoever performs it at that moment is consumed by the sacred fire of the show, and we who watch are involved in this sort of carousel, in this spectacular "dolce vita."

But Fellini is above all attentive to framing. His origins in the world of comics and drawing repeatedly lead him to take into account the figurative relationship established among the characters, the objects, the landscape, and the edges of the frame. Changes in framing and aspect ratio in Fellini's cinema coincide with *La dolce vita*; the previous films were in the Academy ratio (1.37:1), but he now opts for the new widescreen formats: CinemaScope (2.35:1) and the panoramic (1.66:1 and 1.88:1), except for television work. He will use the CinemaScope format only twice: in *La dolce vita* and in *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969), the two "fresco" films that are related to one another in their descriptions of a decadent society embodied in the eternal city of Rome. In *La dolce vita*, Fellini wanted to combine the use of the telephoto lens with CinemaScope, against the wishes of cinematographer Otello Martelli. The critic Richard Dyer (2018, 36–37) notes:

> Fellini wanted to use a long focal length—75 mm, 100 mm, even 150 mm—the kind used for portraiture and close-ups, even for long shots and with a moving camera (whereas 50 mm was the usual lens for Scope). Martelli, with a career going back to the silent period, resisted him, aware of the flattening effect of long focal length lenses and their tendency to produce flutter when movement is involved. Fellini prevailed, producing the image quality of depthlessness and instability that is one of the defining affective features of the film.

And speaking of the early shots of *La dolce vita,* Dyer (1) notes: "The second shot, lateral tracking with long focal length lens and widescreen, allows more than one element of the palimpsest [of Roman history] to be visible and emphasizes a sense of depthlessness, two qualities that justify the common recourse to the term 'fresco' to describe *La dolce vita*." His words would apply to *Fellini - Satyricon* as well. Both films can be considered frescoes not only because of their status as social portraiture, but also because the long focal length of the lenses creates a flattening effect, accentuated by the horizontality of the screen, which gives the impression that we are facing a painted wall. The final shots of *Fellini - Satyricon* explicitly confirm this, showing us the characters painted on fresco fragments on the walls of a house destroyed by time.

Aside from the width of the screen, Fellini covers the available space according to his personal compositional criteria. The most obvious example is the insertion of a character or object that covers one of the sides of the screen as if it were a theatrical backdrop, occupying about one-third of the space. In this way, the viewer is forced to focus on two distinct levels of depth, which is disorienting and also visualizes one of Fellini's common themes: the complexity of existence, which is never unique and univocal, but always multifaceted.

Linked to this type of composition is the characters' entry into the frame, which is often unforeseen and can also occur from below: for example, the appearance of the dancer-idol in the nightclub at the beginning of the second sequence of *La dolce vita*. This use of not only the right

and left sides of the screen, but also the bottom, is so characteristic of Fellini that it is adopted by Woody Allen in *Stardust Memories* (1980), his version of *8½* (1963).

Fellini also has his distinctive mode of exiting characters, employing horizontal tracking shots so a character that seems in the center of the frame is suddenly replaced by someone who enters after (placed closer in the depth of field). The speed of the entrances and exits is managed in such a way as to provide the sense of palimpsest discussed by Dyer—that is, an image composed of several layers. A good example is the walk along the promenade of *Amarcord*, when the various characters are preparing to witness the passage of the transatlantic Rex. There are some nuns with orphans, a carriage, a car, some girls on bicycles, a fat man in a bathing suit: a choreographed movement of people moving in parallel, but at different speeds, so as to constantly disrupt our attention (Figure 19.1). The eye is never allowed to rest in these shots, and as soon as it manages to settle, everything is remixed as if in a kaleidoscope. It is the director-demiurge who intervenes, the puppeteer who reinvents a world, who decides who is to be seen and who not, who conjures into the theater of memory forgotten people who contend momentarily for the limelight.

When Fellini works in this way, he also plays with depth of field, such as when he uses a short focal length such as panfocus, in the style of Orson Welles (evident above all in Fellini's first films), or when he makes substantial use of long focal length with the telephoto lens so that the focus changes in the same shot going from one character to another. This happens above all starting with *8½*. In that momentous film, with everything focused on the existential dimension of the protagonist Guido, with his distorted perceptions of reality, his dreams, fantasies, memories, unconscious associations, Fellini makes a courageous choice: there are numerous shots in close-up and extreme close-up, while the long shots and establishing shots are few and far between. If we think of the sequence outside, early on, at the spa, we see the combination of close-ups on the characters that, overlapping, enter and exit the visual/psychological field of a Guido who is physically present but emotionally introverted, overwhelmed by the reality principle but

Figure 19.1 Promenade in anticipation of the passage of the ocean liner Rex. Fellini's creation of "palimpsests"; that is, multilayered images. *Source*: *Amarcord* (1973). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by F.C. Produzioni, PECF. Frame grab captured by Frank Burke from the 2007 DVD version.

constantly searching for the pleasure principle, in a mental ballet where evoked images and transfigurations of reality are inserted, and where, thanks to the focus that passes from one figure to another, the viewer participates in the particular perceptive approach in which the mind of the author (Guido, i.e., Federico) always operates. It is his mental movie, the perennial one, the truest, already begun in childhood, that Fellini tries to translate into celluloid, revealing himself, never as much as in this case, a master in shaping filmic language according to his most intimate needs. The prevalence of close-ups in a film such as *8½* is the most fitting choice to indicate that the world depicted is an inner one, psychic, conscious, and unconscious.

Starting from "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio" ("The Temptation of Dr. Antonio, episode of *Boccaccio '70* 1962), Fellini also makes use of the zoom, not to replace the dolly or tracking, but to increase spectator proximity to the action in quick bursts, often as a way of concluding complex shots—as if winking to the viewer to emphasize the strangeness of a face, the meaningfulness of a glance, the incisiveness of a gesture.

Defining Fellini's shots as "pictorial" does not mean referring to classical figurative culture or to tableaux vivants as it would for Visconti or Pasolini, but to a composition of visual space that, besides working on the surface, stratifies the picture planes while obliging the spectator to take into account a marginal detail, an appearance in the background, some unnatural lighting. The cinematographic means available are understood by Fellini to be the colors on a palette, ones to draw upon by mixing them to obtain a result that is never imitative, but totally personal.

The idea of the painter proceeding in layers, starting from the background and gradually moving to compose the picture with elements on distinct planes, is shown to us at the beginning of *Prova d'orchestra* (*Orchestra Rehearsal* 1979), where we see the large auditorium and, at the same time, hear the voice of the old copyist who explains the acoustic qualities of the auditorium. The music stands appear in a fade-out, then the sheet music, and finally the old man, as if they were painted in successive moments. Fellini proceeds bit by bit before arriving at a glimpse of the whole, an overview of the room with the music stands and the scores arranged in several lines: at that point the story can begin. It is practically a declaration of poetics and method.

While his visual style reveals an eminently aesthetic, expressive, intention, Fellini also works on the narrative level by inventing a procedure that no one before him had practiced. It can be called "false point of view" or "false subjectivity." It is found in *La dolce vita* at the moment in which Marcello and Emma go to Steiner's house. The sequence opens with Steiner's wife (who acquires a name only after Steiner is dead), as she opens the front door looking into the camera eye, as if looking at her guests. We can consider that shot to be the subjective proxy of Marcello, who is the protagonist. The camera, still in the subjective mode, moves with the hostess, who continues to look into the lens, but after a moment Marcello enters the frame from the left, and Steiner's wife now turns her gaze on him, abandoning the lens. It is a complex narrative passage, aimed at disorienting the viewer, hardly accustomed to seeing himself or herself observed by a character on the screen, and anticipates that continuous entering into and exiting out of the main character's subjectivity that we will find in *8½*. The spectator at that moment *is* Marcello, who is welcomed together with Emma into that temple of wisdom, balance, and, in a sense, spirituality that the Steiner house presumably represents.[1] The smile of Steiner's wife marks the ideal of a family life to which Marcello aspires but at the same time fears and shuns. Unfortunately, as the film unfolds, that family ideal is devastatingly shattered. (Anna's lack of a name in Steiner's presence subtly subverts the ideal even in this scene.) Fellini's visual device that makes Marcello lose his subjectivity suggests a crisis that Marcello undergoes following Steiner's party, which is deepened after the murder-suicide of the man who reveals himself to have been a false prophet.

In the famous ending of the film there is, instead, a reversal with respect to the "false subjective": Paola, the girl on the beach, tries to make herself understood by Marcello who fails (or does

not want) to understand and leaves. After a typical alternation of shot and reverse shot, the last frame is for Paola who, smiling, looks affectionately at Marcello as he distances himself; her gaze moves from right to left, focusing on a distant point, obviously out of the frame. Then, for a moment, while the image dissolves into black, Paola looks at the camera eye. Here, it is not a matter of moving from an objective to a subjective frame, because Paola is not looking Marcello in the eyes. She is watching us spectators, and in that way she extends to us all the angelic smile that is the last message of hope in the film. Anna had looked at Marcello and at us with him; Paola looks at Marcello *and then* only at us (Figure 19.2).

This gaze into the camera is not contextualized from a narrative point of view, but it is thematized with the breaking of the fourth wall, directly addressing the viewer to universalize a concept. It had already been used at the end of the previous film, *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957), where the protagonist, after having reached rock bottom, rises again with faith in life thanks to an encounter with some gentle creatures, an expression of humanity redeemed, that make her no longer feel lonely and desperate. Recurring to an acting technique often used by Chaplin in his masterpieces (see Chandler 1995, 146), Giulietta Masina looks at the lens for a moment without exaggerating, in such a way that the viewer senses that glance more than rationally realizing it. It is a reference addressed to the viewer, as if to say that the film at that moment is speaking to the spectator's soul, mind, and values.

The look into the camera will be a recurring feature in films following *La dolce vita*, including the last scene of "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio," furthering the motif of unveiling the fiction, deconstructing the traditional rules of the story, winking. In some cases (think of the finale of *Fellini - Satyricon* or in *Roma* [1972], halfway through the brothel sequence), the characters stop, pose, look into the camera, and smile, as is usually done in family photographs or as was done in painted portraits. In fact, the ones depicted look and smile at the future, to the one who will

Figure 19.2 Paola's gaze at the camera and at us at the end of *La dolce vita* (1960). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Riama Film in coproduction with Cinecittà and Pathé Consortium Cinéma. Frame grab captured by Frank Burke from the 2014 Blu-ray version.

observe those images when the subject is no longer there. They become evanescent, ectoplasmic presences, evocations of a past that is, by now, deceased.

Another of his inventions linked in part to the subjective is Moraldo's "mental tracking shot" at the end of *I vitelloni* when he is on the train and, departing for who knows where, looks within and imagines his friends still sleeping in bed. The camera goes through their bedrooms as if it were the train passing through, as if Moraldo saw from the window all the other vitelloni gripped by an existential torpor from which they will perhaps never awake. It is also a brilliant invention, which confirms the author's attention to the inner, spiritual, imaginative dimension, but realized through a connection to the real—the train in motion with its noise on the rails—that we could for once define as surreal.

Regarding tracking shots, those in the corridors of the great Roman buildings should be pointed out: subjective paths taken by characters, such as the journalist of "Agenzia matrimoniale" ("Marriage Agency," episode of *L'amore in città/Love in the City* 1953) or the young Fellini in *Roma*. The camera advances along with the character, almost as if to reveal the human events that can be hidden behind every door. Done seemingly in accord with the wishes of Cesare Zavattini, an approach supposed to refer intentionally to the neorealist spirit that animated *Amore in città*, though Fellini's intent was different. In any case, he made an effort in this direction:

> Since Zavattini gave me this opportunity I decided to shoot a short film in the most neorealist style possible, with a story that could never be true, not even "neo-true." … Then, to make the story seem more realistic, I said to the press that the marriage agency was in the same building where I lived. (Chandler 1995, 133–134)

Here Fellini works in an extremely refined way. On the one hand, in the name of the extreme realism that animates Zavattini's project, he anticipates certain forms of cinéma verité: shooting on the streets, without a set, with passersby who react to the presence of the camera by stopping to observe the actors acting or looking directly into the lens. On the other hand, he does not give up his compositional taste, placing the characters in such a way that they occupy one side of the screen and roughly one-third of the image—though in an apparently casual, "wrong" way. The Italian term for this kind of shot is "di quinta," which gets translated as "over the shoulder," but this sort of shot need not be, strictly speaking, over a character's shoulder. We see the journalist when he is with the girl in the countryside blocking the lens for a moment when he stands up to get back into the car, or the porter in the last shot who goes back and forth to and from the camera like a passerby who, without knowing it, disturbs the shooting. As an eternal *enfant terrible*, Fellini first submits to the neorealist rules of Zavattini, exaggerating them in a hyperrealist direction, then denies them by demonstrating his concern for the reconstruction or simulation of chance, a contradiction in terms (Figure 19.3).

In Fellini's cinema, there are also moments in which a character, in a metacinematographic delirium, covers the camera for an extreme and polemical act of self-censorship. In "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio," when Anita, enormous and voluptuous following her descent from a poster, hints at undressing in front of the moralistic and repressed Doctor Antonio, he veils the camera, which thus becomes an element present in the scene, in spite of the conventional pact that would render it invisible. Everything is experienced as a game, as a hallucination, but this opens the way to other situations in which Fellini prompts us viewers to remind ourselves that what we are witnessing is nothing but a movie. In *I clowns*, *Fellini: A Director's Notebook* (1969), or *E la nave va*, he will reveal a camera in action; when a lens "shoots" another lens—that is to say, when the cinema folds back on itself. It is like admitting that there is nothing more to telling a story except maybe the pleasure—or the difficulty—of telling it. It is a self-reflexive journey that began with

Figure 19.3 Fellini's fondness for "di quinta" shots that intrude into the frame but also create a strong haptic impression as well as layering the image. Here we see the journalist of "Agenzia Matrimoniale" loom over the young woman who is the object of his investigative reporting. Episode directed by Federico Fellini in *L'amore in città* (*Love in the City* 1953). Produced by Faro Film. Frame grab captured by Marco Vanelli from the 2014 Blu-ray version.

8½ and goes all the way to *Intervista* (1987). The only film possible is one on the impossibility of making a film.

In this last phase, only *E la nave va* lets us glimpse some confidence (re)found in the act of narration. The prologue is a declaration of love to cinema; in only a few moments Fellini manages to summarize the evolution of film language and technique. The first shots we see are stills, in black and white, conceived as those of the Lumière Brothers: photographs in motion where the subjects on screen smile embarrassed, look at the lens, move jerkily. A man deliberately "intrudes" into the frame, from the right, but the operator moves the lens to eliminate him from view. It is a first outline of a panning shot, born not out of an expressive need but out of a necessity for exclusion. We can imagine the screams that are being hurled in the direction of the preening man, but we do not hear them because we are decidedly in a silent film and only the noise of the projector's gears is audible. The "bel tipo" returns to the frame, until a hand grabs him and abruptly takes him away. Images from Chaplin's first film, *Kid Auto Races at Venice* (1914), come to mind, where the mischievous tramp makes his first official appearance by disturbing the filming of a newsreel.

These frames have no narrative continuity. Then a car appears and stops beside a large ship. The action continues in a medium shot. The editing begins to connect the movements and spaces, brings us close to the characters, makes us enter into the action: filmic narration is born. Continuity shots linked to glances appear, and we begin to perceive the relationships among those figures who are for us strangers emerging from a distant past. Almost imperceptibly, the noises of the scene begin to surface: the siren of the ship, the creaking of a pulley. We see a large

covered load brought in; the camera makes a quick zoom forward, as if to correct the framing. Meanwhile, we have seen a few close-ups, some actions interrupted by new shots that show something else, and then return to the previous actions. We are in D.W. Griffith's realm, one of alternating montage. A rope crosses the screen diagonally. It looks like one of those scratches that time brings to old films. Other scratches, however, are really inserted to age the images, as well as certain jumps to indicate small cuts in the film due to wear and tear. Suddenly an odd character appears in the foreground: it's the protagonist Orlando; then we see a title card that explains his presence as a journalist. Orlando (who looks like Fellini) poses, looks into the camera, changes his hat, puts on another, then another and another—in short, acts like a clown from a silent film. Suddenly, we see before him the cameraman with his camera. It is a reverse shot, and with it the fake chronicle becomes a fictional story—a fiction that chronicles. A few piano notes are inserted to recall the first musical accompaniments in early cinema. Now the hearse arrives with the ashes of a soprano whose final trip to the sea is about to be recounted. The projector noise has disappeared. A photographer makes members of the small procession move back, evidently to create the perfect shot: reality must bend to the needs of the camera. A man speaks and we hear him: sound has come to the cinema! The noise of the wind joins the music. The black and white film takes on a lightly colored sepia tone, then gradually the colors of the faces and of the whole environment emerge: it is now a color film. Finally, directed by the conductor of the choir, all those present, mostly opera singers, begin to sing an aria and board the ship in time to music in a kind of operatic musical. Thus, ends a sequence that demonstrates, more than any other, Fellini's affection for the tools of his craft, his art.

The homage to silent film is not new for Fellini. In "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio," the protagonist smacks a woman for her decolleté: the images are black and white, sped up, and the voices are warped to ridicule the characters, as at the beginning of Chaplin's *City Lights* (1931). In *8½*, a similar procedure is used when Guido is brought back to the boarding school priests after witnessing Saraghina's dance, while in *Amarcord* Fellini uses it to introduce Titta's failed advances toward Gradisca in the Fulgor cinema. They are all ways of playfully addressing the sexual problems of the protagonists. In *E la nave va*, instead, we witness a complex sequence intercut between the kitchen and the dining room in which the actions in the first are sped up and those in the second are slowed down: frenzy and solemnity are separated by a glass door, and cinematically rendered by the flowing of the film at more or less than 24 frames per second.

Fellini's expertise in the use of film techniques is also demonstrated when he inserts amateur films, documentary pieces, silent film extracts, and commercials created by him with imitative intentions—some verisimilitudinous, others patently fake. (We have already noted examples of this at the beginning of *E la nave va*.) In *8½*, Guido must choose the actors for his film on the basis of their screen tests. In *Giulietta degli Spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965), the private detective shows the protagonist footage shot in 8 mm, where we see evidence of her husband's betrayal. Recorded in secret, at a distance, the shots are full of zooms and as a result mimic perfectly, though parodically, private-eye surveillance. In *I clowns*, Fellini witnesses one of the rare performances on film of the clown Rhum in slow motion, a few seconds on old, grainy, scratched film. A real historical find or a plausible simulation? The second, we believe.

In *Fellini: A Director's Notebook* and in *Roma*, there are two similar sequences in which Fellini reenacts viewings of Rome-based fictional films that are bombastic and soaked with Fascist rhetoric. The first, mute, seems to be shot in the EUR district and is shown with an acceleration effect that accentuates its parodic tone, while the piano accompaniment references silent film comedy. The second is more realistic in the staging; it has sound and is accompanied by orchestral music into which Nino Rota inserts a reference to *Lo sceicco bianco*. In *Roma*, the screening is

followed by a fake vintage newsreel, full of exaltation for the regime's endeavors, created by Fellini according to the typical style of the Istituto Luce but introducing his own touch: a passerby, situated at the edge of the screen, turns to the lens, smiles in a satisfied manner, and then leaves the frame. Fellini demonstrates that he is also able to make cinema in the style of other films and directors, far from his own expressive modalities but evocative of his experiences as a child spectator.

In *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976), a magic-lantern projection takes place, a sort of protocinema inside a cave with the form of a maternal womb, with a series of drawings dedicated to the vagina as an archetype of all that exists. Created by Roland Topor, the drawings appear on the screen in quick succession, resembling a cartoon. This tribute anticipates the prologue of *E la nave va*, in which Fellini remakes the history of cinema.

In *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980) there are two instances of projection. The first, inside the hotel where the feminist convention takes place, is a documentary about a woman who lives with several men. The interview and filming style are typical of the militant cinema of those years, and the film is even subtitled in French in order to increase its parodic verisimilitude. On the parodic side, the subtitles contradict what the purported director of the film is saying to her audience, and because we see the screen from behind, they have to be read backward! Later on, during the protagonist's journey into the past, his childhood delight in the cinema is recalled. Thanks to a brilliant scenic distortion, Fellini transforms the movie theater into a huge bed where little boys and priests masturbate, while on the screen we witness a parody-homage to the vamps of the thirties: scenes in black and white made specifically with doubles of Greta Garbo, Brigitte Helm, Marlene Dietrich, and Mae West.

In *E la nave va*, we also see fragments of a silent amateur film that a character projects in his cabin while the ship sinks. In *Ginger e Fred*, there are all the commercials and TV ads that we see on permanently lit monitors (we have already seen a TV on in *Giulietta degli spiriti*). Those advertisements were made grotesque by Fellini to take his revenge on the excessive power of television that in the eighties was destroying the capacity of viewers to concentrate.[2]

A particularly curious movie insert is a clip of *La dolce vita*, therefore a self-citation, magically projected in *Intervista* by Mastroianni-Mandrake in the home of an Anita Ekberg past her prime. With no forewarning, a white sheet appears, stretched out in the middle of the room and Marcello and Anita, from behind, form Chinese shadows that dance tenderly, accompanied by the piano notes of the musical motif of *La dolce vita*. Suddenly we pass to the images of the dance of Marcello and Sylvia at the Baths of Caracalla and then to the famous scene of them in the Trevi Fountain. Though the dialogue is modified from the original, the tone is the same; the overall meaning does not change, but the attitude of Fellini is different here, as he now has more questions than statements to make.

Critic Virgilio Fantuzzi (1994, 130–131) rightly notes the alienating effect of inserting a clip of one's own film, in black and white, with different aesthetic features from those of recent works:

> The quote from *La dolce vita* opens a parenthesis in … *Intervista* and introduces an element of discontinuity into the homogeneous flow of cinematographic images. The exquisite black and white of Gianni Di Venanzo gives the … clip the appearance of a cameo, in comparison with which the color of the film shot by Tonino Delli Colli may even appear dull. This is, of course, an expected and desired effect. Like the leap in time from one film to the other, so too the contrast between color and black and white constitutes a striking difference, which implies other less striking differences. This time, however, we are faced with an element intrinsically linked to cinematographic language, to that language that finds its reason to be in attempts, not always successful, to achieve full expressivity. The clip of *La dolce vita* quoted in *Intervista* represents one of the cases in which it succeeds….

The complex relationship that Fellini establishes between truth and fiction in his staging is revealed largely by the use of "trasparente" (rear projection) in scenes shot in cars. The trick, used routinely by almost all Hollywood and European filmmakers until the 1970s, made it possible to shoot footage in-house that would be too complex if created on location—for example, scenes in cars. Even the classics of neorealism used it as an established and "complicit" practice accepted by everyone, including spectators. Fellini, however, goes further and seems to want to tell everyone that those scenes are really shot in the studio. He enjoys unsettling the viewer by often placing the studio car in such a position that the angle in relation to the road reproduced in the background is distorted, incongruous. It is a perspectival distortion to which he is attracted even in his early films, and it creates an alienating effect that accentuates the emotional climate of Fellini's protagonists.

This distorted use of perspective is also linked to another trick that we find starting in "Toby Dammit" (episode of *Histoires extraordinaires / Tre passi nel delirio / Spirits of the Dead* 1968); that is, the insertion "in truka" of filmed images on a TV monitor or screen present in the scene, an artisanal method that brings to mind early cinema, as in special effects à la Méliès. Accomplished with an optical printer, the process consists of removing part of a frame and replacing it with a segment, equivalent in size, from another frame or visual (for example television) image, in order to create a cinematic photomontage. This optical process often creates discrepancies between the original and inserted visuals in terms of color, grain, size, and alignment, and makes visible the border between the original and the newly inserted parts of the frame. Fellini, who wants his manipulations to be recognized as such, does not care too much about the verisimilitude of the final rendering, and openly shows his tricks.

In this regard, in *8½* there is a moment when Guido is forced by the producer to visit with technicians and friends the set of the sci-fi film that he supposedly will direct. A huge complex of steel tubes makes up what will look like the launch pad for a rocket ship. Conocchia, the production manager, complaining about the 80 million lire they had to spend for the structure, remarks: "But wouldn't a nice backdrop painted by someone chosen by me have been better?" Someone points out that the painted backdrops were made "in our grandfathers' days," ("ai tempi de' nonno") suggesting the link with early cinema. Paradoxically, it is after *8½* that Fellini will start painting the backdrops for his films, making his own the cinema "de' nonno." Think of the sky with clouds painted by the two lazy, bantering, workers in *Intervista*, the same background that will be used for the funeral parlor created in Fellini's favorite studio 5 in Cinecittà upon his death. In addition, in the same sequence of *8½*, we also see a rocket painted on a piece of transparent glass, in pure Méliès style. A character explains: "This is the scale model that will give the optical illusion, by superimposition, that the spaceship is at the top of the launch pad," while Guido assents absentmindedly. This kind of trick, "matte painting," had been perfected contemporaneously by Rossellini for his didactic television films. Fellini's mentor remains present despite the different professional choices of the two directors.

In his final years, Fellini gradually reduced his attention to the technical part of his films, settling for a more neglectful and cursory formal rendering. In this period, his attention was more focused on the profilmic than on the film itself. The eagerness to create, to reproduce everything in the studio, to resort to scale models, excited him so much in the production phase that it led to his postponing the visual and sound corrections to postproduction, to truka touch-ups, to dubbing and audio mixing phases. What was to appear on the screen diminished in importance for the director, and the poetry that had permeated his prior films, where everything was transfigured thanks to an obsessive and creative attention, diminished as well, giving way to a sloppiness about which Fellini did not seem to care.

An example is the evening celebration of the capture of the moon in *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990), when a television crew broadcasts live both the debate in the town square and the commentary from the farm where the moon has been deposited and secured. All this appears on two large cinematic screens. The filming, later inserted in truka, has a quality of cinema rather than of television, with an impossible brightness in a context such as that of a square illuminated by spotlights. Then, when the screens are shot from the side, their perimeter becomes a trapezoid and the image that we see "projected" is orthogonal, creating an unnatural perspective distortion inconsistent with proper television video production (Figure 19.4). Some heads are awkwardly cropped, the black border is seen. Here the result goes far beyond the desire to unmask the fiction. The impression is that, overwhelmed by the enthusiasm to shoot after years of inactivity, Fellini has over-relied on the "after," on the arrangement being edited to mend the blank spaces that emerged during the shooting. We are rather far from the times when, while shooting *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, he had demanded an old Mitchell camera to achieve a crossfade during the shooting phase, rather than during editing, as his associates impatiently urged him to do, so as to obtain an effect particularly evocative of the disappearance of the ghosts of the past in the final scenes.

In contrast with this apparent loss of interest in the visual quality of his films, we find a late confession in which Fellini presents himself in an unusual guise, that of an "artisan of the cinema," now tired of the aura of authority that has surrounded him for years and likely suffocates him. The role of craftsman brings him back to Rossellini, the master with whom he had taken his first steps, even though their paths had diverged to the point of embodying two opposing ideas of cinema: realism vs. imagination, craft vs. authorship, figurative immediacy vs. fantastic

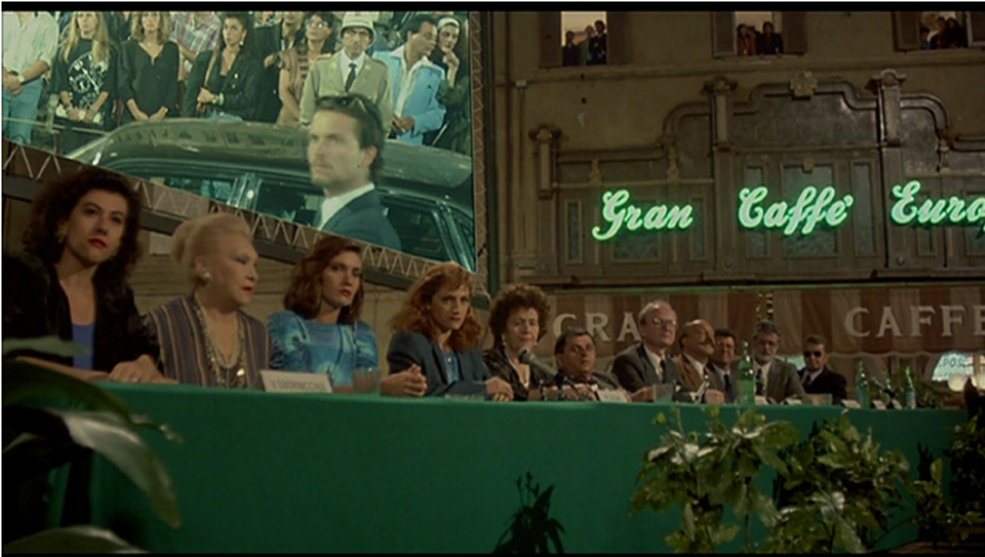

Figure 19.4 The lack of verisimilitude of Fellini's "television" images "in truka" in the town square in *La voce della luna* seems to reflect his lack of enthusiasm for attention to artisanal detail toward the end of his career. *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Cecchi Gori Group Tiger Cinematografica in coproduction with Films A2, La Sept Cinéma, Cinémax and in association with RAI1. Frame grab captured by Marco Vanelli from the Maestri del Cinema DVD version (nd).

transfiguration. Yet this statement, made to Fantuzzi (1994, 167–168) on the set of *La voce della luna*, may confirm for us Fellini's attachment to a cinema that today we would call "analogue," artisanal, "de 'nonno":

> I do not like the special effects produced with sophisticated technological devices. In my films there is always a fantastic aspect, which borders on the surreal; but to make these fantasies I do not need electronics. I prefer the tricks of the old cinema; the handicraft one, which was born right here, and of which the technicians you will see at work are the direct heirs. I feel comfortable with them because, like them, I am also a craftsman….

Let us conclude this essay by likening this image of Fellini to one of a Renaissance workshop master, full of wisdom and experience, waiting for some young apprentice to whom he might transmit his expertise. And, at the same time, we hope that these pages may have served to find an answer to a question no one asked him:

> I realize … that when I do something, everyone asks me why I did it, while no one wants to know how I did it. The handcrafted aspect of my work, which is the most mysterious and for me most important, is of no interest to anyone, while instead everyone is concerned with the philosophical, conceptual, ideological parts, those about which a true artist usually, with rare exceptions, is always the least informed. (Fantuzzi 1994, 172–173)

Notes

1 In the published screenplay (Fellini 1981, 85–86), unlike in the finished film, the name of the Dominican American Thomas Merton emerges several times in the dialogue between Steiner and Marcello; Merton's books on spirituality, including *The Seven Storey Mountain* (1948), were then very well-known in the Catholic circles in Italy. A formal and semantic analysis of this sequence, with certain observations similar to mine, is found in Sewell 2001.

2 We must not forget that Fellini himself directed, starting from the 1980s, five commercials for Italian television, characterized by highly parodic tones. As Burke (2011, 207) notes:

> There must have also been a certain aesthetic appeal for Fellini in directing television commercials. The numerous spots and other short televisual pieces that he filmed during the making of *Ginger e Fred* reveal a strong attraction to the abbreviated format characteristic of television advertising. More important, he had started his career as a cartoonist (as well as a journalist), learning to condense complex expression into extremely limited space, and he continued to exercise that skill virtually till his death in the countless sketches he drew in preparation for his films and in frequent illustration of his dreams. In turning to commercials, he was both returning to his roots and transforming what had become a daily artistic exercise into cinematic form.

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Peter Greenaway

[The] disassociation between plot and image may be the secret of Fellini's extravagant success as a filmmaker. His poetic imagery is not illustrational. Thanks to his particular talent, initially honed with a pen or pencil in his hand, coupled with a dubious regard for text as an Italian cinematic principle, Fellini may have been one of the last silent film directors, and by imperative necessity that means he has to inform us via images.

Magic Realism before Magic Realism. In: La memoria di Federico Fellini sullo schermo del cinema mondiale *(Rimini: Fondazione Federico Fellini, 2004), 166.*

Paolo Sorrentino

Of Fellini's Roma. *"There is a technical expertise so accomplished as to end up having an emotional impact. In the sequence on the Grande Raccordo Annulare (the "great ring road"), the way sound is used, with the deliberate jumbling together of events, as though on one rainy afternoon, anything could happen […]. The way he makes you believe this, when we all know it is impossible that so much could happen. All that is the fruit not just of boundless imagination but of organizational skill and great know-how. Plus the fact that it was done on a staged set, 100 yards long, going back and forth […].*

The English text has been slightly altered by the editors to be more consistent with the Italian original.

https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/4346-paolo-sorrentino-on-fellini-s-roma.

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Fellini's Visual Style(s): A Phenomenological Account

Hava Aldouby

In the vast literature on the cinema of Federico Fellini, Fellini's style and "look" have been addressed in terms, such as "excess," the baroque, the neobaroque, and the surreal (both broadly and with reference to surrealist painting).[1] Many, though not all, of these attributions have been casual and have not considered the full significance of terms such as "baroque" and "surreal" in relation to the film director's style. Partly in response, *Federico Fellini: Painting in Film, Painting on Film* (Aldouby 2013) sought to examine Fellini's work within the context of painting, fleshing out the links between the director and visual traditions to which his work is connected. The study highlighted a painterly suggestiveness that emerged in the middle period of Fellini's career. Pointing out Fellini's ongoing—though rarely explicit—recourse to art historical sources, the book investigated Fellini's reliance on painterly surfaces and evocative *mises-en-scène* that call forth old-master paintings. A central claim was that, through painterly evocation, Fellini's films could provoke sensations that enhance, or in other cases counterpoint, other dimensions of the film. Building upon that work, this essay investigates Fellini's visual style—or styles—from a phenomenological point of view, in relation to the evocative power of his visual universe.

The visual signature of Fellini's films is marked by tripartite periodization during his four-decade career (see Aldouby 2013): (1) the black-and-white period, ending with *8½* (1963); (2) color between *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965) and *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976); and (3) color between *Prova d'orchestra* (*Orchestra Rehearsal* 1978) and *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1993). His oeuvre-long quest for unmediated engagement between viewer and film —seeking a mode of engagement anchored in sensorimotor arousal—can be addressed through similar periodization: intense employment of the foreground, primarily in the black-and-white films; *effetto dipinto* (Costa 1993) in the painterly middle period; and a recourse to plastic, vapor, and other forms of material excess, in the third and last period.

In Fellini's "style of excess," John Stubbs (2006, 3) has identified an arsenal of tactics aimed at defamiliarizing, surprising, and disorienting film viewers. Among them, Stubbs lists disjunctive editing, layered compositions, disproportionate size relations, objects in the frame that interfere with the central action, and undecipherable shots featuring unrecognizable figures or situations (29). These and other visual tactics invite discussion with respect to phenomenological film theory and recent neurocognitive studies that look at viewers' engagement with art and film. While incomprehensible images or scenes, often attributed to Fellini's cinema, challenge top-down

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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cognitive processing, my concern lies with bodily engagement with film—with "a general attitude toward the cinema that the human body enacts in particular ways: haptically, at the tender surface of the body; kinaesthetically and muscularly, in the middle dimension of muscles, tendons, and bones…; and viscerally, in the murky recesses of the body, where heart, lungs, pulsing fluids, and firing synapses receive, respond to, and reenact the rhythms of cinema" (Barker 2009, 3). I thus assign a crucial role to sensorimotor rather than cognitive disorientation—and to haptic engagement rather than interpretation—thereby focusing the discussion on the viewer's body and the phenomenology of engagement with Fellini's films, rather than the cerebral puzzlement they might elicit.

In this regard, Gumbrecht's (2004) concept of aesthetic *presence effect* is useful, dialectically related to *meaning effect* and in constant flux. Presence effect implies intense sensory and affective arousal (2004, 98), a mode of aesthetic engagement where connection is forged "with a layer in our existence that simply wants the things of the world close to our skin" (106). Gumbrecht emphasizes the "eventness" of the sensation of presence, which "undoes itself as it emerges," masked as it is, in our culture, by "clouds and cushions of meaning" (113). Eventness, I would argue, renders the presence aspect of aesthetic experience doubly challenging, its fleeting nature calling for an effort to find the terms with which to address it. As Keith Moxey (2008) has noted, a shift in the conception of the ontology of images now "adds the dimension of presence to our understanding of the image, calling for analyses of media and form that add richness and texture to established forms of interpretation" (142). Gumbrecht's "pledge against the systematic bracketing of presence, and against the uncontested centrality of interpretation" (2004, XV), may be creatively implemented through current neurocognitive studies related to body ownership and embodied empathy.

Crammed Foregrounds, Black-and-white Contrast, and Noir Aesthetics

In Fellini's films, particularly those of the first group, much happens in the foreground. Often, the in-depth view is obstructed by figures, or rather parts of figures, in close-up, truncated by the frame borders. Figures either push forward from the depth of the frame into the foreground, filling it up, or elements enter the frame from the sides, in close-up, blocking the view of the action in deep space. (See Vanelli's discussion of "di quinta" framing in this volume.) Either way, the foreground assumes overwhelming weight. In Cabiria's pilgrimage to the shrine of the Divino Amore (*Le notti di Cabiria / Nights of Cabiria* 1957), a crowd fills the foreground in medium shot, with occasional cuts to extreme high angle views. The intense motion in the frame is rendered in a medium shot of people crossing from screen left to right and vice versa, accentuating the chaotic intensity of the scene. At a certain point, the camera crosses the axis, now facing the crowd that pushes forward through the gate, directly toward the viewer. At this moment, we are invited to engage up close with taut faces and nervous arm movements.

La dolce vita (1960) and *8½* demonstrate the second mode of activating the foreground, where objects or figures enter the foreground from the margins, rather than pushing outward from within the shot's deep space. Many such moments occur in the daytime sequence at the baths in *8½*. A case in point is when Daumier's back and arm fill the frame in a compelling close up, allowing only a partial view of Guido's bowed head through a quadrangular aperture on the bottom right (see Figure 20.1). Rather than being focused on the protagonist, our tactile sensibility is aroused by the crumpled material of Daumier's jacket. At the same time, Guido's ear is suggestively framed, as if to point to the sonic, besides the haptic, as yet another sensory channel that is crucial to the film's somatosensory appeal.

Figure 20.1 Guido framed by Daumier's back and arm. *Source*: *8½* (1963). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Cineriz and Francinex. Frame grab captured by Frank Burke from the 2009 Blu-ray version.

An example from the second group of Fellini's films occurs when Giulietta and her company walk back from the beach through a grove. Tree trunks, branches, and leaves take primacy in the foreground, erecting a palpable screen between the viewer and the group, rendered in deep focus. The same happens in *8½*, when Daumier, entering Guido's hotel room, is filmed through a patterned partition that screens him from view. The shot compels attention to the pattern in the foreground, while sensorimotor arousal is augmented by the struggle to get hold of the figure through the screen. Again, in *Giulietta degli spiriti*, gauzy screens filter the circus scene, assigning primacy to surface and texture over depth. The effect of these screens exceeds the conventional association of haziness with memory or dream states. In phenomenological terms, the screens transform the cinematic space into a set of tangible textured surfaces. We see little Giulietta gazing, through a semi-opaque screen, at dark-skinned strongmen entering from the frame lines, filling the foreground with a compelling, sensual presence. Through this device, Giulietta's memory is brought closer to the body of the viewer. It is made palpable, or "presentified," to draw on Gumbrecht's terminology (2004, 20).

According to Carroll and Seeley (2013, 59), "[m]ovies function as attentional engines intentionally designed to focus perception on those aspects of the depictive scaffolding of shots and scenes *diagnostic for their narrative content and meaning*" (emphasis mine). Fellini's films, however, require an approach that takes into account more than a set of "diagnostic cues" assembled into "a coherent and unified … global narrative model" (Carroll and Seeley 2013, 71). While these are regarded by Carroll and Seeley as sufficient to fulfil "the related goals of telling and understanding a story" (61), Stubbs (2006, 20) asserts that, rather than providing a coherent and decipherable reality, "the visual strategy [Fellini] has followed is that of giving viewers more than they are accustomed to receive in a movie." Neurocognitive knowledge, brought to bear on phenomenological film theory, may help unpack the nature of this "more."

Since the mid-1990s, phenomenological studies that addressed bodily affective aspects of our engagement with motion pictures have foregrounded sensorimotor stimulation, claiming for it a primary role in film experience (see Barker 2009; Elsaesser and Hagener 2010; Marks 2000, 2002; Shaviro 1993; Sobchack 2004). More recently, cognitive neuroscience has opened up new routes of inquiry seeming to support the phenomenological assertions put forward in these studies. In *Lo schermo empatico: cinema e neuroscienze* (2015), Gallese and Guerra study aspects of cinematography,

such as camera movements and angles, as well as montage, in light of the discovery of mirror neurons. The analyses of Antonioni, Kubrick, and Hitchcock (2012, 2015) by Gallese and Guerra are informed by current neurocognitive knowledge, and by recent empirical work (Heimann et al. 2014).[2]

Embodied engagement with film, as theorized by Gallese (Gallese 2005, Gallese and Guerra 2015), is predicated on a functional brain mechanism for which the term "embodied simulation" (henceforth ES) was coined. Before elaborating on ES, I should note that it builds on the more general assertion that our brain maps a potential "motor space" around our bodies and orientates itself toward it. Tagged "peripersonal," the space in the perimeter within arm's reach allows for planning the body's motor engagement with the surroundings. Visual, tactile, and acoustic information helps the brain model this space and orientate within it (Gallese and Guerra 2015, 52). Thus, our mapping of the space in the vicinity of our body, and the significance we attribute to it, are predicated on motor intentions and anticipations. Studies have shown that peripersonal space is multisensory. It is constituted through the integration of visual, tactile, auditory, and proprioceptive information coming from the entire body (Gallese and Guerra 2015, 52). The crucial point here is that space, and the objects within it, are sensed via bodily processing, rather than exclusively through vision and higher cognitive processing.

Gallese (2005, 41) defined ES as "an automatic, unconscious, and prereflexive functional mechanism … not necessarily the result of a willed and conscious cognitive effort … but rather a basic functional mechanism of our brain." He postulated that, by means of ES, the brain–body system is able to process anticipated engagements with the environment—whether motor, sensory, or affective—"as if," to adopt Antonio Damasio's phrase (2010, 102–103), these engagements were being actually experienced. Briefly, ES theory builds on the discovery of the abovementioned mirror neurons in 1998 (Gallese and Goldman 1998; Rizzolati et al. 1999). This discovery fostered neurocognitive inquiry[3] into cortical neural mechanisms involved in our understanding of the world around us, enabled through motor, tactile, and even affective resonances driven by the mirroring apparatus (Gallese 2005). On the basis of these studies, Gallese and Guerra (2015, 110) hypothesized that ES plays a substantial role in film experience. Furthermore, they opined that the intensity of the experience might be studied on the basis of motor resonances (94), rather than on the exclusive premise of top-down cognitive processing.

This theoretical foundation is helpful in accounting for the effect of the Fellini look, and the sort of engagement it invites. Recall Fellini's recurring use of the foreground as an arena for extreme close-ups of truncated figures, and consider the size of these figures when projected onto a large theater screen (the common viewing medium for much of Fellini's career). Emphasis on foreground, surface, and texture, such as in the gauzy partitions in *Giulietta degli spiriti*, Daumier's jacket in *8½*, or the crowded foregrounds of *Le notti di Cabiria*, persists throughout Fellini's oeuvre.[4] Two additional examples: *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969) begins with a graffiti-covered wall that fills the screen, and *Ginger e Fred* (1986) opens in a crowded train station, with a traveling shot pushing faces into the foreground.

Fellini invests film with an augmented potential for tactile and motor resonances, a compelling haptic dimension that neurocognitive studies may help account for. Even merely anticipated tactile engagement is an actual event of cortical neural activity, overlapping with physical engagement (Ebisch, Ferri, Romani, and Gallese 2014). The anticipation of active touch (i.e., intending to touch) is manifested in a network of cortical circuits involving somatosensory and motor regions, as if the subject were actually performing the action. Fellini's crammed foregrounds and texturally suggestive surfaces invite tactile and motor intentionality and arousal. This mode of somatosensory engagement precedes, and at times overshadows, top-down cognitive processing. It thus exceeds the "diagnosticism" of Carroll and Seeley,

in that it offers superfluous detail whose main function, as I see it, is to privilege bodily arousal over "the needs of narrative understanding" (2013, 65).

Neurocognitive theory offers enhanced insight into the impact of the aforementioned Fellini figures or objects that emerge suddenly from the margins or bottom of the frame. In a night scene in *La strada* (1954), a horse rises startlingly from below, trotting into the deserted street where Gelsomina awaits the return of the jailed Zampanò.[5] The horse enters the frame from the viewer's point of view, causing momentary disorientation. As Gallese and Guerra demonstrate (2015, 207), our perception and reception of film montage resemble the mode in which we perceive and map the world around us, pivoting on the position of our own body. In this regard, the horse's eruption onto the scene manipulates viewers' sensorimotor arousal, owing to the struggle of brain–body system to reorient, or remodel, its disturbed peripersonal space.

In *Giulietta degli spiriti*, a cut from Giulietta in the villa's garden, matched with the direction of Giulietta's gaze, leaps startlingly to a location other than the expected garden fence. A close-up of sand and water culminates in the sudden entry of a ball from screen right. In the absence of an establishing shot, the appearance of the ball remains unexplained for a few seconds. An abrupt cut, still without providing "diagnostic" cues, presents Giulietta's head and face in close-up, against a vermilion backdrop that continues to conceal context or surroundings. Only a subsequent countershot establishes that Giulietta is seated on the beach in the company of friends. A similar type of spatially disorienting editing is employed in the bedroom / graveyard scene in *8½*, where an indoor scene abruptly shifts to an open outdoor space, without transitional cues. Viewer disorientation elicits sensorimotor arousal.

The effect of discontinuous editing such as this may be accounted for in light of a high-density EEG experiment performed at Gallese's lab (Heimann 2015), to investigate the impact of conventional versus disruptive montage on viewers' cortical activity. The experiment hypothesized that violating the 180° law[6] would disturb sensorimotor anticipations, causing a need to readapt. Subjects were shown two video clips, one edited according to the 180° law, while the other violated it (198). Where violation of the 180° law disturbed spatial consistency, activity was detected in a cortical location known to be active when controlling and correcting our actions. Gallese attributes these results to the viewers' brains detecting an action that did not conform to sensorimotor expectations fostered by the preceding scene (203). The brain treated this as an aberration that required a reorientation in space. Interestingly, the two obverse conditions of the experiment (i.e. disruptive / nondisruptive montage) affected only the cortical activation related to execution and observation of motor actions, and did not affect circuits related to visual attention (Heimann 2015, 207). In light of this, it is reasonable to assume that when the horse in *La strada* suddenly emerges as if from beneath the ground, or when the ball emerges from the side of the frame in *Giulietta degli spiriti*, the brain apparatus responsible for spatial positioning is called upon to readapt, compelling sensorimotor arousal that does not necessarily involve higher-order cognitive processing. In Fellini's hands, disorienting shot sequencing becomes a versatile tool. While disruption may have a "meaning effect" in Gumbrecht's sense (signaling, for example, "alienation," or "displacement"), it can often undermine the apparent discursive meaning of a shot or sequence of shots.

In both cases, the uncanny assumes somatosensory immediacy. Distrusting the affective power of the narrative alone, Fellini's films use figures, objects, and surfaces that appear suggestively within tactile reach to arouse the viewer's mode of engagement. While to a certain extent this can be said about film in general, certain filmmakers, more than others, privilege formal tactics that augment embodied engagement. At times, particularly in experimental or avant-garde cinema, this comes at the expense of narrative clarity. This might be said of certain Fellini films as well, when they tip the scale toward somatosensory engagement, optimizing film's potential to arouse compelling presence effects.

There is a flip side to Fellini's crammed foregrounds: the strangely vacant urban spaces that recur in his black-and-white films. These spaces, as well as their dramatic lighting, bear a haptic potency, or somatic appeal, comparable to those of Fellini's "overcrowded" shots.

Night scenes where Cabiria plies her trade seem, at moments, wrested from the flow of life and transported to an otherworldly setting. Also at night, we see Cabiria's shanty home, surrounded by an empty lot where half-naked children in strange hoods, looking like stick figures, play a weird game in the far background. The uncanniness of these Fellini spaces, in a film on which Piero Gherardi served as production designer, stands in marked contrast to the busy and conventional urban environments of a film such as *Padri e figli* (*A Tailor's Maid*, Mario Monicelli 1957), on which Gherardi served in the same capacity.

Several night scenes in *Cabiria*, such as the group scene in Cabiria's "workplace," are characterized by extreme contrast in lighting. Most of the frame is in a dark noir style, while dramatic back or side lighting hints at uncanny encounters. Dramatic backlighting recurs in the hypnotist scene, endowing Cabiria with auratic radiance. Maurice, the magician in *8½*, appears as a dark silhouette with an enigmatic halo. Susy, the circus beauty who captivates Giulietta's grandfather, makes her first appearance in *Giulietta degli spiriti* as a dark silhouette in front of a piercing white light.

Fellini augments the contrast between black and white through costumes and makeup. Cabiria, like Gelsomina in *La strada*, wears black-and-white stripes, contrasted with white zones in the frame. Cabiria's makeup, and even more so Gelsomina's, is graphically drawn in black-and-white. Fellini's contrastive look stands out in comparison with the rich and balanced grey scales of non-Fellini films on which his visual collaborators worked: *La fortuna di essere donna* (*What a Woman!*, Alessandro Blasetti 1956), with Otello Martelli serving, as he did for *La strada*, as director of photography, and the Gherardi-designed *Padri e figli*.

Resonances of film noir are unmistakable, but Fellini's aesthetic choices exceed mere cinematic evocation. From a phenomenological point of view, Fellini's emphatic black-and-white and light/dark contrasts, as well as the ominously empty spaces, are no less haptically effective than the intensely occupied foregrounds discussed earlier. Both appeal to viewers' tactile and motor sensibilities, demanding bodily attention and feedback to deal with environments that are sensed as disturbing, disorienting, or just exaggerated with respect to more familiar reality.

Introduction of Color, and Effetto Dipinto

The aesthetic tactics discussed above remain in use throughout Fellini's career. At the same time, the haptic effectiveness of his visuals gains in strength when color is introduced. Filming in color was a decision partially induced by Fellini's growing interest in depth psychology and the role of the unconscious in the creative process. Conceiving film in *Fare un film* in terms of "great painting" (Fellini 1974, 93), he made explicit an analogy between the painter at his easel and the film director behind the camera, stating that the director should control color like a painter (95–96). *Giulietta degli spiriti* opens a phase in Fellini's oeuvre where painting assumed a fundamental role. Useful to our discussion is the concept of effetto dipinto, coined by Antonio Costa (1993) to address cinematic evocations of painting. Costa divides the concept into the subcategories of *effetto pitturato* and *effetto quadro*. Effetto pitturato indicates the effect produced by perceptibly painted sets. Effetto quadro, which could translate as "painting effect" (vs. effetto pitturato as "painted effect"), points to cases in which film evokes or explicitly cites specific paintings. Effetto quadro may also evoke iconographic or compositional traits characteristic of a particular painter or an art historical school, or even a genre such as still life or portrait painting (Costa 1993, 155–157).[7]

Here I would like to point out a useful correspondence between Gumbrecht's (2004) binary "presence/meaning effect" and Costa's dichotomous notion of effetto dipinto. In the present frame of discussion, "meaning effect" may be conceived in terms of art historical reference, or effetto quadro, while "presence effect" would function through effetto pitturato, which drives viewers' bodily engagement.

With effetto pitturato, the haptic acquires a new dimension in Fellini's cinema. As discussed earlier, film's appeal to sensorimotor attention is mediated by foregrounds and surfaces that elicit anticipations of motor and tactile engagement. Effetto pitturato is primarily manifest on walls, screens, and draperies, of which *Giulietta degli spiriti* provides several examples. In the school theater sequence, the walls and other elements of décor are painted in a markedly monochrome palette of ochres, whites, and greys, applied with large, visible brushstrokes. Giulietta and her schoolmates' dresses, of a faded yellowish white hue, echo the painterly look of their ambience. The artificiality and painterliness of the scene are underscored by heavy makeup, which according to the script was to look "cadaver-like" (Fellini 1975, 428). In terms of effetto quadro, this film seems to draw on Italian symbolist painting. The divisionism of Gaetano Previati (1852–1920) is of particular relevance, whose muted chromatic key, grainy texture, and rejection of deep space resonate in the scenes under scrutiny (Aldouby 2013, 27). Fellini's schoolgirls, winged and dressed in yellowish white, speak to Previati's female types, especially the submissive "brides of God" in *The Funeral of a Virgin* (1895) and *The Assumption* (1901–1903). Not only the typology of the figures but also the color scheme and painterliness of these memory scenes echo Previati's low-keyed coloring and grainy texture (Aldouby 2013, 28–29).

These scenes may indeed be traced back to particular paintings. Giulietta's final confrontation with the spirits takes places in an uncannily tiny room (see Figure 20.2), accessed through a

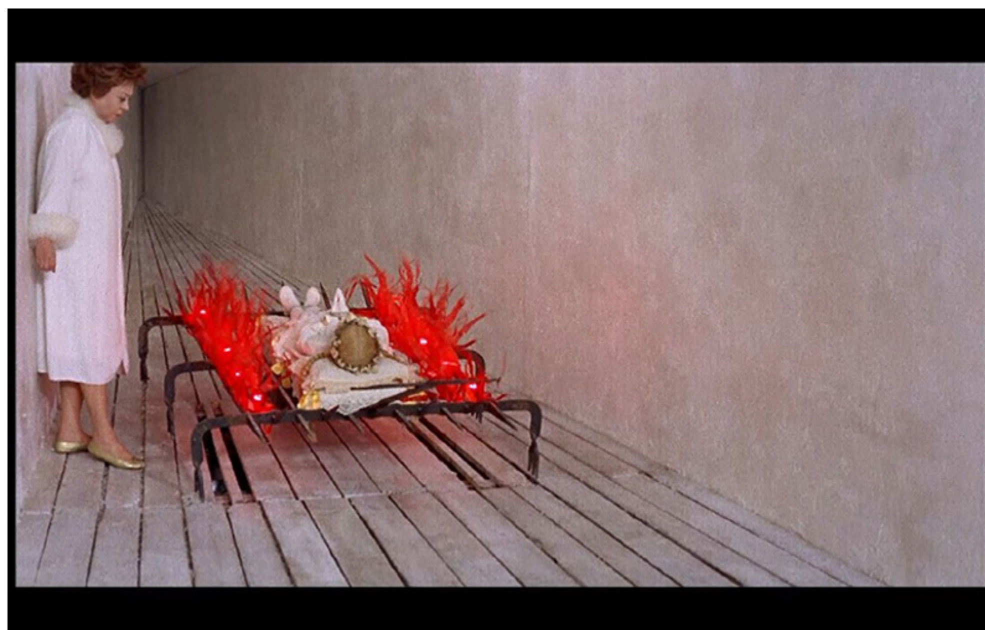

Figure 20.2 Giulietta's hallucinatory claustrophobic room, reminiscent of Max Ernst's *The Master's Bedroom*. *Source*: *Giulietta degli spirit* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Rizzoli Film. Frame grab captured by Frank Burke from the 2018 Blu-ray version.

miniature door that calls to mind the protosurrealist imagery of *Alice in Wonderland*. The sharply converging walls and floorboards are painted grey, with visible brush strokes, linking this room with the school theater's yellowish-grey tones. Color, or rather paint, links the two scenes, both of which are evocative of early trauma. The presence of young Giulietta in the miniscule room, tied to the grill that was in the theater scene, clinches the connection. Looking at the effetto quadro in this scene, we might think of *The Master's Bedroom* (1921) by the surrealist painter and collagist Max Ernst. *The Master's Bedroom* features similarly converging walls and floorboards (which themselves hark back to the paintings of Giorgio De Chirico), and the same greyish color scheme. Spatial incoherence reigns through improbable proportions, and the laws of physics do not apply, as indicated by the floorboards that are simultaneously liquid and solid. As discussed by Haim Finkelstein (2008, 145), Ernst's painting conveys a concept of the psyche as a layered space. This concept was predicated on psychoanalytical theory and its spatial concept of the psychic apparatus, which the artist made visually concrete. *The Master's Bedroom* forges a pictorial space that suggests an experience of probing through layered barriers, deep into the forbidden sight of some repressed infantile scene.

A close affinity is discernible between Ernst's painting and Giulietta's claustrophobic memory space. The room traps her, together with her "spirits," between its converging walls. The impact is achieved simultaneously through effetto pitturato and effetto quadro. The former functions through the textural suggestiveness of the walls and floorboards. Sensorimotor arousal is enhanced by the bizarrely shaped space, whose sense of entrapment calls for bodily reorientation. The shots of Giulietta in the miniscule room present a strong somatic appeal, irrespective of whether viewers are able to recognize the particular art-historical reference. On the other hand, effetto quadro, or art-historical referencing, is where Gumbrecht's "meaning effect" would come into play.[8]

Through the decade and a half that followed *Giulietta degli spiriti*, Fellini privileged painterly and pictorial suggestiveness. "Toby Dammit" (episode of *Histoires extraordinaires/Spirits of the Dead* 1968), *Fellini - Satyricon,* and *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* reach the acme of effetto pitturato and effetto quadro in Fellini's oeuvre. Toby Dammit's delirious entry into the city of Rome is suffused with an orange-tinted fog that engulfs the sequence, blocking cinematic depth.[9] Shot from the inside, the car windows become opaque canvases, while outside reflections merge with the passengers' hazy faces, in a succession of "moving pictures."

At a certain point, the camera frames the rear of a truck, revealing hanging bovine carcasses and a man standing next to them, barely perceptible—an enigmatic image filtered through the grainy orange hue. This shot brings into play both effetto pitturato and effetto quadro. In terms of the former, the beef carcasses are pushed to the foreground of a framed, rectangular structure. Two metal bars and opaque black background obstruct depth, intensifying the sense of painterliness that prevails in the shot. Framing the image, the truck's flapping wrap evokes a spread-armed torso. Although the frame reveals a road on the left of the truck, and a blurred cityscape on the right, color saturation distinguishes the central image in intense ochre and red from the monochrome images on the sides, which merge into the yellow mist. The camera faces the rear of the truck and abruptly cuts away before the body of the vehicle becomes visible. Depth is avoided; the image is flattened in a way that suggests a painting.

In terms of effetto quadro, this shot invokes Rembrandt's *Slaughtered Ox* (1655), which portrays a dark slaughterhouse interior, with a flayed ox hanging spread-eagled on a rectangular wooden fixture while a barely discernible maid peeps from behind a half-open door. As early as 1965, scriptwriter Brunello Rondi (19) remarked on Fellini's profound interest in Rembrandt's "favolosa tragicità." Two monographs on Rembrandt, found in Fellini's private library, point to his interest and acquaintance with the master's work (Aldouby 2013, 58). Rembrandt's masterpiece

has reverberated in modern art, from Soutine's beef paintings of the 1920s and 1930s to Francis Bacon's paintings, in which the bloody sides of beef often serve as background for human suffering and torture. As I have argued (2013, 57–62), "Toby Dammit" resonates powerfully with the iconography of butchered meat. Relying on the compelling power of painting, and on the particular paintings indicated above, Fellini condenses the scene envisioned in the script—in which a butcher shop was to be featured (Fellini 1968, 76)—into a painterly image framed briefly by the camera. Again, it should be pointed out that somatosensory engagement takes place independently of the specific art-historical reference. This dimension of the encounter with the film serves to augment the sense of unease, even anxiety, vis-à-vis the disturbing imagery of Toby's hallucinatory car ride. At the same time, the art-historical reference adds an important layer of signification to top-down processing.

Interestingly, only three months after Fellini finished shooting "Toby Dammit," Pasolini began work on *Teorema* (1968), in which he filmed printed reproductions of Francis Bacon's "meat" and other paintings. *Teorema* was filmed in Rome after "Toby Dammit" had been projected in Cannes. This close circumstantial proximity calls for a comparative look at Pasolini's treatment of Francis Bacon's paintings in light of Fellini's shot of butchered meat.

Teorema features Terence Stamp, Fellini's lead actor for "Toby Dammit," in the role of a mysterious Visitor upsetting the life of a bourgeois household. In the sequence of shots under consideration, the Visitor is seated on a bed beside the son of the host family with whom he is involved in a homosexual liaison. The two are leafing through an illustrated monograph on Francis Bacon, and the paintings that fill the frame are occasionally intercut with reaction shots of the younger boy's anxious expression. The camera lingers for several minutes over Bacon's *Two Figures in the Grass* (1954), and then on *Two Figures* (1953). Special weight is given to the reaction shots of the boy's facial expression, as he examines the screaming creatures in *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* or the bloody meat parts in *Painting 1946*.

While *Teorema* and "Toby Dammit" appear to engage similarly in an endeavor to incorporate painting into film, they diverge sharply in the formal devices employed. Unlike Fellini, Pasolini films actual paintings, or, to be more accurate, printed reproductions. Recognizable both as "paintings" and as "Bacons," his images function as cultural signifiers. Fellini's concerns, by contrast, lie far from cultural coding, or the film/painting dialectic, with which Pasolini engages via quotation, appropriation, and tableau vivant. The three art-historical intertexts—Rembrandt, Soutine, and Bacon—embedded in Fellini's meat shot are not distinctly marked as units of painting within an essentially cinematic text. Neither are they brought to attention via tableau vivant, as in "La ricotta" (*Ro.Go.Pa.G.* 1968) or *Il Decameron* (1971), again by Pasolini. In Fellini, painterly suggestiveness and haptic appeal prevail over cultural signification. At the heart of his effetto dipinto, painting functions as a conduit to sensorimotor and affective arousal. In terms of phenomenological film theory, it taps the condition where film "make[s] sense on the surface of the skin" (Barker 2009, 25). Fellini, in other words, anchors film affect in the viewer's body.

Il Casanova di Federico Fellini (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976) provides fertile ground for further discussion of effetto dipinto and art-historical reference. A night scene in which Casanova, a solitary figure holding a candle, stands on the shore of a miniscule island awaiting a mysterious emissary, evokes Arnold Böcklin's painting, *The Isle of the Dead* (1880), in which there is a tall shrouded figure standing in a boat and another seated and rowing. Fellini's script strongly evokes Böcklin's ghostly figure: "Casanova … sees … a gondola approaching. Inside there is a human figure standing up, motionless, almost a phantasm." The film, however, loosens the link with the painting. The standing human figure becomes Casanova on the shore, not in the boat, with the rower alone seaborne. Böcklin's shrouding now extends to the latter, enveloped in a huge nun's wimple.

Effetto pitturato is created by the flatness of the thin strip of land that constitutes the miniature island, and by the background that is obviously painted. Casanova seems just one element of a depthless depiction on canvas, an impression enhanced by the blatantly plastic sea. The silhouette of the rower, a "cutout" occupying over 25% of the frame, contributes to the flatness of the scene.

Despite its earlier association with Nazi Kitsch, Böcklin's work was resurfacing in public and received critical attention in the 1970s. Fellini would have been aware of the revival either directly or through the mediation of his painter friend Fabrizio Clerici, who in 1974, coinciding with Fellini's initial work on *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, launched a series of nine paintings in which Böcklin's *Isle of the Dead* constituted a central motif (Aldouby 2013, 126–127).

In terms of meaning effect, conjured via effetto quadro, this scene might be reconceptualizing Fellini's shallow womanizer as "a great solitary man," a romantic theme central to *Isle of the Dead* (Brummer 2000, 30). Yet the complexity of Fellini's modifications belies such a simple inference. Fellini replaced the rock necropolis of the original with a structure that looks like a small temple or place of worship, enriching the art-historical mesh of references and recalling the curtained temple in the background of de Chirico's *The Seer* (1915), and the temple of Apollo in the same painter's *The Enigma of the Oracle* (1910). Fellini thus interweaves the mysterious figures of de Chirico's paintings with Böcklin's motionless silhouette. There is also a similarity between the image of Casanova ashore and the shrouded figure in yet another Böcklin painting, *Odysseus and Calypso* (1883).

On the one hand, the divergent significations embodied by Böcklin, perhaps even the connotation of Nazi kitsch, resonate strongly with Fellini's representation of Casanova, whom the director viewed as a proto-Fascist (Fellini 1975, 30–31), as well as with the *anni di piombo* (years of left- and right-wing terrorism) in which *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* was made. However, in the end, the multiplicity of allusion, coupled with the visual and aural intensity of the scene, point to a frustration of simple meaning effect and tilt the scene in the direction of multisensory engagement rather than intellectual apprehension or interpretation.

Plastic Seas and Other Material excesses

Accordingly, artificial hazes, and mists and sheets of plastic gradually replace effetto dipinto as Fellini's preferred means of achieving haptic power. Plastic sheets, blown and ruffled by a mechanical apparatus, introduced in *Amarcord* (1973) and exposed in the finale of *E la nave va* (*And the Ship Sails On* 1983), become a central trope of Fellini's late look, in conjunction with heavy, artificial vapors through which figures and objects become barely discernible, as if they were located in an unnavigable, Deleuzian "smooth space." Much like the jammed foregrounds in Fellini's black-and-white films, or the semi-transparent screens and painted walls in *Giulietta degli spiriti*, the mist conceals while it "presentifies" (Gumbrecht 2004). Denying a clear view of the narrative occurrence, the mist draws attention to "the viscous, equivocal appearances" that, in Merleau-Ponty's terms (1945 / 1993, 68), constitute a blind spot for conventional representation.

The plastic sea and the veil of mist thus offer surplus materiality with which Fellini's viewers are invited to engage through sensorimotor resonances. Where narrative information is filtered through painted screens, mist, grain, and plastic sheets, the agility demanded of the brain–body system entails arousal of those bodily senses responsible for our "feeling of *having* (proprioception) and *moving* (kinaesthesia) *a body*" (Paterson 2012, 476). In phenomenological terms, it translates into Gumbrecht's definition for presence effect (2004, 106).

In *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, the device of the plastic sea, enhanced by lighting, motion, and sound, gives new impetus to Fellini's somatosensory provocations. When Casanova rows against

a fierce, though artificial, wind, the sound is that of rustling plastic sheets. Paradoxically, the sound *is* realistic, in that it conveys the particular materiality at work. While this obviously underscores the contrivance, at the same time there is no escaping the sensory effect of the sound and the texture. These are compellingly suggestive. The lighting reflected off the synthetic surface, and the sound of crisp plastic sheets rustling against mechanically decompressed air, anticipating sensory and motor engagement. The film thereby doubles its appeal to the sensory modalities that form our essential sense of presence, the sense of occupying a body in space. In a sense, the sea, as referent, is itself presentified in the process, becoming more accessible to the senses precisely at the point where the illusion is apparently broken and the cinematic apparatus exposed.[10]

The thick haze, vapor, or mist fosters spatial disorientation, thus inviting heightened motor agility and anticipation of tactile stimulation. In *Roma*, the clerical fashion show takes place amid a cloud of what appears to be white smoke. Vapor fills the space around and between the parts of the ghostly, hollow costumes. In *Amarcord*, a dense fog disorients the grandfather, to the point that he believes he is dead. For the child Titta, the fog occasions an eerie encounter with a long-horned white bull. The scene is barely explicable even in the loosely wrought narrative of *Amarcord*. It is as if the mist functions primarily as a privileged vehicle of sensory stimulation. In *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, dense fog engulfs the London scenes, and Casanova approaches the bizarre fair, or freak show, wading slowly in an obscure ambience devoid of orienting detail. In *Ginger e Fred*, an outlandish scene evolves in the desolate precincts of the Hotel Manager, where members of the grotesque assortment, gathered for a Christmas TV show, dance in a cloud of mist (see Figure 20.3). They are followed from afar by Giulietta Masina, as Ginger, performing a little dance in the hotel entrance in an unmistakable nod to the night scene of Cabiria dancing, in a world of her own, in *Le notti di Cabiria*. The fog brings us back 30 years to the misty, noir-ish look

Figure 20.3 Fellini's fondness for fog in the third phase of his career. *Source*: *Ginger e Fred* (1986). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Produzioni Europee Associati (PEA). Frame grab captured by Hava Aldouby from the 2007 DVD version.

and loose spatial organization of the figures in the earlier film—despite the fact that the cinematic means have undergone major changes and elaborations. While *Le notti di Cabiria* invites somatosensory engagement through gripping black-and-white contrasts and compelling use of the foreground, *Ginger e Fred* builds on an excess of grotesque detail. The film immerses the viewer in heavy makeup, shiny garments, and exposed skin and flesh, both human and animal, proffering a strong invitation to engage. Whether this material richness induces an implicit desire to touch, or rather aversion and repulsion, tactile and motor sensibilities are central to the experience.

That, in short, is the "Fellini look," reexamined from a phenomenological perspective and thus, arguably, reconfigured as the "Fellini e/affect." Seeking to exceed the boundaries of interpretation, this perspective promises insight into the potency of haptic appeal, channels of somatic communication, and invitations to sensorimotor activation offered by Fellini's cinema. In the last two decades, we have become better equipped to study and understand aesthetic engagement, through bottom-up processes. Behavioral, physiological, and neurocognitive studies constitute the field of inquiry known as experimental aesthetics, which aims to corroborate phenomenological theories. As Moxey (2008) indicated, we are witnessing a "[r]enewed interest in the presence of objects—in their capacity to outrun the meanings attributed to them by generations of interpreters" (135).

While the combined phenomenological/experimental approach may be criticized (Wolff 2012) as interfering with the study of "meaning effects," interrogation of Fellini's specific ways of augmenting haptic engagement is crucial to fully engaging the compelling grip of his films as aesthetic objects. The experience gained may, in turn, pave the way for new understandings of the hermeneutic challenges posed by Fellini's cryptic scenarios, uncanny characters, transgressive images, and polysemic language.

Notes

1 For the use of these terms, see Stubbs 2006, generally, and 3 and 28; Calvino 1974, xxii; Angelucci 1993, 187; Agel 1956, cited in Stubbs 2006, 259; Degli-Esposti 1996; and Bondanella 1992, 303.

2 Raz and Hendler (2014, 96) also postulated a mode of cinematic address that involves "automatic resonance of [a] visceral state," as opposed to higher-order cognitive experience that, in turn, involves "cognitively driven simulation of another's state." These two modalities are activated by *eso*- and *para*-dramatic cues, the terms of Raz and Hendler for formal cinematic devices, such as camera movement and montage, which facilitate either the visceral or the cognitive dimension of film experience.

3 To emphasize, I am not referring to cognitive theory (or "theory of mind"), which is basically about top-down processing. Neurocognitive theories such as those of Gallese attend to different strata of experience.

4 Notably, despite visible changes in style, this aspect of Fellini's visuals does not seem to be affected by the shift in production designers, from Gherardi to Danilo Donati, and finally to Dante Ferretti.

5 This feature has been noted by Stubbs, in the frame of Fellini's "style of excess" (2006, 29). Here it will be accounted for in the terms proposed above.

6 Editors' note: the "180° rule" is based on the assumption that, for clarity's sake, two characters in a scene should maintain the same left–right relationship to each another. This relationship is maintained by the camera remaining on one side of an imaginary axis between two characters. When the camera passes over the invisible axis connecting the two subjects, "violating the rule," it is called crossing the line and the shot becomes what is called a reverse angle (see Indie Film Hustle).

7 Costa has remarked upon Fellini's employment of effetto pitturato. At the same time, he overlooked effetto quadro, which plays a key role in Fellini's films of the period under discussion.

8 Fellini could have devised painting-like scenes that would have achieved a similar phenomenological effect, without having recourse to particular paintings or art-historical sources. Apparently, he did have recourse to specific works of art, which resonate in certain frame compositions, tonality, and textures.

This chapter addresses primarily the formal and phenomenological aspects of these choices. Aldouby (2013) offers extensive deliberation on Fellini's embedded art-historical references and their cultural contexts.

9 Piero Tosi, the film's set designer, remembers that Fellini provided him with a portion of hashish before sending him out on a drive along the road from the airport to take random photographs of whatever he saw on the way (Aldouby 2005). Considering Fellini's experimentation with LSD at that period, as part of his deep engagement with the mysteries of the psyche, we might surmise that he conceived the car ride sequence as a voyage through a distraught, drug-affected, artist's mind (Tosi said he never touched the hashish).

10 I thank Frank Burke for drawing my attention to this aspect of engagement with the plastic sea.

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21

The Liquid Hyperfilm: Fellini, Deleuze, and the Sea as Forza Generatrice

Amy Hough-Dugdale

> I was born in a city by the sea, Rimini; I lived and very often worked in a town by the sea, Fregene. So, for me the sea is an obligatory setting, an ancient vision, a deeply rooted dimension. Indeed, it appears again and again in almost all my films, but not only as a place of memory, like scenery or a backdrop: rather like a *forza generatrice* of ghosts, invaders, hallucinations, motionless magic. It's a blue, gray, or dark line on the horizon; an approach to a mute panorama, a path that leads to nowhere.
>
> (Federico Fellini, quoted in Tornabuoni 1982, emphasis mine)

While rarely featured as his films' main setting, the sea makes brief appearances throughout Fellini's repertoire in scenes that seem to lap at each other like waves. *La strada* (1954), for example, ends with Zampanò collapsing on the beach, an image that prefigures Marcello's detached perch on the sand near the end of *La dolce vita* (1960). The lascivious Volpina in *Amarcord* (1973) mirrors the buxom Saraghina in *8½* (1963), both women haunting stretches of the shoreline. The long shot of Titta on the pier at the end of *Amarcord* evokes a similarly composed shot of the five friends staring out to sea in *I vitelloni* (1953), and the brief, up-close shot of the plastic waves in *Amarcord* anticipates the more overtly plastic seascapes in *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976) and *E la nave va* (*And the Ship Sails On* 1983). These scenes resonate with one another interfilmically, communicating most effectively at the level of Fellini's "hyperfilm."

Described by Millicent Marcus (2002, 170, emphasis Marcus) as "the unitary, on-going creative project that links the artist's biography to his cinematic corpus at a relatively high level of abstraction, where the author's *life in filmmaking* comes to coincide with *the film of his life*," the hyperfilm works, according to Marguerite Waller, as a "conceptual matrix within which to read [Fellini's] individual films" (Waller 2002, 19). It thereby also offers itself as a framework within which to read the recurring motif of the sea and the shoreline that Fellini referred to as his "obligatory setting." Conversely, the fluidity of the sea points toward the fluidity of the hyperfilm, the former serving as a kind of *mise en abyme* of the latter.

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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The Hyperfilm as Assemblage

As a "bounded but infinite intertext made up of all of Fellini's films" (Waller 2002, 18), the hyperfilm recalls Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's theory of the *assemblage*. While difficult to define due to its departure from the notions of unity and essence, the assemblage has been described by Deleuze scholar Thomas Nail (2017, 22) as "an arrangement or layout of heterogeneous elements," a multiplicity that is "neither a part nor a whole." An assemblage holds loosely together but is essentially open; its composition determined by mixtures and external relations rather than fixed, inherent qualities. In this sense, an assemblage is always in process, "always free to recombine again and change its nature" (Nail 2017, 23). Assemblage theory is, in effect, an approach to understanding something not by asking what it is or what it means, but "what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 4). If approached as an assemblage, Fellini's hyperfilm is no longer a fixed form comparable to a Platonic ideal (Marcus 2002, 170), but a fluid multiplicity in continual transformation.

Why should we, as film-viewers[1] and scholars, consider the hyperfilm-assemblage to be a critical framework when engaging with Fellini's work? For one, Deleuze wrote about Fellini's cinema as particularly performative of his concept of the crystal-image. The crystal-image makes "time itself" (Deleuze 1989, 82) visible, time as "split[ing] in two dissymmetrical jets, one which makes all the present pass on, while the other preserves all the past" (81). Deleuze puts it another way: "What we see in the crystal is always the bursting forth of life, of time, in its dividing in two or differentiation" (91). While it is not within the scope of this paper to address the topic of time in depth, I will take up a discussion of life and *élan* vital, and I believe Deleuze's pairing of the words "life" and "time" suggests their likeness for his philosophy of cinema.

Another reason to approach Fellini's work as a hyperfilm / assemblage is that Fellini approached his life and work this way himself. He spoke about the importance of being "open to life" (Chandler 2001, 93) and "liv[ing] spherically—in many directions" (97), indicating his willingness to be shaped by what he encountered.[2] This was an attribute he brought to his filmmaking as well, explaining that:

> The illness of an actress, which makes it necessary to replace her, a refusal from the producer, an accident that holds up work—all these are not obstacles but elements in themselves, from which a film is made. What exists in the end takes over from what might have existed.... Making a film doesn't mean trying to make reality fit within preconceived ideas; it means being ready for anything that may happen. (Fellini 1976, 100)

Fellini came to understand filmmaking as fluid and improvisational, an open and heterogeneous process that was in turn "metamorphosed" by the multiplicity of what I am here denoting as the hyperfilm-assemblage. "I cannot distinguish my films from one another. For myself, I've always directed the same film" (Fellini 1976, 164), Fellini admits. Each film, then, is a metamorphosis of the "on-going creative project" that sweeps up in its path of becoming Fellini's "life in filmmaking"—dreams, drawings, relationships, interviews, and anything else that implicates or affects his creative process. Even after the director's death, the hyperfilm continues to evolve as film-viewers and scholars engage with the films, and new concepts are born from these interactions.

Rhizomatic Cinema

Waller (2002, 19) draws a comparison between Fellini's hyperfilm and a "cinema of thought and thinking," which refers to Deleuze's project, in his books on cinema, of describing an "image [that] becomes thought, [that] is able to catch the mechanisms of thought" (Deleuze 1995, 52). This thought-image "takes as its object, relations, symbolic acts, [and] intellectual feelings" (Deleuze 1986, 198). Essentially, Deleuze's cinema of thought and thinking departs from classical cinema's reliance on action and linearity, and accesses the more relational, rhizomatic rhythms of the mind. Deleuze and Guattari point out that "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 7). Like an assemblage, the rhizome "has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 25). Comparable, I'd argue, to the plasticity of the brain and its neural network, the rhizome does not have a predetermined evolution but unfolds and connects by way of offshoots.

Deleuze (1995, 149) further elaborates his notion of a cinema of thought:

> cinema doesn't just operate by linking things through rational cuts, but by relinking them through irrational cuts too … there's a hidden image of thought that, as it unfolds, branches out, and mutates, *inspires a need to keep on creating new concepts*, not through any external determinism but through a becoming. (emphasis mine)

Deleuze is concerned with thinking, not as the unveiling of truth, but as the emergence of new concepts. It is as if the cinema discovers a synaptic pattern and momentum that is visible on screen but also implicated offscreen, "hidden" and "unfold[ing]" in the mind of the viewer. In her comparison of Fellini's hyperfilm to a Deleuzian "cinema of thought and thinking," Waller suggests that the creative linking enabled by the filmmaker and that discussed by the philosopher are akin (19). Furthermore, if "the brain is the screen" (Deleuze and McMuhan 1998, 48), as Deleuze declared, and "the screen… can be the tiny deficient brain of an idiot as much as a creative brain" (Deleuze and McMuhan 1998, 49), then approaching Fellini's oeuvre as a hyperfilm-assemblage renders the film-viewer particularly privy to the brain of the filmmaker. That is, the hyperfilm offers access to Fellini's mindscape through its audiovisual evocations of the filmmaker's "creative brain" and its particular artistry.[3]

Images of scaffolding and incomplete structures (see Figure 21.1) in the individual films hint at the existence of this connective and creative hyperfilm. They recur throughout Fellini's filmography, and are very often visually associated with the sea. These "strangely functionless structure[s]" (Harcourt 1966, 11) make their first obvious appearance in *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957) when we see children climbing on a metal framework next to Cabiria's house. We see a similar incomplete structure on the beach at the end of *La dolce vita* as Paola tries and fails to communicate with Marcello above the sound of the wind and sea. What is referred to as the spaceship launching pad on the seaside set of the unfinished film in *8½* is really an enormous scaffold, and in *Amarcord* Volpina attempts to seduce the workers who are laboring at a beach construction site filled with scaffolding and piles of bricks. Additionally, one could argue that a sort of rudimentary version of these incomplete structures already exists in *I vitelloni* in the form of a mangled fence that protrudes into the frame as the five friends walk aimlessly along an empty beach.[4]

But what are these enigmatic structures doing there? According to Peter Harcourt (1966, 1), "questions like that can have no answer on any rational plane." Indeed, to ask what the structures

Figure 21.1 Incomplete structures in *I vitelloni* (1953), *8½* (1963), *La dolce vita* (1960), and *Amarcord* (1973)—and the lighting scaffolds in *Intervista* (1987). *Source*: *I vitelloni* (1953). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Citè Films and Peg-Films. Frame grab captured by Amy Hough-Dugdale from Kanopy on 9 April 2018. *Source*: *8½* (1963). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Cineriz and Francinex. Frame grab captured by Amy Hough-Dugdale from Kanopy on 5 April 2018. *Source*: *La dolce vita* (1960). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Riama Film in coproduction with Cinecittà and Pathé Consortium Cinéma. Frame grab captured by Amy Hough-Dugdale from Amazon on 9 April 2018. *Source*: *Amarcord* (1973). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by F.C. Produzioni and PECF. Frame grab captured from Kanopy by Amy Hough-Dugdale on 5 April 2018. *Source*: *Intervista* (1987). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Aljosha, Cinecittà, RAI—Radiotelevisione Italiana et al. Frame grab captured by Amy Hough-Dugdale from the 2005 DVD version.

are or what they signify would be counterproductive to approaching the hyperfilm as an assemblage. Instead, I would argue that there is a rhizomatic mechanism at work. As open, unfinished forms that gesture toward linking and building, they reach out beyond the individual films and "transmit intensities" among one another. Closely related to the many structures and scaffolds on

which lighting is rigged and which support other aspects of the filmmaking process in *La dolce vita*, *8½*, and *Intervista* (1987), they implicate the "elevated or heightened film" (Marcus 2002, 170) in the process of being made. Furthermore, like Deleuze's "hidden image of thought," the incomplete structures act as signals to the film-viewer that say *build something here*.

While it might appear contradictory to use the term "incomplete structure" in light of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987, 12) opposition of the rhizome to any kind of structure, I play with these words to draw attention to the fact that these "unnecessary construction[s]" (Harcourt 1966, 11) are essentially structures that fail at being structure-like. That is, they are not complete ("neither a part nor a whole"), nor do they have a determined beginning or end. They are, perhaps, "between things, interbeing," or remnants of structures that are pointing to, or becoming, something new. Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 15) suggest that there are "rhizome-root assemblages" and that "a new rhizome may form in the heart of a tree, the hollow of a root, the crook of a branch." Fellini's incomplete structures, in addition to suggesting the actuality of the hyperfilm, also function as visual reminders of arborescent knowledge from which rhizomatic and creative thinking bursts forth.

The *Forza Generatrice*

In short, it is not the created object that matters to Fellini, but rather the process and vitality of creation itself. The driving forces of art and of biological life, for Fellini, are one and the same.

> [With the cinema] I can re-create life in movement, emphasizing it, enlarging it, enhancing it and distilling its true essence. For me, it's closer than music, painting, or even literature to the miraculous creation of life itself. It's actually a new life form, with its own pulse of existence (Chandler 2001, 263).

For Fellini, to create cinema is to create life. He gives us "life as spectacle, and yet in its spontaneity" (Deleuze 1989, 89). Deleuze evokes the palpable vitality of Fellini's films in articulating the "third state" of his crystal-image: "the crystal caught in its formation and growth" (Deleuze 1989, 88). Deleuze also refers to this type of crystal-image as a "seed-image, in the process of being produced," and describes it as the principal mode of "the film which takes itself as its object in the process of its making" (Deleuze 1989, 76). In other words, the seed-image film is saturated with a sense of expansion and often with the unfolding of its own creative process. Deleuze's primary example is, of course, *8½*.[5] However, there are many other examples, as this is "the method that will be increasingly adopted by Fellini" (Deleuze 1989, 88). We might name the final scene of *E la nave va,* when the camera pans to reveal the inner workings of the film's production, or the entirety of *Intervista*, a film that is set at Fellini's beloved film factory, Cinecittà, and stars the director himself.

While the notion of the seed-image is helpful in that it captures the vitality and emergence inherent in Fellini's films, it is unfortunate that the type of growth the word "seed" implies is arborescent rather than rhizomatic. Perhaps this is another way in which the hyperfilm-assemblage works as a critical framework—one in relation to which Deleuze's comments on Fellini can be rhizomatically unpacked. As the seed carries connotations of the arborescent, so the "crystal" evokes rigidity and edges, rather than the fluidity and mutability typically associated with Deleuze's thought. However, if we scratch the surface of Deleuze's crystal, we discover the "gushing of time," its "two flows" or "jets" (Deleuze 1989, 81, 98, 81). Liquidity haunts Deleuze's

work, an "interbeing" that seeps "between things" and underneath his words. Similarly, the life-generating force of water is felt through the visual and sonic images of fountains, springs, spas, wells, rivers, seashores, and other water sources that are ubiquitous in Fellini's films. Throughout the director's body of work, the vital, creative force that Fellini called the *forza generatrice* rises to the surface and makes the hyperfilm both palpable and metamorphic.

The *forza generatrice* of Fellini's films has a deep resonance with philosopher Henri Bergson's élan vital, a concept that Deleuze adapts to his own philosophical practice. Deleuze (1989, 146) employs the term in *Cinema 2* when distinguishing between the falsifying power of the forger and that of the creative artist: "[Forgers] have neither the sense nor the power of metamorphosis; they reveal an impoverishment of the vital force [élan vital]…. Only the creative artist takes the power of the false to a degree which is realized, not in form, but in transformation." The élan vital is a power that continues to give and transform rather than to master or dominate. Deleuze describes it as "the outpouring becoming" (146), a fluid, generous force. His articulation of this creative becoming as an "outpouring" and "overspill[ing]" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 21) illuminates Fellini's use of the sea as an "obligatory setting" and embodiment of the *forza generatrice*.

Fellini's Creative Unconscious and the Sea as Screen

> I lived a life apart, a lonely life in which I looked for famous models like the poet Leopardi to justify my fear of bathing suits, and my incapacity to enjoy myself like the others who went splashing into the sea (perhaps why I find the sea so fascinating, as an element I have never conquered: the place from which come our monsters and ghosts). In any case, in order to fill the gap, I had turned to art. (Fellini 1976, 14, 16)

Fellini had a profound and complicated relationship with the sea. He suffered from seasickness, explaining that "even when the sea is still, I'm afflicted with anxiety, nausea, dizziness" (Costantini 1995, 135). He describes an early attempt to film at sea for *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952) as "a disaster" (34), and subsequently chose to film sea scenes from the shore, by helicopter (35), or, increasingly, to recreate the sea altogether. Even more apparent than Fellini's physical discomfort at sea, it seems, was his psychological unease. In *Il libro dei sogni* (*The Book of Dreams* 2008), Fellini's illustrated diary recounting dreams that spanned three decades of his career, there are mentions of a "scary" or "stormy" sea (Fellini 2008, 492, 512), often associated with the port of Rimini. The ever-present and haunting backdrop of his childhood was the domain of monsters and ghosts, prostitutes and intimidating femininity, body-image insecurities,[6] and potential invaders. One such invader turned out to be, surprisingly, the circus. Fellini (1976, 128) recalls:

> When the circus arrived at night, the first time I saw it as a child, it was like an apparition… The previous evening it hadn't been there, and in the morning there it was, right opposite our house. Immediately I thought it was some kind of oddly shaped boat. This meant that the invasion—because of course there must have been an invasion—had something to do with the sea. Some small band of pirates, I supposed. Then, quite apart from my terror, was the deciding factor of the clown, who loomed fascinatingly up out of this marine atmosphere.

While this tale of Fellini's first encounter with the circus correlates with his intuition that the sea brings forth strange and terrifying things, it also marks a pivotal moment when the sea becomes something other than frightening for the young Fellini. The clown "loom[s] fascinatingly

up out of this marine atmosphere," adding nuances of the playful and expressive. Considering the importance of the circus to Fellini's films, and the fact that he equated circus and cinema,[7] the sea seems to reinvent itself here, exciting not just fear but imagination and creativity. We might link this to the fact that Fellini's "fear of bathing suits" and "incapacity to enjoy [him]self" in the water occasioned his pursuit of art.

This double nature is embodied in the creature dragged from the sea at the end of *La dolce vita*. It is grotesque and unidentifiable, a "monster" as one actress exclaims directly to the camera. "Terrible," cries another. Yet the commotion around the creature also generates an eruption of languages—we hear Italian, German, English, and French within a matter of seconds—as well as an explosion of questions and speculations. "It's alive!" "It's been dead for three days." "Is it male or female?" "Do you love your mother?" "Who knows where it comes from?" "Where's the head and where's the tail?" Despite, or perhaps because of, its foreboding foreignness, the creature becomes the center not of answers and identification but of open-ended possibility and imagination.

Fellini (1976, 147) again depicts the sea as a fearsome space that drives creativity in his account of a dream about Picasso:

> There was a great stretch of sea, which looked to me as the sea looks from the port of Rimini: a dark, stormy sky, with great green waves and the white horses on them that appear during storms. In front of me a man was swimming, with powerful strokes, his bald head poking up from the water.... Suddenly he turned toward me: it was Picasso, and he made me a sign to follow him further on, to a place where we should find good fishing. No need to be a psychoanalyst to realize that I saw in Picasso a kind of tutelary deity, a charismatic presence, a genius in the mythological sense of the word—protective, nourishing, vital. To me Picasso is the eternal embodiment of creativity as an end in itself, with no other motive, no other end, than itself—irruptive, unarguable, joyous.

In this dream, the sea is dark and daunting, and we're unsure whether Fellini is swimming behind Picasso or watching him from the shore. However, it is clear that Picasso feels at ease in the water with his "powerful strokes," and that Picasso's sea, with its "good fishing," represents an artistically fertile space. Fellini declares Picasso his "genius in the mythological sense of the word," a guiding spirit through the intimidatingly liquid process of creativity. We witness this apprenticeship in action when the imagination begins to transform trepidation by inventing white horses[8] that unfurl from the threatening waves. However, Fellini values Picasso above all as an "embodiment of creativity as an end in itself." He redirects the focus of the dream away from the product of creation to the process of creativity ("good fishing" as opposed to "fish"). Although Picasso is the explicit symbol of this "vital" and "irruptive" creativity, the sea becomes the overarching symbol of generativity, which begets Picasso himself.

While the sea acts as a *forza generatrice* in Fellini's hyperfilm, it's important to note that many of his characters remain on the shore or in boats. Like Fellini himself, they are attracted to the water but maintain their distance. The sea becomes a sort of distance-dependent projection space, not unlike a screen, that brings forth images, memories, and "hallucinations." In Fellini's earlier films, the film-viewer can sense the memories and visions that arise for the characters at the seaside, but cannot see them. At the end of *La strada*, for example, Zampanò comes face-to-face with the phantoms and emotions that haunt him as he staggers into, then out of, the surf, falling to the sand. As he breathes heavily and stares out to sea, his eyes appear to catch sight of something and to follow it fearfully up toward the sky. We can only imagine what he sees or remembers, but we sense that, as a place intimately tied to Gelsomina (Gieri 1995, 95), the sea brings forth these visions. In the beach scene at the end of *La dolce vita*, we cannot see inside

Marcello's head as he reclines on the sand and takes in the scenery around him, but it is as if we do—the sea monster, the incomplete structure, and the inaudible Paola are markedly surreal and dream-like figures.

Throughout *8½*, the film-viewer gets privileged access to Guido's dreams, fantasies, and memories. Yet it is at the end of the film, after the director has shot himself in the head and "killed" the film within the film, that the sea becomes the screen against which a new, rhizomatic film-assemblage emerges. Though the spaceship launching pad set is proximate to the shore, the sea is not entirely apparent to the film-viewer until after the gun shot, when, in addition to the sonic image of wind familiar in Fellini's films, we hear the sound of waves break through the soundscape. As Guido sits in the car with the film critic Daumier, who asserts "destroying is better than creating…," Maurice, the clown-like telepath, offers something quite different: "Wait, Guido! We are ready to begin. All my congratulations." Maurice then lifts his baton as if to begin conducting an orchestra, and there is a cut to Claudia against the backdrop of the sea as she turns to face the camera. This conducting gesture, I would argue, is the rhizomatic maneuver of a new circus-film-memory-assemblage, unleashing a sequence of images of people from Guido's life and memory who stand out against the sea-screen and begin to walk together toward the film set. Guido suddenly accepts the turmoil inside his head, admitting that "this confusion is me. Not as I'd like to be, but as I am." The film cannot begin production until there is no longer anything external to it; that is, Guido's life/mind and the film must become synonymously chaotic and unfixed. The sea, as that which "helps to establish the typical Fellinian landscape of the mind" (Corbella 2011, 15), plays an important role in this scene in generating the rhizomatic connections that enable Guido's mind, his film, and *8½* to be understood as an assemblage.

Perhaps the sea is an ancient screen of sorts. Past generations in coastal territories watched it intently for the dangers and novelties it brought from afar. This could be, in part, what Fellini meant when he called the sea an "ancient vision." In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 495) note that, from the perspective of the land, the "sea, the Ocean, the Unlimited, first plays the role of an encompassing element, and tends to become a horizon: the earth is thus surrounded, globalized, 'grounded' by this element, which holds it in immobile equilibrium and makes Form possible." They use this example in explaining how the long-distance, or optical, vision of striated, organized space differs from the close, or haptic, vision of smooth space. While the sea is what Deleuze and Guattari call "a smooth space par excellence" (479), that is, a space of continual variation and "pure connection" (493), it "become[s] a horizon" with a straight, screen-like edge when seen from a distance. From this distanced perspective, the smooth sea persists, but as a backdrop that enables form and optical vision. This is very much the sense of the sea-screen in Fellini's early- to mid-career films. The smoothness of the sea is felt as a "place of possibility [and] change" (Corbella 2011, 15), yet ultimately its function is that of a background or screen. It allows the fantastic Forms of the mind to take shape.

In *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965), it is the sea that is the backdrop of Giulietta's first vision: her neighbor Suzy swinging on a trapeze-like chair over the water.[9] This apparition is followed by the procession-like arrival by sea of Suzy and her entourage ("Now *this* is a vision, the kind of vision even I believe in," says the doctor in Giulietta's party). Their entrance is so surreal that the subsequent transition to what is clearly Giulietta's dream is seamless, inviting speculation that the entire beach sequence has been a dream. Or perhaps more accurately for Fellini's cinema, the dreams are the actuality. "Our dreams are our real life," Fellini claimed, "[and] the stuff of which my films are made" (Chandler 2001, 58). Giulietta sinks deeper into the life of her mind when she approaches the shore and takes over from the red-robed investigator the job of heaving a rope from the water. A strange ship then floats into the frame from screen left, carrying dead horses and naked warriors with swords

and arrows drawn. We get the impression that Giulietta has pulled up repressed images or archetypes from the depths of her unconscious.

According to psychoanalyst Carl Jung, "the sea is the favorite symbol of the unconscious, the mother of all that lives" (Jung 1959, 177). Fellini was well aware of this connection, as he was a keen reader of Jung's writings. In fact, *Il libro dei sogni* is a product of his encounters with Jungian analyst Ernst Bernhard, who encouraged Fellini to write down and illustrate his dreams (Kezich 2008). One entry in the book, dated 30 March 1968, begins with the words, "Anxieties for the usual film. Make it? Don't make it" (Fellini 2008, 514). There is a sketch of a diver at the bottom of the sea, and the opposing page reads like words of self-motivation: "Sink down into the marine abyss down into the unconscious, fish in the unknown chasm of the sea and come back up with the treasures" (Fellini 2008, 251). Echoing the Picasso dream recounted earlier, this illustration and accompanying description identify the sea as both the symbol of the unconscious and the space where creativity happens. The sea of unconsciousness is inevitably where Fellini found good fishing.

The beach scene in *Giulietta degli spiriti* also works at the level of the hyperfilm. The images Giulietta pulls up from her unconscious are peculiarly prescient of what we see in the maritime scenes of *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969), Fellini's next full-length feature film. The boxy, container-like ship full of half-naked, spear-wielding warriors in Giulietta's dream is a harbinger of Lichas's squarish vessel, overrun with minimally clothed prisoners and javelin-bearing soldiers. Even the lifeless horses floating on a raft in Giulietta's dream and the dead whale hauled up from the sea in *Fellini - Satyricon* seem similarly surreal and symbolic. If the hyperfilm is an assemblage always in process, then it makes sense that in one film we can see indications of another emerging. These are visual traces unfolding, like a rhizome, from the middle, "which it overspills" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 21). The hyperfilm is especially emergent against the sea-screen because the sea, as symbol and stimulus of the creative unconscious, is where the *forza generatrice* is concentrated.

The Plastic Sea and Cinema as Hypergenre

> I can't distinguish what really happened from what I made up. Superimposed on my real memories are painted memories of a plastic sea (Fellini quoted in Bondanella and Pacchioni 2017, 265).

Fellini - Satyricon ends, like several of Fellini's other films, at the sea. Encolpio decides to join the crew of the Africa-bound ship, whose rectangular sail looks like a blank screen set against the horizon. However, the sail-screen is visible to the film-viewer only when the ship is beached. Once the perspective shifts to that of the ship sailing on the sea, it is as if the film-viewer's screen has taken the place of the sail-screen, bobbing up and down on the waves. We seem to be peering "through" the screen and into Fellini's creative vision, identifying for a moment as captains of the hyperfilm. The horizon tilts back and forth, no longer an orienting line, and fades from fuzzy grays to sharp blues and back again. Here the sea-screen is problematized, rendering Form impossible within the encroaching smooth space (the island in the distance is thickly veiled with mist and practically invisible). It is as if Fellini "sets sail" toward his source of creativity, toward and on the smooth, haptic space of the sea, in hopes of getting somewhere new with his art (*Fellini - Satyricon* was made in 1969 after Fellini had been hospitalized with what initially seemed a life-threatening illness). The scene then cuts to a close-up of Encolpio against a sparkling sea-screen. The frame freezes and morphs itself into a painting, as if to insist on creating rather than capturing an image. Finally, the camera pulls back to reveal

that the portrait of Encolpio is really one of several frescoes of the film's main characters, painted on crumbling walls, alternative "screens" foregrounded while a distant sea-screen all but fades into the background.

My impression of this final scene of *Fellini - Satyricon* is that it prefigures an alternative handling of memory, the sea, and the source of creativity in Fellini's films. *I clowns* (1970) and *Roma* (1972) come next, both of which undertake the task of reshaping Fellini's memories. However, *Amarcord* is his next film containing images of the sea and his first to feature the technique of recreating it in the studio: "I believe in constructing daylight, and even the sea, in a studio. In *Amarcord*, I built the sea. And nothing is truer than that sea on the screen. It is the sea I wanted, which the real sea would never have given me" (Fellini 1976, 165). While the "real sea" had been associated with Fellini's unconscious and his memories of vulnerability, the plastic sea, by superimposing "painted memories" on "what really happened," becomes both "truer" to his creative vision and less threatening. By reinventing the sea on his own terms, Fellini appears to transform the "element [he had] never conquered," transferring the source of his creativity from his unconscious to the media and materials of production that make cinema possible.

Reconstructing the sea from solid materials such as plastic transforms the typically "smooth space par excellence" into a striated, organized space. In *Amarcord*, the striation of the sea is evident in the way the boats gather like a small city to await the ocean-liner *Rex* (the "king" around which the smaller boat-subjects organize). The overt falsity of the constructed sea (the plastic sheets are waved in our face at the end of the scene just to make sure we have noticed), in addition to characterizing the Fascist regime and its glorified ship, is Fellini's way of playing with the "powers of the false": "narration ceases to … claim to be true, and becomes fundamentally falsifying" (Deleuze 1989, 131). That is, Fellini is on board with Deleuze (1989, 146) when he says that "truth is not to be achieved, formed, or reproduced; it has to be created." Fellini's plastic sea is an exposition of his created "truth," as well as a reminder that "cinema is an art of illusion, and sometimes the illusion must show its tail" (Fellini quoted in Samuels 2006, 96). Fellini increasingly revealed his magician's[10] tricks on screen, to the point where, at the end of *E la nave va*, he lifts the curtain completely and exposes what's behind the scenes of the film's making.

In actuality, all of *E la nave va* is an exposure of, and homage to, the cinematic art form. The film-viewer is made "aware of the fact that the point of it all is to record it on film, to make a show of it" (Perricone 1987, 79). That the film draws attention to itself is evident in numerous details, from the plastic sea and painted sunset ("how marvelous; it looks fake," says one of the ship's guests) to the manipulated film speeds, excessive camera movements, and techniques, such as grainy scratches and iris-out. Additionally, the apparatus of cinema is referenced throughout the film, from the camera that films the narrator in the opening silent-film sequence to the makeshift screen that reveals footage of the opera star Edmea Tetua while the ship is sinking. Ironically, however, the sea-screen is virtually absent from *E la nave va*. Despite the fact that the sea is ever present as background, it no longer functions as the *forza generatrice* of visions, dreams, and memories. Instead, it works as a signifier of artifice, a "falsifying power," reiterating not "life as spectacle" but *cinema* as spectacle. Cinema, posits the film, is not only spectacle by means of its artifice but also because of its relationship to music, dance, painting, photography, poetry, and other artistic genres cited in *E la nave va*. Cinema is all of these things, boasts Fellini, and more: it is the hypergenre, the generative mechanism of (his) life. The sea's relationship to creativity, though, is not entirely lost when the art of cinema inherits the role of *forza generatrice* in this film; Edmea Tetua, whose artistic spirit "hovers above everyone" on the ship (Perricone 1987, 78), was, as a character puts it, "born from the sea, like a goddess," and there her ashes return. This correlation between the sea and the artist/goddess recalls the relationship between smooth space par excellence and the striated forms it enables. The deification of the "high arts," though, or of any organization that implements exclusions, insides and outsides, and hierarchies, is a surefire way,

the film suggests, to "sink the ship." Both nationalism and imperialism figure prominently among these, as the Austro-Hungarian vs. Serb naval battle, whose crossfire sinks Edmea's ship, the *Gloria N.*, implies. Survival takes the deterritorializing form of a lactating rhi(zome)noceros bobbing on the waves in a lifeboat.

In *Intervista*, Fellini's penultimate film, images of the sea are almost entirely absent. There is, however, one striking exception: as the trolley journeys toward Cinecittà, Sergio gazes out of the window at the countryside and sees an elephant, after which there's a cut to an image of a herd of elephants walking in the surf. It is as if the image of the elephant that Sergio sees hauls up its own archetype of elephants from a cinematic unconscious. Just as Fellini's dreams and visions had become the images of his films, this cinematic vision generates elephants, both live-action and cardboard, as images of the film being made at Cinecittà. Fellini's cinema, not Fellini auteur, is its own "creative brain." Frank Burke (1989, 40) notes that "[Fellini] appears as the recycled product of his own films of forty years." Instead of the creative artist in the process of making the film, we witness the film's making (and unmaking) of the artist. *Intervista*, as the title suggests, posits cinema as "seeing between,"[11] a seeing that questions, interacts, and relates. As the film in which the hyperfilm-assemblage becomes aware of and performs itself, *Intervista* experiments with a liquid vision that doesn't just capture or encompass but also connects, creates, ands transforms.

While the sea is visually absent from *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990), Fellini's final film, one could suggest that it's there in the form of an echo, a subtle "voice" that speaks to us, as if from the depths of a well, beneath and between the visual images of the Earth's surface. The moon, associated with the ocean's tides and with its own phases, coaxes the film-viewer, along with Salvini, to "listen" and "hear" rather than to "understand." I'd like to suggest that, in *La voce della luna*, sound and hearing (in Italian *sentire*, which also means "to feel") are posited as rhizomes with which to access "reality,"[12] the nature of which is (often uncomfortable) change. While *Intervista* celebrates the cinema as "seeing between," this film betrays a disillusionment with the visual image in "postmodern Italy" (Degli-Esposito 1994, 44) and encourages us, instead, to *hear* between. Hence the opening of the film, when sound comes before image, suggests a new way to access the visual. Likewise, the excess of antennas (this film's version of incomplete structures) on the roof, where Salvini sits with Nestore, reminds us that television transmits via radio waves and provokes us, perhaps, to intercept and reconfigure the visual with our ears. There is always the possibility of hearing drums and chants in the quiet of the fields, or a waltz in the midst of Michael Jackson's "The Way You Make Me Feel" (which, translated into Italian, could also mean "the way you make me hear"). Conversely, the many visual holes in the film (the one that opens for Salvini at the cemetery, for example) lack generativity and lead nowhere new.

Kezich tells us that, of Ermanno Cavazzoni's *Il poema dei lunatici* on which *La voce della luna* was loosely based, Fellini "like[d] the notion that at night the water in the well is awakened by the moon and starts uttering faint messages that only madmen and vagabonds can perceive" (Kezich 2006, 380–381). If, for Fellini, the water whispers, then the drips and leaks in the film (the leaking pipes below the city, for example, and the dripping pool of water Salvini and Gonnella encounter before entering the discoteca) also speak. They reverberate with Deleuze's *ligne de fuite*, commonly translated as "line of flight," but also meaning line of flow or leakage. The line of leakage is the flow toward the external, the rhizomatic movement away from overcoded form, oppressive structure, and "everyday banality" (Fellini quoted in Degli-Esposito 1994, 51). Leaks, subtle as they may be, are what make the "outpouring becoming" possible. If we follow Fellini's line of leakage, if we listen underneath and between the dominant regime of the televisual (*tele*-vision can also be understood as "seeing at a distance"[13]), we might rediscover the director's well of aural and liquid creativity inside the film that critics largely deemed a failure. What is more, the hyperfilm's liquidity immerses us in Fellini's singular generativity, shaping not an optic *tele*-vision, but a liquid *inter*- and *hyper*-vision that leaks off the screen and between the senses to enable creative becomings.

Notes

1 My choice to use the word "film-viewer" instead of "spectator" stems from my encounter with Teresa Rizzo's *Deleuze and Film: A Feminist Introduction*. Rizzo (2012, 6) points out that "feminist film theory inherited… binary logic" in its engagement with ideas of spectatorship, and so "the term 'spectator' is now seriously compromised; to use it in a productive way is virtually impossible." She proposes the term "film-viewer" "in the hope of suggesting an understanding of the film-viewer as fully embodied" (7).

2 Furthermore, Fellini was particularly malleable in relation to his past. He gave interviewers different answers to the same question, and was contradictory in the telling of events, even to friends: "I'm accused of being especially imaginative in the recounting of the story of my own life…. I don't think of myself as a liar. It's a matter of point of view. It's indispensable for a storyteller to enhance his story, to color it, to expand it, to extend its dimensions…. I do this in life just as I do in my films" (Chandler 2001, 263).

3 See Aldouby's account in this volume of mirror neurons and cognitive neuroscience in relation to the hapticity of Fellini's films.

4 Harcourt (1966, 10) seems to agree: "Fellini emphasizes [the vitelloni's] own feeling of irrelevance and functionlessness by the many apparently useless structures that we see sticking up out of the sand."

5 Interestingly, *8½* is also what Marcus (2002, 170) calls the most "transparent example" of the hyperfilm, "in which film and hyperfilm come to intersect in almost total identification between Guido and his author…."

6 "As I was skinny and had a complex about it—I was nicknamed Gandhi—I refused to wear a bathing suit" (Fellini 1976, 14).

7 Fellini (1976, 98) claimed that "the cinema is very much like the circus…. That way of creating and living at one and the same time, without the fixed rules which a writer or painter must observe, the fact of being plunged into the action itself: that's what the circus is. It has such strength, such bravery, and I feel that the cinema is exactly the same thing."

8 Horses were a common theme in Picasso's art and images that recur in Fellini's films.

9 This recalls Wanda's first vision of the eponymous character in *Lo sceicco bianco*. The sea, in addition to generating visions, generates rhizomatic links between films.

10 One of Fellini's nicknames was *il mago* ("the magician").

11 I owe this idea to Frank Burke (2002, 39), who writes that Fellini's filmmaking in *Intervista* constitutes "a 'seeing between' ('inter-viewing') of prior significations and codes."

12 Degli-Esposito (1994, 51) quotes Fellini as saying that *La voce della luna* attempts to capture "the voice of reality—innocuous, domestic, everyday banality that ends as a threatening vibration."

13 "Tele" is a "combining form" that means to or at a distance, as in "telekinesis."

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22

Sounding Out Fellini: An Aural Continuum of Voices, Musics, Noises

Antonella Sisto

Introduction

Federico Fellini is the film director who became an adjective. "Felliniesque," however we define it, points to an identifiable discursive filmic manner, an audiovisual textuality that runs through the director's oeuvre, inspires other directors, and is recognized by the audience as a peculiar interplay of moods, modes, and meanings on the screen. In a wry move, as a poststructuralist theory of cinema demands, the author disappears, or is swallowed by the films, and by the network of psychological, ideological, aesthetic, affective, and intertextual discourses invoked and projected.

In the present essay, I propose to think of the felliniesque in terms of the mysterious power of music (as Fellini has often termed it) that dances with, on, and across, the images, giving visual marvels and bewilderments a startling aurality. The space of aurality is at the center of Fellini's work. Sound operates as the medium of a heightened sensorial and experiential sphere of human perception. Within the felliniesque, the aural is deployed for its potential to create glitches, reversals, or openings in familiar signification, and to surprise with the intensity of sonic gestures that smooth or trouble expectations, assumptions, and desires.

One of the categories that defines the felliniesque is the oneiric. Onscreen situations, acts, and agents are freed from ordinary takes on reality by broken linearity, temporality, and consequentiality; overloaded exposure; or, more simply, charmed encounters. From *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952) and *La strada* (1954) to *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990), music, sound, voices, and noises delicately whisper into, or calamitously blast open, the continuum of events, often significantly altering their status.

The sonic space, both musical and cosmic (coming from the natural world, the bio- and geophonies), unbridles human imaginations, rendering the act of listening psychophysically orienting or disorienting. The diegetic sound may be literal, as when music is present as an event or performance, creating an ambience denoting a particular social space, or it may carry political or religious overtones, mark class belonging, or suggest emotional aspirations. The metaphorical use of sound—for example, music as "salvation" (Gorbman 1974)—calls attention to itself as idea, generating attunement and transformational awareness, as happens in Fellini's early, more

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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realistic films (*La strada* and *Le notti di Cabiria/Nights of Cabiria* 1957). There, music carries the message without words. The pathos of the film reverberates though the experiences of the characters, and the music resolves existential quandaries into sonic epiphanies that nourish empathy.

In *Prova d'orchestra* (*Orchestra Rehearsal* 1978), the music becomes an allegory of social revolutions and restorations, as it openly points to the unfathomable force of music to regiment, disconcert, revolt, reassess, and return to order. The enigmatic power of music resounds with unanswerable propositions, here and in later films, as it breaches mundane eventfulness. The discord of cacophonous urban noise, destructive rebellions, mysterious intrusions, and authoritarian fury are suspended temporarily in magnetizing performances of music. "Music saves us, let's hang on the notes," says the orchestra conductor after the harpist's death and the sinister destruction of the auditorium walls. In the cracks and dust, the musicians join in playing until the music ends and life resumes. In chaos, one is left to wonder, as one of the musicians says earlier, "Where does music go when music ends?" Right in that moment the conductor with authoritarian brutality yells out, *da capo!* And the playing starts again.

In Fellini's most experimental film, *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969), music reverberates with the garish confusion of the visuals. The pan-sonorous and estranging ethnocacophony of roaring crowds, people, and musics enthralls and debauches in incredible mazes of sound, collapsing communication into intensifying noise. In the longest, noisiest sequence in the film, Trimalchio's feast, hypnotic ancient rhythms, barking dogs, wretched vocalizations, and poem recitations underscore and overlap with the grotesque and hyperbolic imagery of lust, cruelty, and gluttony. Twisting contortions of bodies and mouths often look disassociated from the rhythms of the music as with the sultry but out-of-time dance of Fortunata, Trimalchio's wife, stiffly moving and gesturing among the chanting and clapping of orgiastic guests. Throughout the film, audiovisual mismatches displace and disorient. A babel of languages mingles erratically in Imperial Rome: contemporary Italian—often with a strong Roman accent—invented African languages, Latin, and German. In asynchronous play, the ancient Roman debauchery resounds with the polyglot and the modern, exceeding its times and places.

Fellini's treatment of sound as the sonorous amplification and/or distortion of highly subjective experience and cultural tropes is expressionistic. Fellini is never really interested in sound as simply mimetic or denotative. Amplifying noises, undoing the spatial coordinates of realistic sonic perspective, playing ambiguously with sound sources, blurring the diegetic and nondiegetic, saturating events with music that overrides them, and jesting with the theatricality of vocal expressivity via the use of very loose dubbing, Fellini creates sonic space that reveals the oddities of the earthly everyday, past and present, and the performativity of existence.

A Sonic Continuum

Music situates Fellini's stories in their cultural moment, as with the glamorous dances and musical performances in nightclubs and the catchy *canzonetta* (pop song), so vital to the mundane fun of his early films, played loudly on radios, in cars, and on jukeboxes. Here, what I refer to as the sonic continuum also points to the groundlessness of precarious individuality and fashionable escapes in resounding spectacle (I am speaking here especially of *La dolce vita*—1960) of toxic/exotic entertainment. When silence encumbers, tragic events occur (suicides, both attempted and achieved, and murder).

The favoring of a full and erratic sonic continuum made Fellini's films overflowing containers of music of all kinds, including the corniest and most trivial samples of musical production

ranging from commercial popular music to classical music clichés (Miceli 2010, 353–368). Beyond his acerbic critique of Fellini's music, what is worth noting from Sergio Miceli's analysis (which claims "sonic incontinence" as the main flaw of *Le notti di Cabiria*) is his historicizing comment on a traditional disregard, by many Italian filmmakers, for the poetic function of the soundtrack, which resulted in unresolved aesthetic conflicts of the sound–image relation. Cinematic expressivity was deaf to the sonic, privileging visual exploration and relegating the auditory to an ancillary role. Neorealist directors and musicians mostly continued with the use of a traditional music track whose function as commentary on the images, often melodramatic and celebratory, was fundamentally extraneous to, and divergent from, the realist content and innovative register of the visual track. This conventional audiovisual displacement is exemplified in films such as *Roma città aperta* (*Rome Open City* 1945), precisely where Fellini started in cinema as scriptwriter (Miceli 210, 357; Sisto 2014, 79–111). If this genealogy of Fellini's relation to the soundtrack is accurate, his inherited approach to film sound is radically different from the dissonant results audible in neorealist productions, where generic music scores, postsynchronized sounds loosely emanating from the images, and recited voices are attached incongruously to the visual score of reality. Fellini's indulgence of his protagonists, stories, and audiences with musical kitsch and a sonic potpourri becomes characteristic of his filmmaking. The soundscore resonates as a cacophonic transfiguration of the chaos of the life he projects visually.

Fellini's sonic continuum prefigures the frantic mediascape that constitutes our subjective and collective experience today, which saw its dawn in the economic/technological capitalist miracle of sonic mobility, cosmopolitan commodification, and ubiquitous spectacle indexed in *La dolce vita*. Half a century before the digital revolution of omnipresent listening filters and saturating audio consumption, Fellini asserts: "There is no silence any more, one dulls [one's] senses with music, the entire film [*La dolce vita*] is dominated by this sonorous obsession. People fear silence because they dread to hear their grievances in it" (quoted in Sala 2010, 128).

Egli Danza … Egli Danza

In "La ricotta" (episode of *Ro.Go.Pa.G.* 1963), Pier Paolo Pasolini, who had worked as anthropological and linguistic consultant and guide for Fellini, meandering though the Roman *borgate* (the slums on the periphery of the city) for the making of *Le notti di Cabiria*, offers a poignant and inspired characterization of Fellini's work as a director. In the film, a journalist asks a Marxist film director, played by Orson Welles, what his opinion is of the great Federico Fellini. A baffling answer emerges: "egli danza" ("he dances"). There follows a pensive pause, and, again, "egli danza."

The metaphor of dancing returns in an interview with British film director Terry Gilliam (nd), who picks *8½* (1963) as his favorite "moment" in cinema. For Gilliam, the film "coalesces the essence of cinema": in particular, the sequence where Marcello Mastroianni performatively "tap dances his way out of trouble" in the corridor of the hotel where he is trying to make his movie. As a director himself, Gilliam finds this the quintessential definition of the job of a filmmaker, "tap dancing past all the problems." Later, after describing Fellini's juggling of the flow of existential temporalities and imaginary dimensions in *8½*, he notes how Fellini made him understand the "camera as a partner in dance." He continues, "the film is like a dance, it shoots like a dancer would shoot, is all moving and shifting, things are coming in and out of the frame, is never still, it is what life always feels like to me." Gilliam's response sounds like the extended answer that Pasolini/Welles did not offer in "La ricotta."

So if dance can be taken as a metaphor not only for the existential twists and turns of filmmaking, but also for its formal, aesthetic, and technical modes, Fellini's filmmaking can best be addressed as *camera-dance:* A mode of filmmaking that is capable of conveying, via camera movements and montage, the subjective experience of exploring reality and reenacting the dynamics of the human sensorium and imaginary.

Although Fellini is not among the directors whom Pasolini (1972, 2005) chose to exemplify as practitioners of what he terms the "cinema of poetry," that is, a cinema of "free indirect discourse" consisting of blurred authorial/character expressivity, disjunctive perspectives, indefinite point-of-view and audition, and a foregrounding of the technical-stylistic work of the filmmaker, one can say without doubt that Fellini's cinema fits the bill. By means of his camera-dance, Fellini unfetters cinema in a ballet that swirls, leaps, jumps, and at times rhythmically stalls in the representation of physical, cognitive, and emotional experience. And he does this from his earliest films.

Music and the Musician as Partners in Dance

In Fellini's creative arsenal what may well have contributed significantly to the swinging mobility of his camera is his predilection to shoot his films with musical accompaniment on the set. While the final soundtrack of the films (sound effects, noises, dialogues, and music) is produced in post-synchronization, Fellini played recordings he liked in order to induce moods and rhythms while shooting. The phrasings of the music became an intrinsic part of the movement of the scenes and performances of the actors, as if they were on a silent film set. All the dialogue would be dubbed in postproduction. Many scholars have noted Fellini's scarce attention to lip-synching (the matching of voices to the movement of mouths) so that one can say that even the dialogues in his films dance around the characters, becoming a free and loose emanation "in space as well as in time" (Chion 1999, 85).

Fellini used a megaphone to provide actors' recitations with what he calls a "more direct, more vital, more creative" guidance (Sanguineti 2006, 14). He also participated actively in the process of dubbing, which he compared to a séance. Dubbers become the mediums who give voice to the filmed shadows (18). Famously, he used voice actors to dub more than one character in the same film, so that the whole film could end up being voiced by five or six dubbers, performing according to Fellini's indications and only very loosely in synch with the images. As Fellini reports, *Giulietta degli spiriti* was dubbed entirely by his voice-pick Alighiero Noschese (16), and in *Prova d'orchestra*, out of 49 identified acousmatic (the aural equivalent of the phantasmatic) and character voices, Fellini invests Oreste Lionello, the jack of all vocal and gender trades, with 23 personifications. Even while questioning Fellini's probable exaggeration, dubbing specialists still ascribe six characters to Lionello. In the same way, according to legend in *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980), Solvejg D'Assunta performs 50 voices, while dubbing experts ascribe to her a maximum of 20 vocal performances (94–95, 98).

Suggesting Fellini's fondness for a babbling jungle of vocal histrionics, one of the jokes reportedly going around the studio was that Fellini asked a dubbing director: "Are you sure … that we can't do it out of synch?" (40). The out-of-synch effect becomes part of Fellini's expressive poetics, while scholars become voice-busters searching for the actors behind the vocal enactments on screen. A comprehensive list of Fellini's dubbers is still nonexistent. Subverting the technicalities of postsynchronization that lip-synch body and voice so that the audience assumes the voice belongs to the body, Fellini and his dubbing teams created a sonic palette of cinematic voices that

float freely around the characters and the screen and, in so doing, resound with the artificiality of cinema, and play with the idea of the performativity of life.

Despite his musicalized way of working and the persistent presence of music and music-acts in his films, Fellini often described his relationship with music as a troubled one. His words explain how deeply affected he was by its ineffable power:

> Music troubles me … Music sucks me into a dimension, where it dominates totally … Probably I have a fragile ego, very weak, so that I cannot offer resistance, opposition; … I see music as a kind of invader, at very deep levels, and this thing annoys me …. I sense its dangerousness: precisely because music acts at such a deep and unconscious level that it can become dangerous. With music, in fact, you can go to war, you can engage in battles, you can persuade entire communities, make them weep or exalt. The musical aspect, the intervention of rhythm, at deep psychological levels, is a very mysterious thing. (Quoted in De Santi 1983, 75–76)

Among the many mysteries that fascinated him, Fellini embraced that of music, sharing this occult affair with trusted composer, Nino Rota, who was his alter ego until Rota's death: "Nino … *becomes* the music that is needed in a specific moment, to give a greater emotion, soften, blur, quiet, underline, intensify certain images" (quoted in De Santi 1983, 76). However conventional Fellini's description of the function of music for the images is here, what is compelling is the notion that Nino Rota does not compose the music; he becomes music itself. This is a beautiful declaration of the enormous regard and affection Fellini held for Rota's music/person, and testimony to the congenial affinity with which they worked together (Figure 22.1).

Figure 22.1 Fellini's sketch of himself and Nino Rota. Diogenes Verlag AG Collection. © Estate of Federico Fellini/SOCAN (2019).

Their collaboration lasted for 30 years, for every film through *Prova d'orchestra*, except for "Agenzia matrimoniale" ("Marriage Agency," an episode of *L'amore in città / Love in the City* 1953), making them a rare coupling in the history of filmmaking. The uniqueness starts with the role of music in Fellini's films, which provides a sonic continuum whose semiotic function is open, ephemeral, and freed from strict narrative constraints. Fellini's bustling, elliptical, and visionary style calls for a music that resonates accordingly. Thus, its composition and orchestration lie outside canonic tropes and modes of film-music accompaniment. The dreamy, cheerful, and pulsing confusion on the visual track resonates in the polyphonic flow of rhythms, spirited melodies, and enthralling tempos created by Rota on the soundtrack.

A Musical Baby Prodigy

Rota is notable for his eclectic and chameleon-like style. With ease, antihierarchical playfulness, and unrelenting professionalism, Rota pursued all kinds of musicmaking, from sonatas, symphonies, and operettas, to popular songs, swing, and pop. He embraced an unbounded idea of music and an international community of musicians and composers. Coming from a highly musical family in Milan where notable guests and acquaintances included Giacomo Puccini, Arturo Toscanini, Maurice Ravel, and Igor Stravinsky, Rota found music his quintessential expressive medium from an early age.

In the Sunday picture section of *The New York Times* on 21 October 1923 (Anon 92), a gentle-faced young boy looks at the camera with delicate poise. The caption reads: "The Mozart of the Twentieth Century: Maestro Nini [sic] Rota Rinaldi." The prodigy Nino Rota, at the age of twelve, attracted international attention for his musical gifts and talented performances. A year earlier he had completed the score for the oratorio *L'infanzia di San Giovanni Battista* ("The Childhood of St John the Baptist") for vocal soloist, chorus, and orchestra. First performed in Milan and then in France in 1923, the oratorio won spectacular acclaim. His studies of classical music proceeded brilliantly at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (the national conservatory in Rome) where he studied with leading progressive Italian composers, such as Ildebrando Pizzetti and Alfredo Casella. They belonged to the "Generazione dell'80," figures born around 1880 who advocated a modern Italian style of spare instrumentation and harmonics and simplified musical forms that withdrew from the riches and affectation of melodramatic tradition. While on a two-year scholarship at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, Rota met and became friends with composer Aaron Copland, expanding his musical horizons to jazz, American popular music, and Hollywood scores. He also met Samuel Barber and Gian Carlo Menotti, and their romantic twentieth-century style is echoed in Rota's piano concertos, and much of his chamber and film music (Dyer 2010, 25). Extraordinarily eclectic, Rota formed his own artistic persona, rejecting the modernizing innovations of serialism and atonality of his contemporaries, and, following a disarmingly melodic vein indebted to earlier Italian music and opera. He found in cinema a medium that suited and exalted his traditional style.

In 1933, just three years into the Italian sound film era, Rota wrote his first soundtrack, for Raffaello Matarazzo's *Treno Popolare* (1933). From then on, he collaborated with numerous directors, working with their diverse musical temperaments, in Italy, France, Britain, the US, and Russia. He composed for all genres: comedy, melodrama, B movies, big-budget international coproductions, and films that became acclaimed masterworks: a total of 160 in all (Miceli 2010, 324). The canonical films, other than Fellini's, that Rota scored include Luchino Visconti's *Il Gattopardo* (*The Leopard* 1963), Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), Francis Ford Coppola's

The Godfather (Part I 1972; Part II 1974) and Lina Wertmüller's *Film d'amore e d'anarchia* (*Love and Anarchy* 1973). In the words of film director and admired musicologist François Porcile:

> Rare are the composers who have grappled with all genres of films, avoiding clichés and facile takes, keeping intact their own personality. Nino Rota is one of them, at ease either in historical frescos (*War and Peace*), or sentimental drama (*Le notti bianche*). (Quoted in Miceli 2010, 325)

Fellini declared Rota his inevitable partner, almost predestined, "not a choice":

> It was the convergence of two dispositions, two natures, two creatures, who inevitably had—within the limits of their results—to cohabitate the expressivity of film, rendered more vital, more appealing, and more suggestive by music. (Quoted in De Santi 1983, 74)

From their first meeting, congeniality reigned:

> I did not even know him. … When I went to his house for the first time, he immediately introduced me to his mother and then to the pianoforte where he sits tinkling a motif…. He starts playing another marcetta [little march] that, in the end, seduces me, moves me, exalts me, enchants me much more than the old traumatizing gladiators' marcetta." (74)

Fellini is describing the encounter regarding their possible collaboration for *Lo sceicco bianco*. Fellini right away wanted the motif Rota played for him as the theme for the film. The gladiators' march he refers to is Julius Fučík's *Entry of the Gladiators*, which he originally planned to use for the film. In the end, Rota rewrote this piece, and Fellini used the new composition, which echoes Fučík's circus-band exuberance in more delicate and farcical strains. Fučík's "Entry of the Gladiators" returned as inspiration and variation throughout Fellini's oeuvre by way of Rota's rearrangements, creating a circus-like atmosphere in the scene with the clowns and Gelsomina in *La strada,* in the final passerella (parade) in *8½* (Dyer 167), and throughout *I clowns* (1969).

Key to Rota's style are musical quotation, recreation, and adaptation. He had a taste for musical pastiche, quoting and adapting his own work from one film to the next. In film, this means recasting sonorities with variations of structures and tonalities that sardonically and playfully reinterpret themselves according to the new narrative and psychological context, and at the same time create a texture of perceptible assonances that play throughout different films, making up what becomes a sonic imprint easily recognizable as Rotian, and vital to the felliniesque.

Camera-dance

In her pioneering essay on Fellini and music, Claudia Gorbman (1974), commenting on the pervasive presence of music in *Le notti di Cabiria*, identifies some striking scenes where the diegetic music orchestrates the dramatic action, meaning that camera movements follow the musical leads. Midway through the film, Cabiria, the protagonist, meets the renowned movie star Alberto Lazzari, played by Amedeo Nazzari, a leading popular actor of his time. Lazzari/Nazzari plays "himself" in the film, contributing to Fellini's self-reflexive meditations on the overlapping of reality and fiction, and on their reciprocal infringement. In the midst of sophisticated clientele at a chic nightclub, after a dance show of entrancing and exoticizing tribal rhythms, Cabiria unleashes an uninhibited mambo with the movie star. Later at his luxurious villa, Lazzari puts on

a record of the second movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. In this shift of musical registers, it is not the characters who dance to the music, but the film. The ensuing action is paced:

> to match exactly the movement of the symphony. At the point of a great crescendo and modulation, as the music swells on the soundtrack to improbable volume, a servant brings in a majestic tray loaded with food in silver serving dishes. The synchronization of music and action does not stop there; for a full two or three minutes, they continue to indulge in spectacular interplay. (Gorbman 1974, 21)

Such a musicalized scene is a signature of Fellini's camera-dance taken literally, in the sense that transparently, and with the filmmaker's technical virtuosity, it points to the intertwined creation of visual and aural track, with rhythm dictating actions and interactions, somehow unrealistically, thus ironically pointing to the cinematically created and perceived idea that the characters are being played by the music. The scene also foregrounds classical cinema's ploy of using the sound score to shape and interpret the experience of a particular moment or situation and express the character's interiority. Certainly, Cabiria feels mesmerized by the luxury around her. The grandiosity of the music, so alien from her world and taste, is attuned to her exhilaration drinking champagne with the famous and handsome actor and seeing a lobster for the first time. In her words, holding the lobster in her hand "And what is this? I think I saw it in a movie once."

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, one of the best known pieces of Western music (tied together by the four-note opening that returns throughout the composition, often described as fate knocking at the door), works as a terse commentary on Cabiria's low-end life and her defiant, willful, and wondrous nature, depicted in the film as inseparable from the beats and strains of musical expressivity. She dances and sings through misery, deceptions, trouble, and what seemed like her destiny. At the end of the film, music recasts earlier events sonically in a reorchestration of previously heard rhythms and melodies, asserting and embodying Cabiria's brazen inner volition. In the words of Fellini enthusiast André Bazin:

> Cabiria, stripped of everything—her money, her love, her faith—emptied now of herself, stands on the road without hope. A group of boys and girls swarm into the scene singing and dancing as they go, and from the depths of her nothingness Cabiria slowly returns to life; she starts to smile again; soon she is dancing too. (Bazin 2005, 91)

More than dancing physically, Cabiria is emotionally transported; she moves forward on the road encircled by the extemporaneous movement of the youth and their music, and then glances at us (into the camera) with wondering eyes as the music swells in a crescendo that transcends the immediacy of the road. In Fellini's words: "A lyrical, musical outburst, a serenade sung in the woods ends this last film of mine (which is full of tragedy), because in spite of everything Cabiria still carries in her heart a touch of grace" (quoted in Bondanella 1992, 130).

To quote Beethoven's dictum, "Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom or philosophy" (in a 1810 letter to Goethe, quoted in Godwin 1989, 9). A "musical outburst" as transcendence amid and through the mundane also occurs in *La strada*. Music produces a rupture in daily reality that transports Gelsomina to an "unreal realm compounded of her spirit and imagination" (Rohdie 2002, 140). And the same happens to Zampanò. When he hears the music Gelsomina used to play on her trumpet sung by another woman, he experiences "a metamorphosis of physical states and emotional feelings" (Rohdie 2002, 140):

> Gelsomina is there, with him. It is not precisely that the sound of the trumpet transforms the real and brings forward into it time and memory, but that the sound exists in the simultaneities of a past, inhabits the past and gives it presence. … It literally moves the world and encloses, embraces it. (Rohdie 2002, 141)

This sensuous dimension of music is another characteristic of the felliniesque, which shifts the temporality and significance of the images. In a film such as *La strada*, it short-circuits the characters' normal sensory perception of the world, cognitively firing into unusual territory. There memories, imaginings, and desires cross/connect, as they do in the phantasmagoric sonic apparitions of the later, more introspective films. Porous sonorities reverberate as physically immediate acts and events, as embodied kinesthetic experiences that at times move the listener in ways that cannot be clearly contained or explained, as ineffable polyphonic refrains for "ear-witnesses" (Murray Schafer 1994).

In *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965), separating daydreaming from reality becomes a hard task for both the protagonist and the audience. An aura of mystery is carried by penetrating ambient sounds—wind, fire, sea, and chirping crickets in the night—that suspend signification. The apprehension of surroundings becomes acute perceptual awareness. Daily life flows under the beat of Rota's reverberating bright themes. A disorienting sense of unreality often accompanies ghostly nonvocal and vocal apparitions. Eerie silence momentarily blurs the sense of place and beings. Iris, the spirit who speaks to Juliet during a séance, then appears to her on the beach, moments before the voluptuous neighbor Suzy (played by the same actress, Sandra Milo) arrives. Sudden appearances and arrivals are interspersed within the flow of events, perceived via Giulietta's point of view and audition, and often look and sound like imaginary apparitions. The encounter with Giorgio's friend, José, the Spanish guest Giulietta finds at her villa after her visit to the clairvoyant Bishma, is muffled in a vibrant foggy night. His velvety voice pronounces words already spoken by Bishma. It takes an abrupt change in sonic timbre and Giorgio's arrival to break the spell.

Magic ritual sonorities and clownish motifs intertwine throughout the film (De Santi 1983, 126) and underscore hallucinations and memories. Manipulation of sonic atmospheres, together with an elliptical montage and surreal *mise-en-scène*, reroute the narrative into Giulietta's inner life. There, a main protagonist is her grandfather who meets and elopes with Fanny, a circus dancer, who is also Suzy and Iris: the embodiment of liberated eroticism that, like circus music, rises on expectant notes that invade (as the spirits do) Giulietta's mind and play in the soundscore as booming notes of liberation from the Catholic and institutionalized repression of her girlhood. Music propels the visuals, pinpoints psychic events and affects, and hushes into silence to skew the sense and certainties of reality.

La dolce vita: Sounding the Depths, the Surfaces, and the Social

The energy unleashed by music translates the everyday into dance, spectacle, ritual, and production numbers: Fellini's films are full of dance sequences, often ironic, excessive, grotesque, quirky, or spectral. Clowns, kids, whores, friends, transvestites, and dolls do the mambo, cha-cha-cha, rock and roll, line dance, belly dancing, striptease, and tap dancing. Dancing refashions spatiality, as becomes clear in the Caracalla sequence, and engages the body beyond ordinary movements. It is movement for its own sake, not goal-directed. This is precisely why dance is used as a metaphor for Fellini's (restless) camera work and why dance fills so much of his screen time. Dance is a vital impulse, sometimes degenerate, confused, exhilarating, drifting, when not staged or mechanical. In the sonic continuum previously mentioned, dances are eruptions of physicality, emotion, and musical absorption.

At the Caracalla night club in *La dolce vita*, the arrival of the actor Frankie, dressed and acting like a satyr, brings a tsunami of corporeal energy. He frees Sylvia, the movie-star goddess from the smothering embrace of Marcello, changes the music, and inspires Sylvia to lead everyone in

a conga dance—another procession of dancers, though much unlike the one at the end of *Le notti di Cabiria*—during which Frankie lifts her up and spins her around in the air like a whirling dervish. The camera enters the scene, swings with the dancers, shifts and follows points of view, cuts back and forth and around as people gaze at each other in and across directions. It moves up and down following glances and the sway of bodies, as people move in and out of the frame and objects cross the camera's field of vision. Sylvia catalyzes the euphoria, and this exuberant dance breaks the peace between Sylvia and her nondancing fiancé Robert. It has exposed her in her Junoesque power, her body an indomitable receptor of energy and desire.

The frenzied tone of this sequence and the intense musical appeal to sensuality are contrasted in the dramaturgy of the film to various moments in which sound echoes intimacy, as when Sylvia, entranced by her surroundings, listens and responds to the meowing of cats or the barking of dogs. Of course, her performances here are also consistent with her previously established role as seductress, as she eroticizes the female body by emitting a-semantic vocalizations and inarticulate moans following enculturated laws of gender. The charm of the voice, in the absence of speech, is a call to pure pleasure (see Cavarero 2005). The lure of the feminine body and sexuality becomes enmeshed with animal acoustics. Think here of the parody of the vocalizations emitted during intercourse uttered by Bhisma, who also mimics the cries of pigeons, ducks, green sparrows, flamingos, quails, and storks.

This performative immersion in the natural realm, stereotypically associated with the feminine, is reworked later in Steiner's living room, where it is technology, and not the body, that captures natural sounds, preserving and reproducing them through electromagnetic recording, that is, a form of writing (For the relationship between recording and writing, see Ihde 1993).

From a critical gender perspective, which calls attention to the constructed status of authority, property, and power, and identifies masculinity as their organizing principle, writing, or recording as aural transcription and instrumental abstraction from the natural is associated with the masculine (Cavarero 2007). Steiner's sound recording, as an act of overcoming contingency and manipulation of nature via the mechanical, stands in opposition to Sylvia's listening to and vocalization of animals. Technology shifts physical interrelations with the world into mediated experiences, allowing for a detached exposure to events apart from the living soundful moment. In this sense, the two characters represent gendered enculturation: Sylvia *performs* nature, Steiner captures and *controls* it.

Throughout the film, Fellini explicitly reminds us that there is much at stake in listening as a reciprocal and non-neutral act. Even the film's ending, with Marcello unable to hear, seems to reinforce this point through its impossibility, since listening implies a willed inclination toward the other.

Sylvia invites Marcello to listen to the beautiful sound of the flowing water in the Trevi Fountain. Maddalena, too, insists that he listen in the "room for serious discussions" at the villa. Maddalena, having moved to a different room and positioned herself by the dry fountain that mysteriously conducts sound, asks Marcello to guess what it is that produces the sounds she creates, which he can hear but not see. The intimacy of sound experienced before and beyond semantic valences becomes an invitation to sense the embodied self while sound waves travel through space and resonate in the body via the eardrum, body cavities, and abdomen and generate a psychophysical perceptual awareness of being, there and then.

However, in the sonic continuum of anesthetizing entertainment that pervades *La dolce vita*, participatory and conscious listening is a practice not in style. This is something that Steiner, Marcello's intellectual friend, points to while playing the organ amid the cold architectural space of a modernist church. The aura of the sacred and earthly will materialize, but dissonantly. After Steiner tinkles some jazzy phrases, Marcello hits the keyboard in a way that retrieves the timbral

groan of the organ that resonates physically and beguiles viscerally. "These are sounds that we are not used to listening to anymore; what a mysterious voice seems to come from the entrails of the earth," says Steiner before performing Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor. Steiner, amid the pomposity of his pronouncements, is performing what no doubt Fellini and Rota recognized and intended as a film-music cliché, sounding him out as hollow. No sublime listening ensues. Marcello offers a troubled smile and then walks away, uncomfortable. The aporia felt via the organ music, evoking the disjunction of modern life from "the voice of the earth," marks this moment as unsettling and turns the music into an omen.

Steiner appears to be the refined counterpart to debauched fun and, yet also, as indicated previously, the foil to the enculturated feminine natural. Fellini uses sound in relation to Steiner in a manner that is not just visceral or pre-/a-semantic, but a means toward significant social critique. When Marcello attends Steiner's party, orientalizing live music is performed, consonant with many of the film's nightclub dance numbers. The decolonization of Africa and Asia for the cultured Italian bourgeoisie meant continuing the appropriative aesthetic gestures of essentializing and romanticizing the Other while entertaining themselves without undermining any notion of western privilege. In this sequence an older writer lavishly praises the "oriental woman" as "the only authentic woman … mysterious, maternal, lover and daughter together … a little tiger in love"—a creature who "remained close to nature." Thus, he voices uncritically the split from nature that is at the basis of western culture and capitalist modernity, affirms the dichotomy of East and West, and the gendered fascination with and projection of nature (and untamed animality) onto the woman's body as the locus of patriarchal desires and values. A black woman guest, ethnically robed and playing guitar, has just finished singing a piece identified in the cue sheets (music program) as "canzone orientale" (oriental song) foregrounding her cultural otherness in sonic materiality.

Another part of the living-room entertainment is provided by the audio tape recorder that in the years of the Italian economic boom (roughly 1958–1963) became a staple of bourgeois household décor. Fellini uses it to comment on the power of recording and cinematic technologies and the illusionary impression of reality that they can create. At first, it is just play. Without anybody noticing, one of the guests has recorded a conversation between the poet Iris Tree and Steiner. The poet describes Steiner as "primitive as a gothic steeple … so tall that you cannot hear any voices any more from up there," and Steiner answers, "If you saw me in my true stature, you would realize that I am not taller than this," indicating a tiny height with his fingers.

While the significance of this self-deprecation will be replayed and recontextualized at the scene of Steiner's murder-suicide, for the moment, as soon as the recorded sentence is played back, the sounds of a thunderstorm startle the guests and Steiner himself, who jumps up from his chair. The intense loudness of atmospheric turbulence and the emotional turmoil linger, accentuated by Steiner as he refers to nuclear war in his conversation with Marcello in the children's bedroom. There, their words are underscored by almost imperceptible percussive electronic sounds that add an eerie tension to Steiner's somber talk about the dark night's silence that "weighs" on him.

Outside however, there was no thunderstorm. The scene has no acoustic detail, no ambient noises or sounds, and is mostly enveloped by a haunting artificiality, providing a stark auditory contrast with the recording of the storm and other natural sounds that seems to underline the incapacity of intimate relational listening to achieve human integration in tune with the environment. In their schizophonic resounding, as recorded sounds invariably detached from original phenomenal events, the storm and other sounds bring to the room the false impression of an unfolding event, and then play as traces of the mysterious vox mundi: cacophonous, heterogeneous, and incommensurate with the modern perceptual experience of the world. They seem to refer back to the conversation in the church about the sounds "we are no longer used to listening to."

Shortly thereafter, the woman of color sings a ballad of British origin, "Ten Thousand Miles"—a moving declaration of a lover's farewell—and the room resounds with her singularly human, vocal, and instrumental beauty. Female and racially other, the singer reproposes Fellini's emphasis on gendered and culturally situated vocalization. To the vocalic pleasure is attached a shift of cultural expressivity and foreshadowing, since the song verbalizes painful departure and physical distance. More broadly, following the writer/traveler's masculinist, orientalist ramblings and her singing of the "oriental" song, this British ballad reasserts Western musical culture.

This interplay of colonized and colonizer musics hints at the fossilization of history and ideology in postcolonial bourgeois entertainment, where traces of the past are present in unquestioned and commodified ways. Starting at the beginning of the scene, the oriental piece accompanies exotically, as sheer sonic materiality, the white guests' conversations, with the singer smiling ambiguously when the orientalist ramblings start, never speaking or intermingling with the white guests. As a visual correlative to the writer's orientalism, the camera frames her in postcard-perfect shots, clichéd as object/Other in the room. She might well be one of the writer's oriental love conquests. Her sonorous playing/presence unobtrusively continues to underscore with alterity the guests' jarring chatter and more pensive conversations. The shift to her singing the British ballad calls attention to voice and music as cultural carriers and articulators of identity, difference, and fragmentation. She loosens her singular cultural aural anchor and blends in with the language of Western hegemony. This transcultural aural imaging of the oriental Other plays with the politics of its colonial matrix.

In contrast to the prevalent sonic obsessiveness of *La dolce vita*, Steiner's party episode is crafted by Fellini and Rota with extreme subtlety. The subtlety extends to the replay of the taped party conversation following Steiner's and his children's deaths. The recording is accompanied by the uneasy sound of a rarefied, repetitive, oscillating electroacoustic hum (Corbella 2011, p. 19) that both absorbs and conveys the horrific tension of the moment.

In sum, the significance of sound is explored throughout *La dolce vita* as affect, perceptual intuition, and cultural expressivity. More fugitively, it offers meditations on the tension between sound as identifiable meaning (Emma's naïve referential response to the bird songs on tape, as if the birds were present), and sound as resonance, as an enigmatic audibility that suspends signification and invites reflexivity, instead of naming. Such meditation is fostered by Fellini's use of the intensified sound of the wind throughout his films—and at the end of *La dolce vita* with the heightened roaring of waves that seems to impede Marcello's hearing and understanding Paola. After the nocturnal orgy, in the aggressive antimimetic texture of the waves' overwhelming sound, there is all that goes, contingently and idiosyncratically, unspoken. Deafened and numbed by the spectacularized life/noise of "the sweet life," as well as by the nihilism of Steiner's intellectual alternative, Marcello can experience no musical or listening revelation, but a sonic transfiguration of his psychic state of loss, confusion, and disconnection.

Casanova's Obsessions in Sound Takes

The transfigurative use of sound as an evocative and unsettling auditory short circuit to a character's mental state (not as the traditional leitmotif that accompanies/follows the character), and as phenomenal aural event that imbues the sense of a place and event, finds fascinating and complex realization in Fellini's more experimental films, such as *Fellini - Satyricon* and *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976). Despite his lack of interest in electronic music, for these soundtracks Rota collaborated with electronic music composers, overseeing the musical project,

and was regularly present in the recording studios even when others were in charge of the orchestration (Perugini 2009, 25).

Fellini - Satyricon's electroacoustic scape of broken figurations and musics is set up as consonant aural manifestation and amplification of the film's unbridled visual fragmentation and color saturation.

Rome's licentious residencies, caves, and strange constructions peopled by gaudy crowds are inundated with overlapping sonorities borrowed from pieces of preexisting contemporary music (by experimental composers Tod Dockstader, Ilhan Mimaroğlu, Henri Pousseur, and Andrew Rudin) and recreated archaic fragments of ethnic Tibetan, Indonesian, African, and Neapolitan musics played anticonventionally and distortedly with traditional instruments. A peculiar experiment in the Rota–Fellini collaboration, *Fellini - Satyricon* constitutes an eclectic unicum composed under the sounding key of aleatory estrangement and worldly reverberations resulting in a "total patchwork" (Miceli 2010, 410) that magnifies Roman decadent and intemperate life (Brophy 2004, 202).

In *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, the decadent memoirs of erotic obsession and ordeals are plunged into a sort of atemporal tale of excess thanks to the interweaving of lush visuals and extravagant sounds. The insistent sound starts with the long opening titles that give the sensory register a repetitive, percussive, mesmerizing tone. The esoteric opening piece plays like a spell in which one is induced to lose consciousness. A visual correlative to the music is offered by quivering waters and vague reflections in blurred colors that inundate (us) with indefinite stimuli. Casanova's embodied process of memory is being engaged, along with a cinematic appeal (or catering) to the senses, in a key of abstraction. Entry into both representation and the memoirs is signaled with the sounds of waves and a slow camera zoom out that gives architectural contour to the abstract water reflections, while the sound of church bells takes us, with a dissolve and reverse cut, to a cacophonous carnival in Venice's Rialto, replete with masks and fireworks. The realistic and hyperamplified sounds that introduce and propel scenes, and the eerie, disruptive, or obsessive sonification that orchestrates mental and performative spaces, constitute the jarring register of the film.

If sound obsession in *La dolce vita* indicated, as Fellini pointed out, a perennial exposure to music functioning as emotional analgesic, in *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* sound and obsession take on a dehumanizing reciprocity, which is cast on a body that is figuratively reduced to a mechanistic instrument. Casanova's compulsive sexuality finds a correlative in a mechanical bird (playing the musical theme "Magic Bird") that accompanies/arouses his sexual performances. When wound up, it moves up and down and flaps its wings, while resounding with synthetic metallic vibrations.

The videogame-like musicalizing of sexual encounters demystifies Casanova's sexual prowess as antierotic, camouflaged gymnastics. Staged as farcical simulacra of lust and lovemaking, as with the one-hour sex contest/spectacle with the coachman in Rome's British Embassy, or the communal rocking orgy at the Albergo dei Mori in Dresden, the sex acts of a wandering life culminate in infatuation with Rosalba at the court of Württemberg. A mechanical woman, a life-size toy made of wood and porcelain, like the mechanical bird, she emits disquieting and obsessive tinkling sounds as she squeakily moves to the score theme of "The Mechanical Doll."

The parable of sumptuous excess and ravenous pursuit of carnal pleasure ends with the recollected dream of Casanova and Rosalba who dance with the automated gestures and predetermined rhythm of a carillon duo, turning round on a frozen plastic Venetian lagoon. Memory and desire are cast as pathetic vanity, their sonic and choreographed repetition, as artifice. Casanova's erotic search is as false as the mechanical bird and doll, whose facial traits mirror his own. When he finally makes love to his double, the mechanical bird disappears. The mystery of woman is

nullified in or transferred to this automaton of narcissistic self-projection. The spectacle of male fears and fantasies, displayed in the magic lantern show inside the body / womb of the whale in the "Grande Mouna" episode (the whale's name recalls the vulgar Venetian term "mona" that means "cunt"), is accompanied by the musical theme of the mechanical doll, orchestrated in a circus variation and mixed with melodic fragments from the lullaby "Pin-Pinin" hummed by the Giantess as she bathes. The Giantess is the majestic saving woman who drew Casanova back to life when he had decided to commit suicide in the Thames. The musical phrasings work by insinuating sonic memories and contradictory affective figurations absent from the visual track. In the uproar of the Mouna's phantasmagoria, the Giantess's "Pin-Pinin" musicalizes Casanova's temporary regression and salvation as counterpoint to the antivitalist sounds of the mechanical doll that encapsulate his erotic conquests, while the lullaby sonically insinuates the impossibility of innocence.

The sensuous rocking of Rota-Fellini's score throughout the film imbues Casanova's memoirs with ambiguities and stridencies that sonically embody his contrived quest for self-actualization via hollow infatuation / consummation / dispersion.

The Felliniesque and Musicking

With the term "musicking," Christopher Small (1998) indicates how we need to think of music not as a thing, but an act that encompasses all musical activity from composing to performing to listening. Sounding out the felliniesque, we discover that "musicking" is intrinsic to it. From Nino Rota's compositional work, to the music and sounds that coalesce with Fellini's images—and to listening as a transformative act—Fellini's musicking propels his characters and audiences to explore the memories, dreams, desires, and fears of being human in urban, natural, historical, psychic, imaginary, and mythologized spaces, all bursting with sound as the stuff of life.

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23

Fellini and the Aesthetics of Intensity

Paolo Bertetto

Intensity in Cinema

Intensity is a concept that can be essential in interpreting a film. A film consists of multiple levels of attraction that work together to produce both the form and the function of the work. Films try to captivate the viewer; they need a public. Therefore, they must create a certain dynamic, a montage of attractions, as Eisenstein (1942, 230–233) had perceptively claimed as early as 1923, when he was focused on performance in both theater and cinema. Intensity is created by the attractions that make up the movement or flux of the work.

The concept of intensity—used in the converging fields of art and aesthetics—is related to both the form of the film and the effects it produces. We can thus discuss intensity by reflecting on the most relevant components of a work and on the reception of the work by spectators. In fact, intensity is marked by the changes in and production of energy that define a work, as well as by the efficiency of the communicative relationship, the ability to seduce the viewer. Throughout his life Eisenstein reflected on cinema's capacity to produce emotions and, consequently, to reach the deepest layers of consciousness, always connecting his discourse on film with the viewer. Pathos and extasis, imagination and rhythm, are the means by which cinema produces new intensities and objectifies fundamental anthropological processes (Eisenstein 1964, 2002).

While other concepts may fail to grasp the complexity of cinema and the potentially multifaceted structure of a work, intensity links the inside and the outside, intentionality and projection. A film is designed on the basis of the dissemination of a number of attractive qualities that make the reception of the film a variable and undulating process. But the production of intensity is related to the ability to create alternatives to conventional communication. Intensity requires the activation of otherness with respect to the norm.

Thus, difference and intensity are constitutive aspects of artistic cinema in general and of auteur cinema in particular, both being other than common discourse, standard messaging, and the banality of existing forms of communication.

Intensity is distinguished by variabilities in magnitude and level, and thus by an articulation of intrinsic differences. In *Différence et répétition* and in *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, Gilles Deleuze

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke,
Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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(with Félix Guattari in the latter work) strongly connects intensity to difference and variability: "The expression 'difference of intensity' is a tautology…. Every intensity is differential, by itself a difference" (Deleuze 1994, 222). He also notes, "It is always by means of an intensity that thought comes to us" (Deleuze, 1994, 144). The connection of intensity to thought is fundamental for Deleuze and Guattari: "The concept… has no energy, only intensities" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, 21). Intensity distances thought from the danger of dogmatism, which is assertive and repetitive. Intensity is a multifaceted dynamism that concerns sensation and that permeates the work, makes it an action. It underlies both differential entities and their transformability, and therefore, it implies becoming rather than stable being, rigidity, fixity, eternal sameness. Intensity therefore does not exclude excess and immoderation, yet does not imply it. In its most sophisticated and subtle manifestation, intensity involves movement rather than clear-cut resolution.

The concept of intensity relates to another Deleuzian idea, that of flux. And flux too concerns not just the way a work functions but how it is perceived and how the elements are dynamized within the expressive fabric. Flux militates against the idea of the work as a structure, in favor of the process of creation, of an endless succession of sensations, and of their interaction, which count more than structural components or some ultimate ideal of harmony.

Intensity is the textual nucleus of the emotion produced in the viewer-consumer. It makes the text variegated, seductive, and attractive. Sensations are produced by differential dynamisms triggered in one's imagination and vision, and promoting ongoing transformation. Dynamism, the flux of variable forces, and differential processes, related primarily to sensation but also to forms and concepts, are intrinsically characteristic of cinema (see Bertetto 2016, 13–64).

Intensity is an important key to thinking about Fellini's films. Fellini is one of those auteurs who, with great intentionality, construct their films as variegated and multifaceted journeys of attraction that aim to produce sensations and captivate viewers, drawing upon the seductions of other popular forms as well. I will focus on two films that embody intensity in multiple ways, at times explicitly and with great appeal, at times in less obvious hidden and more tormented ways: *La dolce vita* (1960) and *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976).

La dolce vita

La dolce vita was conceived and realized as a polyphony of the intensive, built on three vast axes—the first two evident and the third hidden. The first is the attractional dynamics of Roman nightlife as seen through the eyes of the protagonist, journalist Marcello Rubini. The second is the personal journey of a difficult, unsatisfied man, who is captivated by the vivacity of Roman life and susceptible to amorous adventures. The third and least obvious is the probing of the tragedy of existence, death, and pain, that demolishes the protagonist's illusions and brings him face to face with the void.

To begin with, *La dolce vita* depicts the Roman world that revolves around cinema and nightlife, intertwining heterogeneous environments and characters who are marked by a strong desire for new sorts of experience and amusement. Together they embody a new image of Italy. Not only does the film abandon the poverty and hardship depicted by neorealism, along with depictions of a society that faces the contradictions of rapid economic and industrial development, but it brings to the big screen—with force and unexpected comprehensiveness—the modern world, as perceived through cinema and media communication. Together with *L'avventura* (Michelangelo Antonioni 1960), but more obviously and systematically, Fellini's film reveals the forms of social life in a modernity that is overdetermined and conditioned by the invasive techniques of

communication in a technologically advanced society. Fellini uses situations related to show business and Roman nightlife in order to intrigue and captivate the viewer. They are attractions, intensities, "impure" but bona fide, that run throughout the film and demonstrate the force of the spectacular. In their valorization of the spectacular, they embody a fundamental aspect of cinema in an immediate and direct form that activates the viewers' curiosity and voyeurism and guarantees a variety of intensities that never diminishes but rather modifies and transforms itself continually.

The major scenes with the diva Sylvia and the soirée at the castle in Bassano di Sutri are intertwined with other complicated scenes: the night that Marcello spends with Maddalena (first at the nightclub, then in the prostitute's basement apartment), the false miracle with its media circus, and Steiner's murder-suicide with its unbearable charge of horror and intensity. But, together with these primary nuclei, other episodes, from the statue of Christ transported by helicopter to the so-called "orgy" and subsequent walk on the beach, follow a narrative course that seems both spontaneous and planned.

In truth, the chain of unexpected situations in *La dolce vita* does not reflect mere spontaneity; it is a complex construction that is brought to life through chance. This combination of construction and chance is an aspect of Fellinian creativity that is apparently contradictory but perhaps for that reason quite effective. Making that which is carefully constructed appear as chance adds tension to the narrated events and ensures an invisible and apparently inexplicable, though definitely powerful, intensity. Fellini is fully aware of his compositional project. "We have to make a Picassoesque sculpture, break it into pieces and then reassemble it according to our whims" (quoted in Kezich 2002, 193). Fellini imagines a deconstructed, anomalous form that contains the contours of force but dismantles the visible whole into Cubist fragments.

The film therefore is more like an illustrated news magazine than a fresco. But it is also a recording of the scenes in which Marcello takes part, for he remains the pivot of the film. The idea of the Picassoesque work is interpreted not only as the breaking down of the world but also as a binding of diverse realities that have been dismantled and revealed through the gaze of the auteur.

Some critics see 12 or 11 macrosequences (Costa 2011, 27–56 and Canga 2004, 31–33), others 7 (Manganaro 2009, 156–158), or 7 with a prologue, an intermission, and an epilogue (Kezich 2002, 199–202; Bondanella 1992, 154–155). Nearly all the episodes propose singularity marked by imaginative difference, characterized by anomalous situations and behaviors that are bound to evoke diverse emotional reactions—from curiosity to arousal. They provoke in the audience a tension, variable but always active. The novel, the glamourous, the unexpected, the prohibited, the transgressive—these are notable emotional triggers, though there is also space for more traditional sentiment, as in the episodes with the girlfriend Emma and the protagonist's father. This compositional procedure aligns with the idea that auteur cinema is close to genre cinema, founded on a concatenation of tensions and straightforward emotions that evoke various emotional responses, from participatory complicity to amazement, and even trauma. This procedure is always marked by subtle anomalies, by the introduction of a surprise, by the appearance of something unforeseeable, which all guarantee a productive variation of intensity.

These anomalous narrative elements are then organized according to a principle of alternating sequences with different tonalities and characters. At times even within a macrosegment, there are microsegments of tension and rhythmic contrast. An exemplary macrosequence is the Sylvia phase of the film. From her arrival at the airport to the press conference and then to the climb up the bell tower; from the nightclub to the car ride in the country, the episode in the Trevi Fountain, and the clash with the actress's husband; the film goes through compositional and tonal variations—from frenetic rhythm to the expansion of time to contemplative pause. There are

differences in ambience, behaviors, and characters, all of which distribute and articulate intensity. In this macrosequence, as in the entire film, Fellini demonstrates an extraordinary mastery of filmic time. And the transition from dynamic and fast scenes to slow and reflexive ones continually guarantees a textual and emotional development through difference.

This kind of abrupt transitioning is evident in the movement from Emma's suicide attempt to the arrival of Sylvia, in the intensive night with Sylvia becoming a tranquil encounter with Steiner in church, in the shift from the chaotic "miracle" to Steiner's sedate party, and in the exhaustion of the "orgy" giving way to the wondrous apparition of the fish on the shore. It is harshest in the transition from Emma and Marcello in bed to Steiner's suicide.

Marcello's figure constitutes the film's second axis of attractional intensity. First of all, Marcello Rubini is clearly part of the mechanism of secondary identification that characterizes cinema and leads the public through the variety and spectacularity of 1960s Rome, provoking with his glance the voyeurism of the film spectator. The protagonist reveals himself to be not a superficial figure but layered: divided by desire, curiosity about the realities of nocturnal Rome, and his literary ambitions. He realizes his existence is aimless, but he is still fascinated and intrigued by the environment and adventures of the café culture.

He is a subject without a strong and stable identity and seems to go with the flow of situations and intensities. In part as a subject-agent (the adventures with Maddalena and Jane and his attempt to seduce Sylvia), but more often as a means of connection between different worlds, he generally acts as a voyeur who does not intervene but only watches (Pravadelli 2016, 89–99). He is not a well-rounded character as in the neorealist tradition; he is an opening, a journey, a subject in transformation and, in this, he resembles characters from the most significant modernist films. At his core, Marcello is a subject in search of himself, thrown into given circumstances. He is immersed in a world that is dominated by inauthenticity and the extreme difficulty of retrieving lost meanings and equilibriums. He is a character linked with existentialism, similar to and yet different from the characters of Antonioni and Godard, figures who no longer have an exceptional and heroic determination but who experience the absence of God and the lack of meaning in life in a secular and undramatic way. They are characters who experience the ineffectiveness of traditional identity models, and who make the search for intensity the explicit and implicit axis of their imaginary lives.

Pathways of Intensity in *La dolce vita*

The segment with the flying statue of Christ and the extended sequence of the false miracle underline the strong and unexpected relationship between religion and spectacle. The segment of the false miracle is not only great cinema but also, and above all, an illustration of how spectacle and media communications have become essential in the contemporary world. The spectacle machine is exhibited with intensity (see Burke 1996, 267–272; Bertetto 2014, 32–37) as Fellini insists on showing the apparatus of the *mise-en-scène*, organizing a rehearsal of the "reality" that is to be shot, exactly as if it were a set up for a fiction film. By foregrounding the means and methods of media communication in this sequence, Fellini anticipates Debord's theory of the spectacle of society (1967), articulating among other things:

1 Relationships with a multitude of spectators, that is, viewers, who in this case are both present and absent.
2 The choreographic configuration of the visible, spatially organized according to non-natural criteria that correspond to the effect of the spectacle.

3 The more or less simulated character of the performances/actions of people within the frame.
4 The transformation of the offered performances into strong and intensive images; the image and the spectacle in a game of mirrors reflect and reverberate systematically.

In the macrosequence, the filmic image does not appear as a mere visible representation or a representation of the visible, but as a visible composition—i.e., situated in a distinct and formalized configuration.

Other elements of spectacularization emerge in the staging of *La dolce vita*. It is not a coincidence that Anita Ekberg/Sylvia wading into the Trevi Fountain has become perhaps the most famous image of Italian cinema. All the sequences with Ekberg are devised with the possibility of turning any microevent into a show. Fellini works the image of Anita, making her a scenic vector, an element of particular visual intensity. All the behaviors of the diva produce a dimension of great power and undeniable excess. Sylvia is always the creator of the show that she performs for others. But in the ascent of the St. Peter's bell tower and especially when she wades in the waters of the Trevi, Sylvia does not reveal herself to a vast audience of bystanders; she has only one spectator (Marcello). Fellini does not turn this into a show; it is a pure image, with absolute intensity that collects and condenses the power of cinema and its ability to redefine in a completely new way—the idea of image. The image is affirmed in and of itself as that which establishes a new category and dimension of being.

In this respect, Fellini mirrors Heidegger (1977, 129): "world picture…is not a picture of the world, but the world conceived and grasped as a picture." "To be new is peculiar to the world that has become picture" (132). And the world *is* "Representatio" (131), which here clearly has a philosophical and not aesthetic value. (On Fellini overcoming the textual model of representation, see Burke 1996, 21–24, and Burke, in Burke and Waller 2002, 26–43.) Essence no longer gives itself as a thing in and of itself, but as an image. And the image is the form in which any entity finds its objectification—the way in which the thing is in so far as it is presented. This characteristic captures an aspect of absolute novelty to our age. And Fellini's images have a strength and intensity that show this in an exemplary way.

In this presentation of being in its entirety, the image of *La dolce vita* seems to acquire a sort of "haecceity" (singularity) and take on unique immediacy, which strikes the viewer and creates a singular and emotional bond with the public. This particular effect of the *La dolce vita* image reflects some of the characteristics of haecceity as theorized by Deleuze: a "power" composed of "different degrees," that guarantees experiences of "active and passive affections, that is of intensity" (Deleuze and Parnet 1996, 111).

Affirmation of the strength of the pure image and its symbolic resonances also runs through the sequence of the night party at the aristocrats' castle, in the unexpected itineraries that develop in extremely suggestive places, and among the characters. In this case, the image has a more subtle and even secret meaning and vibrates with intensity like a watermark in the fabric of the film.

The night celebration reveals a state of boredom paired with a dynamic of sentimental and erotic deception. The encounter between Marcello and Maddalena, a conversation in two different rooms of the castle that is brought to a close by Maddalena's flight (the visual space serving as a symbol for the impossibility of communication), constitutes only the first part of a journey into a dark labyrinth in search of nothing, marked by the intensity of the void that the participants try vainly to fill.

The symbolic value of the celebration of nothingness ("our feasts are high-class funerals" says one of the brothers, the owners of the house) and its movements without aim or meaning are a

mise en abyme, a microcosm of the whole film—and an expression of the third axis of intensity. The aimless pilgrimage in search of ephemeral surprise is also a kind of metaphor for the existential and social mobility of Marcello, who is incapable of defining a coherent life project and who is instead open to experiments that may provide moments of pleasure. The metaphorical character of the nocturnal pilgrimage is underlined by some of its particular aspects: the fact that it happens in the absence of light, in spaces removed from ordinary life, seems to underscore the absence not only of the light of God, but also of the logic of an ordered society. Its metaphorical value enriches the segment with a subtle force, with an excess value, the vivid intensity of further symbolic tension. The beauty of images is strengthened by their significance; the nihilism of existence is juxtaposed with the useless beauty of forms in the dark.

In the aimless nocturnal wandering, then, desire and enjoyment constitute an intermittent line, almost a rhizome, that emerges and hides, encourages and closes off. Marcello finds Maddalena and with her begins a verbal game of promises and deceptions; it is she who directs and he who is left in uncertainty. Affirmation of Maddalena's desire for and interest in Marcello is denied or marginalized by her capriciousness, which allows another man to easily seduce her while she speaks to Marcello from another room. In *La dolce vita*, more than in Fellini's other famous films including *8½* (1963), woman's desire is independent of phallic and masculine domination and at times presents itself in free and/or perverse forms. Woman appears open to her sexual drives and unrestrained by moralistic concerns. Her desire is multiple and cannot be closed off by a monogamous relationship, much as male desire is often deemed to be. But perhaps to fulfill itself, it requires an excess of technique, an element of staging that makes it more sophisticated and anomalous, freer from traditional conditioning.

Woman's desire appears again in the castle sequence in anomalous, if not perverse, form. A seance is, at a certain point, disrupted by the trance of a woman, Loretta, who loses control, possessed by a spirit and calling out to Giulio (one of the masters of the castle). Her excitement exceeds the norms of behavior and the prim style of the party. It is a form of sexual exaltation without the sex, while the other erotic experiences evoked in the sequence, that of Maddalena and of Marcello with the American painter Jane, unfold without altering narrative tone. The experiences are evoked rather than shown. Loretta's trance, in contrast, is unregulated, almost an ecstatic escape from the self. The excitement is produced in the absence of the invoked male and therefore seems to attest to an anomalous regime in which the psychic fervor of the woman does not require the cooperation of male sexuality: it is a kind of hysterical enjoyment, which refers to psychopathology more than to the psychology of pleasure (one thinks of Freud's, and before him Charcot's, studies on hysteria).

If the night party is perhaps the moment of the film's maximum suggestiveness, then the peak of its tension, violence, and horror—largely unanticipated—is the sequence in which Marcello learns of Steiner's suicide and murder of his children. This tragedy, which disrupts the illusions of the protagonist and confronts him with the void, is the third axis of intensity, its concealed manifestation (Figure 23.1). At the base of *La dolce vita* is the discovery of a negative specter that roots itself in subjectivity, a sense of shortcoming and lack of fulfillment. Throughout the film, the most significant characters experience frustration and dissatisfaction. Marcello is not the only one to experience the openness and freedom of nocturnal Rome as an amorphous and aimless path, which leaves behind a bitter taste and above all a strong impression of non-sense, or at least of useless and incongruous action. Beyond the many attractions of Roman life and the small immediate pleasures, Marcello's existential adventure is a journey into the unauthentic, the subtle flow of a deep disquietude. Characters such as Maddalena or Emma experience, in different ways, a failure to realize their goals. Even if Emma's world appears to Marcello as limited and claustrophobic, it is nonetheless marked by a lively sensibility and a strong emotional participation.

Figure 23.1 Marcello confronts the death of Steiner (screen left slumped in chair) in a *mise-en-scène* that recalls, in extreme contrast, his earlier party. *Source*: *La dolce vita* (1960). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Riama Film in coproduction with Cinecittà and Pathé Consortium Cinéma. Screen grab captured by Frank Burke from the 2014 DVD version.

The parable of Maddalena, rich and bored, is intertwined with the contradictions of female desire and becomes entangled with the dynamics of behavioral experimentation and emotional indecision.

But the essence of the emptiness that runs through the whole film as a watermark is the specter of self-destruction and the nightmare of death that affect even those spaces that appear more orderly and balanced. Steiner's murder-suicide is the explosion of a metaphysical threat that becomes a psychic obsession leading to the disintegration of an ostensible equilibrium. The emergence of a radical nonrationality takes the form of cruelty and death. The tragedy of the Steiner family means that no defense exists against profound pessimism and that existence is threatened even amid apparently solid conditions.

That existence cannot be defended from death, from the nothingness that threatens and oppresses it, lies at the root of another deep and disturbing intensity that pervades the film. At once terrible and intolerable, it eventually disrupts every certainty and every possible expression of existential order. The difficult intensity of negativity is one of the film's important determining factors, the secret and hidden core, bitter and harsh, that lies beyond the intensive-dynamic forms of attractions. But nothingness is by no means a rigid and static element. It is the dynamic extreme of openness at the core of existence; it is the form that the experience of radical vertigo assumes on the aesthetic horizon. Fellini's great talent as seen in *La dolce* vita lies in his ability to bring together the intensity of the void and a wide variety of spectacular attractions and make them interact.

Il Casanova di Federico Fellini

Il Casanova di Federico Fellini is one of the richest and most powerful expressions of intensity in Fellini's filmography, a complex variation on the model and spirit of *La dolce vita*. In new ways, its intensity passes through eros and ritual, as well as analysis of the subject and of existence, ever inventing grandiose and unpredictable visual configurations. No less than *La dolce vita*, *Il Casanova*

di Federico Fellini is an affirmation of cinema as a powerful mechanism for producing sensation. The film is a tensive form that assembles disparate objects, heterogeneous characters, and multiple behavioral modalities in a gallery of wonders, much like a cabinet of curiosities. It is an overwhelming flow that proposes the aesthetics of cinema in a symbolic and exponential form: a centrifugal aesthetic, a line of escape that seems to be not the creation of a structure or the development of a pure intuition, but the expansive performance of a symphony orchestrated in different ways, the subtle force of a visual and musical wave that surges over time.

The opening of the film distances itself profoundly from mimesis in order to affirm an alternative visual logic. The transformation of nature into hypersignification, or into the sign of a sign, is one way to create a visual anomaly that produces intensity (see Burke 1996, 223–237). The anomalous writing opens the film medium to new possibilities, affirming an auteur's radical point of view. The auteur is—etymologically—an *auctor* who expands the world, produces a broadening of the universe, brings to life something new that was not there before.

The evocation of the Venetian carnival is immediately an adventure in the abundance of shapes, masks, and disguises that Fellini and costume designer Danilo Donati, in all their inventiveness, bring brilliantly to life. Some scenes, along with some elements of scenography and choreography—beginning with the bridge and the movements of the crowd—recall the splendid Venetian episode of *Der müde Tod* (*Destiny* 1921), the first revelation of Fritz Lang's art, just as Giacomo Casanova's waiting for a gondola that will take him to an island recalls other passages of Lang's work. Although Fellini is not generally associated with citation, in *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, the writing is so hypersignificant that it evokes particularly meaningful images from film history.

The enunciation of a poem dedicated to the female sex ("Mona" or "vulvia") and the emergence and the subsequent sinking of the great black head of Venus establish a relationship with the city: "Aah Venessia! Aah Venissa! Aah Venusia!" The image of sexual fertility together with that of nonfulfillment announces in a diptych of undoubted symbolic value the imaginary path of the film. A letter from Fellini to the poet Andrea Zanzotto (Zanzotto 1988, 3–4), author of the ode to the "Mona," is extremely significant. "The black head of a woman is a great divinity of lagoons, a Mediterranean mother, the mysterious female who lives in each of us"; she is destined to remain in the waters of the Grand Canal, "down there forever, unknown and unreachable."

The myth of the great sexual mother returns during the sequence of Casanova's renunciation of suicide and his meeting with the female giant. In fact, the giant woman is also the figure of the great Mediterranean mother and the symbolic creatress of life that Fellini discovered in his meetings with the Jungian psychologist Ernst Bernhard (see Kezich 2002, 215–221; Bondanella 1992, 171–177; and *Il libro dei sogni/The Book of Dreams*, Fellini 2007/2008). In the film, this figure is opposed to Giacomo's real mother, who, when he meets her in Dresden, is not only estranged from her son but incapable of emotive, maternal, experience and expression.

Despite the initial evocation, however, the figure of the Great Mother does not have a central function in the film; it is overcome by the multiplicity and singularity of Giacomo's erotic experiences. Casanova's first amorous encounter shows an abnormal and different type of sexuality. The encounter with the nameless nun, a lover of the French ambassador, is intentionally constructed as a ballet, a ritual, a ceremonial game rather than an experience of desire or instinctive drive. The ballet of sexuality offers itself as a new anomaly, proposed as a characterization of both sex and the protagonist, and as a sign of their singularity.

In fact, the creation of singularity is a fundamental aspect of Fellini's poetics and of his film. It manifests itself through the scenography—the invented, artificial, visible—but above all through the ritualized behavior of the protagonists, deprived of immediacy; the affirmation of ceremony; and abstraction from the strength and naturalness of desire. The characters seem to experience a

disincarnate enjoyment in a frozen and lifeless ritual, and for this reason the encounter assumes a uniqueness and peculiarity. The ceremonial coldness and antinaturalness remain dominant and reveal Fellini's distance from Casanova and from the sexuality depicted.

The encounter is observed by the ambassador, who deliberately chooses a position of voyeurism and watches from the eye of a fish drawn on the wall (a detail that recalls the eye of the monstrous fish that appears in detail at the end of *La dolce vita*). The perverse nature of the scene is not unlike that of the other erotic experiences of Giacomo, recalled during his imprisonment at the Piombi prison. The exhibitionism of the nun, like the masochism of the woman who wants to punish her own backside and the pale and washed out young woman pretending to faint—thus stimulating the predatory taste of Casanova—are episodes that outline the extravagant and contorted dynamics of female desire.

Casanova's eros, by contrast, appears dissociated from desire, a bodily exercise that does not involve phantasmal dynamics. Casanova is never moved by the "manque à," or lack, which for Lacan links desire to the existential condition (see Lacan 1977). His eros is perfectly autonomous, privileges pleasure, and does not need to be fantasized as desire. It is a kind of affirmation of the power of the subject and its drive, which aims to cancel, in the repetition of the act, the dimension of an absence.

At the end of the encounter with the nun, Casanova speaks with the voyeur behind the wall, asking for recognition of his political and intellectual qualifications. This is the first evidence that the subject Casanova is characterized not only by masculine sexuality, but also by cultural and political interests. But the world prefers to privilege his virility and his openness to sex over his pretensions to being an educated man and a free thinker. The historical and cinematic characters of Casanova are therefore articulated in a double register. Strangely, Fellini's statements about his protagonist understate Casanova's complexity. He is neither a "non-person" nor a "void" (Fellini in Betti and Angelucci, 1975 140), but, on the contrary, a dynamic and elusive subject, characterized not by a rigid identity but by varied and fluid modes of behavior and transformation.

This variety of elements, gradually unveiled, enriches the film and outlines diversified flows of intensity. The character of Casanova escapes the boundaries of classical narrative. By exceeding all simplification of identity, he embodies existential experimentation that unfolds in singular forms, remaining ever problematic and multifaceted.

The anomaly of Casanova's behavior and his activity as a free thinker betray him to the Venetian Inquisitors of the Tribunale Segreto, which intercepts him in the middle of the night while he is crossing the stormy lagoon. His trial, carried out in a dark room where he is placed low while the judges loom high above, not only intensifies the nightmare of his capture, but explicitly recalls the model of the psychic and spatial subalternity of Dreyer's heroine in *La passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (*The Passion of Joan of Arc* 1928). The film's tendency toward citation is further established in the segment dedicated to Casanova's abandonment by Henriette, in which an image of lit candles in superimposition refers again to *Der müde Tod*, along with *Vertigo* (Alfred Hitchcock 1958) and *La chambre verte* (*The Green Room*, François Truffaut 1978).

Then all of sudden, represented by a sharp cut (which is also a sudden burst of intensity), Casanova, having escaped from the Piombi prison and from Venice, appears in Paris in the magnificent house of the Marquise d'Urfé, elevated to an environment of great refinement and elegance. The first image shows a dinner with guests dressed in sophisticated and personalized ways, with singular faces that constitute an effective hieroglyph. The objects on the table, the glasses, the bottles, the dishes, contribute to delineate a particular space, certainly anomalous and heterodox, and affirm decoration and appearance. On the walls, three panels of fabric rhythmically split the image with an effect of imperfect symmetry. Then the shots dedicated to the

characters gradually outline abnormal figures, extravagant configurations, creating a universe of magic and highly evocative esotericism, traversed by multiple visual intensities.

It is a poetics of beauty that exalts not the "splendor of truth" of which the young Godard once spoke (Godard 1989, 245), but, on the contrary, the splendor of the false. The world depicted is a carnival of wonders, a cabinet of curiosities, that transfigures beings in a universe of unreality and beauty. This explosion of sophistication and visual charm creates a succession of intensities in which difference opens up refined new configurations. Beauty and elegance are the affirmation not of the natural but of artifice. It is an idea of a cinema (and an art) that is radically antirealist and wholly constructed.

The highly refined image is configured in rigorous and decorative forms, capable of balancing the forces in the visual field, or creating always sophisticated vectors of gestures and expressions, or of color and objectivity. The environments and grand scenographies, as well as the smaller spaces, are constructed with an attention to structural design and to cosmetic effectiveness. They generally have visual elements that light up the image, give it a particular beauty, and together evoke the past and sublimate it to a level of absolute tension. As always, Fellini pays more attention to the image itself than to connections between shots, to montage. The image is strong and refined. The visual articulation of the narration can occur simply through a shot–reverse shot (for example, in the Venetian sequence at the table with the woman obsessed with her own backside), but the micro details that define the scene remain pregnant with meaning. In the most significant examples of editing, the film proceeds not by an accumulation of elements but by a succession of images, guaranteeing an effect of novelty or surprise—according to a compositional model that returns in Fellini's other most significant films.

In *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, the image has a surplus force, an excessive immediacy that almost makes it emerge from the picture to present itself to the spectator. This singular power of the image has the capacity to break free from its context, to propose itself as exceptional. It is as if the image were acquiring material form, becoming touchable, perceptible—as in the 3D movies of the 1950s and more recently—only more so. The image produced exemplifies the nature of configuration, of exhibition and accumulation, of the "confrontation of world views," that Heidegger considers an essential element of the image in the contemporary age (Heidegger 1977, 134). In *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, the intersection of action, gestures, scenic spaces, decorations, and erotic experiences delineates images endowed with intrinsic force. Dynamics of pure and/or varied intensity, of hybrid and/or fluid intensity, are brought to life, thanks as well to Fellini's extraordinary ability to compose a symphony of rhythms.

The Staging of a Staging

The issue of Giacomo Casanova's subjectivity, on the other hand, traverses the entire film (as is logical in a biopic), but acquires a deep, even difficult and painful, significance in times of crisis and, of course, toward the end, in old age. The attempted suicide in London is charged with performative intensity. Casanova wears his gala garments and recites Tasso entering the Thames to prepare for death, intentionally crafting a noble and aristocratic figure for the presumed end of his days. His attitude attests to his existential project, configured as an open staging, a conception of life and the world, a ritual in which all beings are redefined in a horizon of ceremony and fiction. Even at the extreme moment of death, Casanova does not give up performance and stagecraft, but reveals it in a particular form. Staging is thus revealed as the fundamental axis of the construction of the character's life—an axis that can be illustrated in exemplary fashion given the nature of cinema.

Casanova's affirmation as a character who finds his own truth in being staged opens up a significant chain of symbolic figures and doublings. The whole film is precisely the staging of a staging. Thus, the exaltation of staging shifts from the character to the filmic space, in a rich game of reflections, and, in this inventive vertigo, the metacinematographic nature of the film is affirmed, but above all Fellini devises a way to produce especially strong and effective intensity. In the staging's game of reflections, combined to infinity, Fellini establishes himself as a great artist/*metteur en scène* who exalts cinema's fundamental structure of artificial creation.

The film's ending again picks up the relationship with death and further projects the character into a metahistorical dimension at the border of what is human. Casanova's relationship with the mechanical doll is enriched with latent meanings. While it is a woman reduced to a sexual object, deprived of human identity and inscribed in a circuit of male satisfaction, it is also a sort of symbolic image of Casanova as the subject of a sexuality that is very often required by others, socially circumscribed, rather than associated with pleasure and choice. The mechanical puppet becomes the symbol of male sexual potency, but also, at times, an instrument at the whim of others. The mechanical doll is also the symbol of a general loss of humanity that eventually becomes the image of an era.

At the same time, however, the mechanical doll, an automaton that interacts with man, is, paradoxically, the closest thing to a human figure that Casanova meets in the castles of Württemberg and then of Count Waldstein, for whom he serves as librarian, mocked and tormented by German nobles and servants. One of the paradoxes of the film's conclusion is that humanity now appears inhumane and, on the contrary, it is the mechanical doll that seems human, for she upholds a semblance of sensitivity and sweetness. The figure of the automaton eventually transcends the context and Casanova himself, and delineates an opening onto the future, a possible projection toward the posthuman.

The finale of the film, with Casanova in his wretched room, unhappy and nostalgic for Venice, is the manifestation of mortal sadness and irrecuperable failure. Casanova thinks about Venice

Figure 23.2 Casanova and his automaton partner in the final scene of *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*. *Source*: *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1960). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Produzioni Europee Associati. Screen grab captured by Paolo Bertetto from the 2005 DVD version.

and imagines returning there at night, sees some elusive figures, above all women, but remains initially alone in a metaphysical square à la De Chirico. He is irremediably lonely, though ultimately accompanied by the mechanical doll, the paradoxical subject of loving feelings that he imagines only the automaton can guarantee. The mechanical doll is an inadequate alternative to the nothingness that consumes Casanova (Figure 23.2). A shot of Casanova's face interrupts this sad fantasy of Venice. His desperate eyes staring in the direction of the camera and the spectator signal the failure of being and the impending void, recalling the unrealized Fellini project "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna" ("The Journey of G. Mastorna") whose protagonist—perhaps the most profound of Fellini's figures and one repeatedly abandoned by the director only to resurface anew—was so closely tied to an obsession with dying.

The overwhelming force and intensity of Fellini's cinema, in *La dolce vita* as in *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, is realized precisely in the highly improbable and extremely productive intersection between the vertigo of nothingness and the chaos unleashed by fabrications, visual stimuli, imaginary figures, and attractions: an impossible synthesis of opposites that enriches the world.

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24

Egli Danza: Fellini's Contexts and Influence from Before Rossellini to Sorrentino and Beyond

Vito Zagarrio

Fellini at the Intersection(s)

Fellini's biography and filmography reveal a network of relationships that are fundamental to Italian and international culture. This network could be described as an elaborate intersection of media (comics, radio, cinema, television), styles (realism, antirealism), methodologies (both the ones he practices and the ones with which we can study him—for example, psychoanalysis), authorial strategies (from Roberto Rossellini to Paolo Sorrentino), generations (from Erminio Macario to Daniele Ciprì and Franco Maresco), and historical periods (from Fascism to the post-war period, from modern to postmodern).

This essay will illuminate these intersecting relationships, exploring both Fellinian modes of filmmaking and his legacy in Italy and beyond. What is most striking is the director's great versatility. He moved between comedy and tragedy, the realistic and the grotesque, popular and auteur cinema, working with a variety of people—in his early days Mario Mattoli, Rossellini, Pietro Germi, and Alberto Lattuada—and his name ultimately became associated with international directors whom he influenced and with whom he developed professional relationships. I will begin with the enormous influence that the "felliniesque" has had on postrealist (if not antirealist) cinema, from Spain's Pedro Almodóvar to the American John Waters.

Almodóvar has become the icon of postmodern, colorful, queer-positive cinema through films, such as *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón* (*Pepi, Luci, Bom and Other Girls Like Mom* 1980), *Matador* (1986), and *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* (*Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* 1988). The irony, the "bad taste," the rejection of realism, the provocativeness, the visionary qualities implicate Fellini. John Waters, as both film director and installation and conceptual artist, is similarly felliniesque, as is reflected in his icon, Divine, the plump transvestite protagonist of some of his most famous films. The tobacconist in *Amarcord* and the exuberant Saraghina of *8½* are predecessors of Edith Massey, the bizarre woman in several of Waters' early films—*Mondo Trasho* (1969), *Multiple Maniacs* (1970), and *Pink Flamingos* (1972)—films of a transgressive, cynical, and antiestablishment filmmaker. Waters' work, strongly "political" even if it claims to be merely "exploitation cinema," descends from Fellini, with a bit of Pier Paolo Pasolini mixed in.

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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Fellini's entire biographical and creative venture intriguingly embodies apparently polar opposites. On the one hand, his oeuvre constitutes *cinema d'autore* par excellence; on the other hand, he participated in popular *cinema di genere,* which has only recently been sanctioned by Italian cinema studies scholars. Fellini collaborated with Mario Mattoli on Macario's comedies; he experimented with an unfinished genre film by Osvaldo Valenti; he worked with Mario Bonnard, director of a vast number of films popular in nature. The director is both "artist," and "professional" or craftsman. Fellini was the source of cinematic dreams, but he was also a radio scriptwriter and a respected comics artist; he wrote screen plays for his colleagues and was available for adaptations of Hollywood films. Another apparent contradiction is addressed by Tullio Kezich. Piecing together Fellini's "brazenly anti-intellectual" background, he talks about the critics' suspicions with regard to Fellini's early work. Establishing an opposition between Visconti and Fellini, Kezich then marries them in one original, critical move: "if for André Bazin there exists the Hitchcocko-Hawksian, then there's no reason we can't have the Fellino-Viscontian" (Kezich 1988, 12). While Fellini became the oneiric director par excellence, his work identifying with antirealist if not surrealist cinema, he was also a major contributor to the neorealist aesthetic, thanks to his association with Rossellini, with whom he worked as cowriter, assistant director, and even actor. This raises the question: why and when did the transition from realism to antirealism or postrealism occur? Fellini told the critic Giovanni Grazzini that in postwar Italy there was no need for plot, because stories were right around the corner, those of reality lived by real people (Fellini 1983, 86). The late postwar period was different—people's problems were no longer hunger and unemployment but the search for happiness, quality of life, and meaning. From then on, the desire/necessity was to investigate the human condition all the way down to the labyrinths of the unconscious. This was the same journey undertaken by Rossellini, who transitioned gradually from a documentary style (at least in Bazin's sense) to a deeper inquiry into the human soul and its complexity: from *Roma città aperta* (*Rome Open City* 1945) to *Viaggio in Italia* (*Journey to Italy* 1954), from *Paisà* (*Paisan* 1946) to *Europa '51* (*Europe '51* 1952) and *Stromboli, terra di Dio* (*Stromboli* 1950).

Fellini didn't betray the realist movement, but rather developed a tendency already present within that aesthetic strategy. Not surprisingly, Fellini embraced Rossellini's project more than he did that of Vittorio De Sica and Cesare Zavattini. In fact, a structural and symbolic complexity that goes well beyond the mere "representation of reality" was emergent in Rossellini's neorealism: *Roma città aperta* is a socially committed film, but with a mix of melodrama (the death of Pina), horror (the torture of Manfredi), and comedy (Don Pietro silencing an old man with a frying pan to circumvent a round-up by German soldiers). *Paisà* is a manifesto of the resistance and of the alliance between partisans and Allies, but it is also a symbolic journey into the viscera of the world it depicts. The Rossellini of the Bergman period is nothing but the revelation of an aesthetic that was already within his soundings of human existence, starting with *La nave bianca* (*The White Ship* 1941). Fellini was clearly comfortable with Rossellini's complexity, which allowed him very personal explorations. In the episode of the "tyrant" in *Francesco, Giullare di Dio* (*The Flowers of St. Francis* 1950), Fellini's hand is easily recognizable in the treatment of Aldo Fabrizi, fresh from his portrayal of Don Pietro in *Roma città aperta*, as a petty despot stripped of any heroic connotations.

Fellini is distant from the populist neorealism of De Sica–Zavattini, yet he might be making reference to it at the beginning of *8½*, when the doctor asks Guido if he is preparing "another film without hope." De Sica–Zavattini stories were generally sad and tragic, with the notable exception of *Miracolo a Milano* (*Miracle in Milan* 1950). The question is an ironic, and also self-ironic, joke, given Fellini's neorealist origins. On the one hand, it links Guido's pessimism with a neorealist tradition that includes, in a broader sense, Fellini's earlier film, *La dolce vita* (1960). On

the other hand, it alludes to the fact that the film-within-a-film that Guido never launches is a film of catastrophic science fiction (a huge spaceship transporting people from a devastated Earth). In line, however, with the changes taking place in Fellini's cinema, this pessimism is distant from the social realities that neorealism sought to represent.

Artisanal Beginnings: Fellini and His Craft[1]

Fellini's early points of creative reference were not the cinema so much as its surroundings. When the director arrived in Rome from Rimini, where he had often gone to the movies, he wanted to be a journalist. He had proved himself a talented comic-strip artist in Rimini when he started contributing to newspapers and magazines, such as *Domenica del Corriere* and *Il 420*. He refined his talent as a satirical illustrator—talent that would inform his entire filmmaking career—in Rome, beginning work at the magazine *Marc'Aurelio* in April 1939. He created columns, such as "È permesso…?" ("Is it allowed…?") and "Storielle di Federico" ("Federico's Little Tales"). In this period, he met Enrico De Seta, the illustrator with whom he opened The Funny Face Shop after the arrival of the allied forces in 1944.[2] There they would paint caricatures for allied soldiers, and it is there that Fellini met Roberto Rossellini a year later.

After the comics came the radio: in 1941, Fellini began collaborating with EIAR (Ente Italiano per le Audizioni Radiofoniche). Some of his radio shows became well-known, such as *Cico e Pallina*, a series of 24 episodes broadcast between 1942 and 1943 as part of the variety show "Il terziglio." The series was based on two naive newlyweds, and the bride, Pallina, was played by Giulietta Masina. This was the beginning of a love story and a partnership that would last their entire lives.

His work in radio included *Una lettera d'amore* ("A Love Letter"), the story of an illiterate girl who sends her fiancé blank pages in the mail (a character who, like Pallina, seems to anticipate those interpreted by Masina for the cinema). He also wrote radio programs with Ruggero Maccari, including *Vuoi sognare con me* ("Do You Want to Dream with Me") starring, among others, Sandra Milo. Maccari went on to become the scriptwriting companion of Ettore Scola.

Although younger than Fellini, Scola shares a similar generational upbringing, a passion and talent for drawing, and the work experience of *Marc'Aurelio*. Scola immortalized this period in *Che strano chiamarsi Federico* (*How Strange to Be Named Federico* 2013), which reconstructs Fellini's life—by way of his association with the Trevico filmmaker—from the early days of his career, when he made the transition from satirical illustrator to cinema scriptwriter.

Fellini's success with *Marc'Aurelio* offered him new work opportunities. He wrote jokes for Aldo Fabrizi's live performances—his connection to Fabrizi to prove quite fateful. He started collaborating uncredited on some of Macario's films: *Imputato, alzatevi!* (*Defendant, Stand Up!* 1939), *Lo vedi come sei…lo vedi come sei?* (1939), *Non me lo dire!* (1940), and *Il pirata sono io* (*The Pirate's Dream* 1940).

Between 1942 and 1943, Fellini collaborated on the script of Nicola Manzari's film *Quarta pagina* (*3/4 of a Page* 1942), but mostly on the scripts of Mario Bonnard's *Avanti c'è posto…* (*Before the Postman*[3] 1942) and *Campo de' fiori* (*The Peddler and the Lady* 1943). The two comedies are now read as anticipatory of certain "popular" aspects of neorealism and as Fabrizi's "rehearsal" of *Roma città aperta* with Anna Magnani. And so, before plunging into the cinema d'autore with Rossellini, Fellini "got his hands dirty" with popular, commercial cinema: Macario and Mattoli are the antithesis of the auteur. The former was the king of vaudeville, the latter became Totò's film director par excellence.

Manzari's case is interesting because, as a director, he made only a few films, but as a screenwriter he worked for many directors across a wide cinematic spectrum: from Guido Brignone to Duilio Coletti, and from Giorgio Pàstina to Raffaello Matarazzo. Fellini and Piero Tellini wrote the synopsis for *Quarta pagina*, from which they produced the script, in episodes, alongside many other professionals including Steno (alias Stefano Vanzina), Cesare Zavattini, and Gianni Puccini.

Fellini's practice of his craft continued with other scripts, before and after he met Rossellini. These were blockbusters that allowed him, apparently, to make ends meet: *Apparizione* (*Apparition*, Jean de Limur, 1943), *L'ultima carrozzella* (*The Last Wagon*, Mario Mattoli, 1943), *Tutta la città canta* (Riccardo Freda, 1945), *Chi l'ha visto?* (Goffredo Alessandrini, 1945), *Il passatore* (*Bullet for Stefano*, Duilio Coletti, 1947), and *La fumeria d'oppio* (Raffaello Matarazzo, 1947), none of which were auteurist works. *I cavalieri del deserto* (*Knights of the Desert*) seems to have offered Fellini a unique opportunity. Dated 1942, yet unfinished due to the war, it was directed by Gino Talamo and Osvaldo Valenti. A famous actor who became part of the Italian film industry's transfer from Cinecittà to Venice under Mussolini's Republic of Salò, Valenti would remain loyal to the Republic until the very end. The film, shot in Libya, starred Valenti and his partner Luisa Ferida, both of whom were later executed by the partisans. According to Tullio Kezich (2002, 72), Fellini filmed some of the scenes himself when Talamo was ill.

Fellini's first experiences behind the camera thus took place both in genre cinema alongside the ultra-fascist Valenti, and in the best of auteur and resistance cinema, *Paisà*. This is an example not only of the ambiguous and conflicting ideology of those years, but also of Fellini's participation in the workshop that Italian cinema was at the time, consisting, somewhat like pre-Renaissance ateliers, of great craftsmen. But it was the world of popular culture and vaudeville that intrigued Fellini the most, becoming the very heart of his first film in collaboration with Alberto Lattuada.

Neorealism and Its Authors

On the basis of this history, we might say Rossellini and Lattuada versus Macario and Mattoli, or auteur versus popular and art versus commodity. Yet Fellini's and Italian cinema's complication of boundaries is reflected in his making a "popular culture" film with the arguably auteurist Lattuada. To Rossellini and Lattuada, we can add a third major name, Pietro Germi. For Lattuada, Germi wrote the screenplays for *Il delitto di Giovanni Episcopo* (*Flesh Will Surrender* 1947), *Senza pietà* (*Without Pity* 1948), and *Il mulino del Po* (*The Mill on the Po* 1949). With Germi, Fellini collaborated on *In nome della legge* (*In the Name of the Law* 1949) with screenwriters Tullio Pinelli, Mario Monicelli, and Giuseppe Mangione; *Il cammino della speranza* (*The Path of Hope* 1950) with Pinelli; and *La città si difende* (*Four Ways Out* 1951) with Pinelli. These are all films with a place in Italian cinema history. They are social or literary films with auteurist ambitions, even as they are tied to genre cinema, as is clearly the case with *In nome della legge*—a cross-fertilization of social film, western, and what today we would call mafia movie. Even *Senza pietà* mixes a neorealist atmosphere with indices of popular cinema. *Il mulino del Po* (based on a novel by Riccardo Bacchelli) and *Il delitto di Giovanni Episcopo* (based on a novel by Gabriele D'Annunzio) affirm a "formalist" trend as well as evoking Lattuada's taste for literary adaptation.

The influences on Fellini of "trade" or artisanal cinema, and as well as those of the cinema of Lattuada and Germi, which remain to be explored in detail, can only be touched on briefly here. Lattuada, like Fellini, had an interest in the female body; for the former, however, this interest was more conventional, while Fellini took it to the extreme of the hypersensuous and even grotesque.

Lattuada was also attracted to the sensual atmosphere of vaudeville, and somewhat to genre. The influence of genre, as well as of American culture, is more apparent with Germi.

Fellini's partnership with Rossellini was the most important, linking Fellini's name to the screenplays for *Roma città aperta* and *Paisà*. With regard to the latter, he collaborated on the rewrite of the Franciscan monastery episode, and according to reports, he worked on the last episode, in which the partisans on the Po are slaughtered. Without a doubt, he held the role of assistant director on set, even standing in for the director for part of the Florentine episode (Kezich 1988, 126–127). With Rossellini unwell, it was up to Fellini to direct the scene in which some residents, under sniper fire, pass a jug from one side of the street to the other with a rope. While shooting, the young assistant director argued with the cameraman, Otello Martelli; Fellini wanted to shoot low, at the height of the trolley (see Figure 24.1). A traditional craftsman, Martelli rejected this type of shot at "mouse height"—something that would become famous with Yasugirō Ozu and his "tatami" shots. The young Fellini was already showing signs of more modernist taste, and, in the end, his choice prevailed. Kezich says that Fellini was extremely emotional when he saw his unedited creation in the dark room, and he later remembered that, in the dark, he felt Rossellini's caress; the director had appreciated his young assistant's creative solution (Kezich 1988, 127).

After this new and productive experience in film practice, Fellini worked on the screenplay for "Il miracolo" ("The Miracle"), an episode of *L'amore* (1948). He developed the synopsis along with Pinelli; they had begun a working relationship that was to last many years. Fellini also acts in the film, playing a vagabond who meets a naive shepherdess (Anna Magnani), then gets her drunk and pregnant. The ironized "miracle" is that the woman thinks she is expecting Saint

Figure 24.1 Fellini's preference for a "mouse-height" shot in the Florentine episode of *Paisà* (*Paisan* 1946). Film directed by Roberto Rossellini; the scene depicted by Federico Fellini. Produced by Organizzazione Film Internazionali in collaboration with Foreign Film Productions. Frame grab captured by Vito Zagarrio from the 2006 DVD version.

Joseph's child. It was a small and silent, yet intense, role, with a young Fellini, blonde and bearded. Martin Scorsese referenced it in *My Voyage to Italy* (1999).

Fellini matured, in short, at the onset of neorealism, but his relationship with Rossellini carried beyond this period. He wrote the treatment for *Europa '51* together with Rossellini, Massimo Mida, Antonello Trombadori, and Pinelli, while the screenplay is attributed to Sandro De Feo, Ivo Perilli, Mario Pannunzio, and Brunello Rondi. Jean-Paul Dreyfus ("Le Chanois"), Diego Fabbri, and Antonio Pietrangeli were also uncredited collaborators. Thus, in the film's writing, Fellini found himself in the company of some of the Italian Left's most important people, as well as of significant intellectuals, from Rondi to Fabbri, and a future film director, Pietrangeli.

The collaboration with Rossellini poses interesting questions: how much did Fellini embrace the neorealist aesthetic, and how much of his professionalism and craft did he bring to neorealism and to Rossellini's cinema? The first question is difficult to answer, though one can safely assert that, in this period, Fellini was open to all cinema's tendencies and devices. The second is easier in the sense that Fellini's touch is often evident, particularly in his collaboration with Rossellini. Aside from instances already noted, we can detect his irony and taste for gags in scenes such as that of Don Pietro and the frying pan.

Fellini also enjoyed another important artistic relationship early in his directorial career: with Pier Paolo Pasolini. It was complicated, made up of great mutual admiration but also of differences in character and culture. After the literary success of Pasolini's novel *Ragazzi di vita* (1955), Fellini called upon Pasolini to collaborate on the screenplay for *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957) as well as on an unrealized project ("Viaggio con Anita" 1958) that would be taken up again, twenty years later, by Mario Monicelli (*Viaggio con Anita*/*Lovers and Liars* 1979). In *Le notti di Cabiria*, Pasolini's mark is clear, especially in scenes in which the desperation of Rome's periphery emerges, a world that was well-known to the Friulan poet.[4]

Later, Fellini entrusted some of *La dolce vita*'s scenes to Pasolini, but so many were cut that Pasolini's name does not feature in the credits. Kept were the scene with Marcello, Maddalena, and the prostitute; exchanges with Steiner (archival documents suggest that they were scripted by Raf Mattioli, who died before *La dolce vita* was filmed); and the final episode.

Despite his scenes having been cut, Pasolini published an ample review of the film in 1960, defending it against the critics. "Fellini's *La dolce vita*," he writes, "is much too important to talk about as one normally talks about a film" (Kezich 1995, 57). Fellini then decided to support Pasolini's first film. In 1960, Fellini had founded the production company "Federiz" with Angelo Rizzoli, and among the films in the pipeline was *Accattone* (1961). But two sample sequences of the film alarmed Fellini, and it seems that he ceded to the pressure of the film's production coordinator, Clemente Fracassi, in refusing to produce the film (which was then inherited by Alfredo Bini). It appears to have been Pasolini's shooting style that rubbed Fellini the wrong way—he judged the film "uneditable." But that "uneditability," compared to the traditional rules of film syntax, made *Accattone* shine, and with it the poet/writer/director entered eruptively into the history of cinema.

The rift over *Accattone* ended the friendship, though Pasolini continued to write good things about Fellini, including powerful words in favor of *Roma* in 1973. He would, at the same time, resort to humorous and inscrutable commentary, as in "La ricotta" (episode of *Ro.Go.Pa.G.* 1963). Orson Welles, playing the part of the director protagonist, is interviewed by a journalist, who asks him the usual banal questions. The journalist then solicits an opinion of "our great director, Federico Fellini." The director ponders for a moment, then responds, "Egli danza" ("he dances"). He pauses, and then, seemingly pleased with his response, he repeats, "Egli danza." As so often in Pasolinian observations on Fellini, there seems something profoundly insightful in what he has Welles say—even though, in this instance, it seems offered largely in jest.

Models and References

At the time of his friendship with Pasolini, the director had won two Oscars for best foreign language film; he embodied the auteur cinema coming out of Italy and out of Europe as a whole. But what was the context of his cinema once he became auteur rather than novice? Reexamining Fellini's oeuvre, we can see both his references to, and his influence on, other types of cinema. The references might have been unconscious, and Fellini might well have denied them, but they reveal how cinematically cultured the Rimini director was. *Luci del varietà* (*Variety Lights* 1950) can be seen as a reference to the backstage American musical, as well, of course, to cabaret and vaudeville-based films. "Agenzia matrimoniale" ("Marriage Agency"), an episode of *L'amore in città* (*Love in the City* 1953), takes as its point of departure (if only satirically) the Zavattinian neorealist ideology that informed the film's collective project. *I vitelloni* (1953), *Il bidone* (*The Swindle* 1955), and *Le notti di Cabiria* reflect the twilight of neorealism and reveal cultural influences such as French poetic realism and even American genre film.

La strada (1954) is a kind of road movie *avant la lettre*, in which we can see the stirrings of a certain type of American myth of being-on-the-move, common to Fellini's generation (see Figure 24.2). (It's not a coincidence that the British Film Institute's list of 100 road movies includes *La strada*.) "Toby Dammit," an episode from *Tre passi nel delirio* (*Histoires extraordinaires*/*Spirits of the Dead* 1968), is an obvious tribute to horror films, in which Fellini appropriates Mario Bava's eerie girl-in-white with a white ball (*Operazione Paura*/*Kill, Baby… Kill!* 1966) for his own ball-wielding girl-devil. "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio" ("The Temptation of Dr. Antonio"), an episode of *Boccaccio '70* (1962), is *commedia all'italiana*, containing hilarious obsession with sexuality and moral corruption. It also references Japanese and American horror-sci-fi films of the

Figure 24.2 Zampanò, Gelsomina, and their "mini camper" in Fellini's "road movie" *La strada* (1954). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Ponti-De Laurentiis Cinematografica. Frame grab captured by Vito Zagarrio from the 2003 DVD version.

1950s. *Ginger e Fred* (*Ginger and Fred* 1986) is a musical parody and Fellini's metacinematic, metalinguistic, reflection on contemporary mass media, a bit like his brilliant last testament *La voce della Luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990).

Nevertheless, from *La dolce vita* on, Fellini's world is ever more original and recognizable as sui generis; it becomes increasingly difficult to detect genre models and conventional codes of reference, and Fellini's cinematic universe instead proposes itself as a genre unto itself. References, if they're there, concern the other arts and disciplines: painting, architecture, and the visual arts in general; literature and psychoanalysis—tied to reflections on modernity and postmodernity. Fellini assembles a puzzle of cultural traditions, from the avant-garde to the kitsch; his cinema is a mix of surrealism, futurism, Dadaism. His universe is metaphysical, his taste is camp-derived from a sort of metabolism that connects him to Francis Bacon (Aldouby 2013) and Andy Warhol, and also to the Colombian artist and sculptor, Fernando Botero.

Among his pictorial references, in addition to his friend Rinaldo Geleng, we can include Pablo Picasso, Giorgio De Chirico, Balthus, Scipione, and Mario Sironi. Creative affinity, inclined as he was to the visionary, surrealist, and metaphysical, also bound him to De Chirico, Alberto Savinio, Paul Delvaux, René Magritte, Salvador Dalí, Marc Chagall, Carlo Carrà, Giorgio Morandi, Filippo De Pisis, Fabrizio Clerici, Leonor Fini, Jean-Michel Folon, and Carlo Guarienti. Others he considered to be gifted with great talent and a distinctive artistic signature were Valeriano Trubbiani, Mario Mafai, Ottone Rosai, Massimo Campigli, Renato Guttuso, Igor Mitoraj, Alberto Sughi, Renzo Vespignani, Antonio Scordia, Mario Fallani, Anna Salvatore, and Mario Schifano.

At a certain point, it was Fellini who became the point of reference for much subsequent cinema, both in Italy and beyond. Paul Mazursky's *Alex in Wonderland* (1970), an example of the first phase of the New Hollywood cinema, features Fellini in a cameo role. He appears almost as if to legitimize the film, which, similar to *8½*, is about a director who struggles to repeat the success of his first film. The part of Alex is played by Donald Sutherland, who, it just so happens, will play the lead in *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976).

Twin examples of the exportation of the Fellini myth to the US are Bob Fosse's remake of *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Sweet Charity* 1969), and the remake of *8½, Nine* (2009), directed by Rob Marshall and written by Michael Tolkin and Anthony Minghella. Both films are based on successful musicals. In the Broadway production of *Nine*, Marcello Mastroianni's role was given to the heartthrob Raul Julia; in the film, it belonged to another star, Daniel-Day Lewis. Thus, Fellini becomes part of international celebrity culture; he becomes an ambassador of Italian cinema, as legitimate auteur, and as pop culture icon accessible to the noncinephile public. One could almost say that auteur theory meets a kind of Gramscian "international-popular."

It is instructive to put some of the scenes from the American films alongside their Fellinian originals. The Saraghina scene (Guido's childhood flashback of the polysemic prostitute in *8½*) appears in both Fellini's and Marshall's films. The context is almost identical: the black-and-white of memory, the costumes (the young Guido in his black school cape), and the action (the priests that chase after the little boy in fast motion, as in slapstick). But the incarnation of Saraghina is totally different: in the American film, the vulgar, fleshy prostitute of the original is reinterpreted as a busty, attractive woman (played by the singer Fergie—see Figure 24.3) who performs the catchy "Be Italian," marrying the prostitute's sensuality with so-called Italian identity. However, this reinforces an ugly stereotype that loses all the grotesquely provocative charge and aesthetic value of the original. Fellini's originary vision can thus be not only borrowed but misinterpreted—and badly parodied.

Italian cinema often touches upon an "aesthetic of bad taste," to use Karl Rosenkranz's expression (2004), which is also often seen as a characteristic of the felliniesque. For example, commedia all'italiana adopts the Fellinian grotesque. Witness Dino Risi's *I mostri* (1963) and its sequel *I*

Figure 24.3 Fergie plays the Saraghina figure as a much more conventionally sexy woman in the musical remake of Fellini's *8½*. *Source*: *Nine* (2009). Directed by Rob Marshall. Produced by Relativity Media Lucamar Productions. Frame grab captured by Vito Zagarrio from the 2010 DVD version.

nuovi mostri (*Viva Italia!* 1977), and above all Ettore Scola's *Brutti, sporchi e cattivi* (*Ugly, Dirty and Bad* 1976), a "comedy" so to speak, but with implications of the surreal tragedy of family and class. The bodies in Scola's film are offspring of the Fellinian body, grafted onto a decidedly Pasolinian periphery and cross-section of society. This is the triumph of the "Saraghina aesthetic," reincarnating the figures of the tobacconist or of Gradisca from *Amarcord* (1974). Fellini's and Scola's shared love for caricature, sketch, and comics emerges.

Scola honored Fellini in *C'eravamo tanto amati* (*We All Loved Each Other So Much* 1974). In a key scene, the protagonists Antonio and Luciana find themselves at the Trevi Fountain where Fellini is shooting *La dolce vita*. Fellini and Mastroianni play themselves anachronistically, and the former's notoriety is satirized, as a fan who is delighted to meet the director mistakes him for the "great Rossellini." The same scene is taken up again in *Che strano chiamarsi Federico*, creating an interesting postmodern pastiche, an exciting game of *mise en abyme*. Elements of the felliniesque are unquestionably present in Scola, both in *Il mondo nuovo* (*La nuit de Varennes* 1982)—the circus, the sense of time, the metalanguage—and *Il viaggio di Capitan Fracassa* (*The Voyage of Captain Fracassa* 1990)—the theater troupe, the metalanguage, the nostalgia.

There is an amusing homage to Fellini in Germi's classic Italian comedy *Divorzio all'italiana* (*Divorce Italian Style* 1961) when the whole town goes to the cinema the evening that baron Cefalù, played by Mastroianni, is planning to commit his honor killing. The film is *La dolce vita* (see Figure 24.4); Germi shows himself to be quite on top of things, given that *La dolce vita* came out just the year before *Divorzio all'italiana*. The sequence shown is Sylvia's dance in the Baths of Caracalla, and the incompatibility of her feminine vitality with the femicidal male culture of the film's Southern Italian town makes *La dolce vita* both a kind of gag and part of the Germi's social and gender critique, thus wedding it to the commedia all'italiana that Germi's film's title helped name. Fellini's film is extrapolated from its aesthetic context and observed anthropologically, together with a good deal of grotesque satire.

Emblematic of the intersection of commedia all'italiana, the grotesque, and social critique is, as hinted at earlier, "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio." Fellini merged his surreal world with a

Figure 24.4 Baron Cefalù (Marcello Mastroianni) exits from the movie theater where *La dolce vita* is screened. *Source*: *Divorzio all'italiana* (*Divorce Italian Style* 1961). Directed by Pietro Germi. Produced by Galatea Film, Lux Film, and Vides Cinematografica. Frame grab captured by Vito Zagarrio from the 2007 DVD version.

comedy of manners, creating what might initially seem a schizophrenic film but that in the end proves a perfect hybrid. On the one hand, it is classic Italian comedy of the period: the moralist, sexphobic petty bourgeois worthy of a Dino Risi film (*Vedo nudo* 1969); the flatulent official to whom Antonio protests against the scandalous billboard of Anita Ekberg; the sister in a mystical delirium; a woman dubbed with a man's voice. On the other hand, Fellini the increasingly surreal and oneiric auteur is unmistakable: replete with self-citation (the band of African-American musicians that plays Rota's theme from *La dolce vita*, and then switches to the ironical refrain "Bevete più latte/Drink more milk"); metacinematic reflection; visionary, hallucinatory structure; and the mocking child goddess Eros who sticks her tongue out at everyone, including the audience and the director, at film's beginning and end.

Sorrentino and Recent Italian Cinema

In sum, Fellini built a very strong and original model of style and content, and even the new *maestri* of Italian cinema have needed to come to terms with this unwieldy "skeleton in the closet." Paolo Sorrentino's *La grande bellezza* (*The Great Beauty* 2013) is an ambitious film that can be measured alongside Fellini's *Roma* and *La dolce vita*. Sorrentino launches a postmodern challenge to his great predecessor, with a dose of both confidence in his abilities and nostalgia for a cinematic art that no longer exists. The film was a turning point in recent Italian cinema. It won the 2015 Academy Award for best foreign language film, becoming an ambassador of Italian cinema abroad. Presented in competition at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival, with great expectations for the Italian film industry, it sharply divided the public and the critics. The film is

a reflection on form, but it also tries to be "political" in its representation of a cross-section of Italy in decline. According to many, this is a film of great depth, one that confirms the Neapolitan director as auteur. It is skillfully shot: the first scene, in which a Japanese tourist dies of a heart attack when looking out over Rome's panorama (struck by its "great beauty"), immediately amazes the spectator with its camera acrobatics. But the very virtuosity that inspires admiration can make the film appear indulgent, narcissistic, and self-referential, attempting to measure itself against Fellini's. The protagonist, Jep Gambardella, is himself indulgent and narcissistic. He is a writer who, after a one-hit-wonder novel, decided to stop writing and dedicate himself to the high life. He has a melancholic sensibility, however, that allows him to observe the "great beauty" hidden in the folds of Rome, which the director and his alter ego investigate with curiosity. There is obvious reference to *La dolce vita* and *Roma* in their representation of the symbolic fall of a "Western empire"—the corruption, the deterioration, and the death of a nation and a civilization. As a film that, like Fellini's, spectacularizes the fall, Sorrentino's work is also a reflection on the "great beauty" of cinema and of the image.

If we compare Sorrentino's film and *La dolce vita*, we find similar narrative strategies: the episodic structure; the examination of the protagonist's masculinity and male gaze; the conflicted relationship with religion. At times, Sorrentino's film seems taken from the same mold as Fellini's masterpiece, though the differences between the two reflect significant changes in the Rome and Italy they represent, and in aesthetic strategies necessitated by the changes.

Sorrentino takes on the same challenge with the subsequent *Youth / La giovinezza* (2015), whose model is clearly *8½*. The metalinguistic structure, the thermal bath setting (at times even with similar faces and wardrobe), the story of the director who is trying to develop his film—all reference its predecessor, as do the male gaze and the representation of women, apparent at the end of the film when the protagonist imagines his entire feminine universe, somewhat like the "harem" scene in *8½*. If anything changes in Sorrentino's postmodern and neobaroque revival, it is the characters' ages: both Jep in *La grande bellezza* and the two protagonists in *Youth* are elderly. Much more than Marcello and Guido, they can take stock of their existence, and they have a nostalgic relationship with their (unresolved) past.[5]

Sorrentino's cinema is felliniesque in its use of masks, the bizarre, the deformed, the exaggerated. The first appears larger than life in the figures of the two politicians whom Sorrentino mocks yet at the same time exalts: Giulio Andreotti in *Il divo* (2008)—the close-up of his face covered in acupuncture needles is extraordinary—and Silvio Berlusconi in *Loro 1* and *Loro 2* (2018), a surreal figure at the center of a run-down Italian society similar to a declining empire. The visage of actor Toni Servillo, in virtually all his Sorrentino iterations, functions as a mask, changing according to the needs of whatever protagonist he is portraying.

The Fellinian myth inevitably seeped elsewhere in Italian cinema, renewed in style and the filmic imaginary from the end of the 1980s onward. Giuseppe Tornatore must have been thinking of Fellini when he abandoned himself to feelings of nostalgia in *Nuovo Cinema Paradiso* (*Cinema Paradiso* 1988), or when telling the story of the traveling cinema charlatan in *L'uomo delle stelle* (*The Star Maker* 1995). The Sicilian director asked the elderly Fellini to play a cameo role in *Nuovo Cinema Paradiso* as the projectionist who screens the sequence of cut-out kisses at the end of the film. Fellini declined the invitation, but suggested that Tornatore himself, in a self-reflexive manner, impersonate the symbolic projectionist role (Anon 2016). And this is indeed how it happened.

At the Venice Film Festival on 5 September 2015, the premier of the restored version of *Amarcord* was preceded by a screening of *Amarcord Fellini. Provini, tagli e doppi scelti da Giuseppe Tornatore* (2015), an 8-minute-long collage video that gathers Fellini's discarded materials and proves to be an interesting inquiry into Fellini's directing. This little film confirms Tornatore's

cinephilia and reveals what has been borrowed—the internal echoes, the layers of vision, that pass from the celebrated director to his ambitious pupil (Squillaci 2015).

Fellini's legacy, according to Tornatore (Squillaci 2015), is the "ability to stage reality's spectacular elements, creating them with meager materials, trees made of cardboard, a fake peacock, the sea made from plastic. Testimonies to an imaginative capacity that is unique, particular, unusual." *Amarcord* is central to Tornatore's Fellinian myth. The title means, in Romagnolo dialect, "I remember," which is essentially the organizing principle of *Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*.

Fellini's influence is forthright in Sorrentino and Tornatore. Elements of his taste more subtly permeate the work of other new Italian cinema directors, such as Matteo Garrone, whose name is often coupled with Sorrentino's for his similar visionary capacity. (It's fitting that each won a major prize at Cannes in 2008). The African prostitutes in *Silhouette*, a short film which then became the first episode of *Terra di mezzo (Land in Between* 1996), are Fellinian, as is some of the imagery in *Tale of Tales* (2015), especially the opening jester sequence that sets the film's tone. *L'imbalsamatore* (*The Embalmer* 2002) has something of the felliniesque in its protagonist's peculiar body type (similar to Garrone's 2018 *Dogman*).

Fellinian masks and ambience also influence the work of two Sicilian auteurs, Daniele Ciprì and Franco Maresco, who graft Fellini and Pasolini onto a double tradition: surreal comedy and the avant-garde, from Buñuel to Dalì, from Breton to Majakóvskij. The best example is the television program *Cinico Tv*, made for Rai 3 between 1992 and 1996. The shows are brief black-and-white sketches set in a dilapidated, posthuman Sicilian periphery populated by vulgar, fat, and solitary males. Ciprì captures the outskirts of Palermo in a surreal manner, using filters to give the impression of a sky ever leaden and looming with black clouds. The characters are unpleasant: belching, farting, pretending to be a penis, but they make you laugh even in their desperate coarseness. They recall Mikhail Bakhtin's (2009) discussion of the carnivalesque in Rabelais's works—in particular, the figures of Gargantua and Pantagruel. Bakhtin's analysis could be applied to Fellini's grotesque bodies, from "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio" to *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980). Ciprì and Maresco are just as inventive, but in a less aestheticized way, and they stage a universe with bizarre Fellinian oneirism at its core.

The two Sicilians continued to display their recognizable style in their fiction films and documentaries, always treading the path of the provocative and the grotesque: *Lo zio di Brooklyn* (1995), *Totò che visse due volte* (*Toto Who Lived Twice* 1998), *Il ritorno di Cagliostro* (2003), *Enzo, domani a Palermo!* (1999), and *Come inguaiammo il cinema italiano. La vera storia di Franco e Ciccio* (How We Got the Italian Movie Business Into Trouble. The True Story of Franco and Ciccio 2004), dedicated to the great comedians Franco Franchi and Ciccio Ingrassia. The splendid short films *A memoria* and *Il manocchio* (*The Evil Eye* 1996), preparatory material for *Totò che visse due volte*, are an example of the highest art, worthy of being seen with a different sort of attention from that we give to everyday cinema—perhaps as though they were a kind of video installation or part of a museum exhibition.

Ciprì and Maresco eventually went their separate ways, but we can still recognize similar inspirations in both. Ciprì directed *È stato il figlio* (*It Was the Son* 2012) and *La buca* (*The Hole* 2014), two bizarre and courageous films. He was also the director of photography for, among many others, Roberta Torre's *Angela* (1996). Torre directed two highly imaginative films, *Tano da morire* (1997) and *Sud Side Stori* (South Side Story 2002), which are in their own ways Fellinian and Almodóvarian. Maresco—Torre's ex-partner—took on less commercial experiments than Ciprì, such as the provocative *Belluscone. Una storia siciliana* (*Belluscone: A Sicilian Story* 2014), about Silvio Berlusconi's connections in Sicily. Certain Fellinian "masks" resurface, as well as the grotesque, the carnivalesque, the oneiric.

Ciprì and Maresco seem to propose a rather misogynist universe: they banish from their cinema (at least when working together) female figures; women's roles are enacted by men in a claustrophobic universe where sex is masturbatory and homosexual, if not zoophilic.[6] In some

ways, they might be seen to propose a reflection on Fellini's alleged misogyny: the aforementioned harem scene in *8½*, *La città delle donne*, and the male gaze of the "womanizer" Marcello in *La dolce vita*. But is Fellini really an antifeminist, chauvinist macho, or is he, instead, critiquing masculinity by presenting its stereotype? Is the director not on Paola's side in the final shot of *La dolce vita*? Is he not on the side of Gelsomina, Cabiria, and Giulietta in their stories, and implicitly on the side of the many other women for whom the pathetic masculinity of Fellini's protagonists (often the alter ego of Fellini himself) poses a million problems?

From this perspective, it is appropriate to pay homage to a woman director, Alice Rohrwacher, whose latest film *Lazzaro felice* (*Happy as Lazzaro* 2018), winner of the Best Screenplay Award at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival, seems to have Fellini in mind. Rohrwacher stands out immediately as one of the emerging directors of the new Italian cinema. Her work lies suspended between realism and metaphor and offers a female gaze that is often incarnated in adolescent protagonists. Her cinema portrays landscapes that posit a philosophy of life, as in *Lazzaro felice*: half fairytale and half moral fable of a history that passes from agrarian production to savage capitalism, from utopic society, where despite social injustice there is at least genuine feeling, to a postmodern universe that is cruel and without hope. Rohrwacher exercises her cinematic style citing some of the greats of Italian cinema, including Fellini in *La strada*. It is no coincidence, in fact, that the young protagonist in *Le meraviglie* (*The Wonders* 2014) is named Gelsomina. In *Lazzaro felice*, the rickety pick-up truck, with which the disenfranchised community from a Northern Italian suburb works and gets around, reminds us of the vehicle Zampanò and Gelsomina use in their wanderings in *La strada*.

Many other flashes of the felliniesque open up in Italian "expanded" cinema, a hybrid among film, video, documentary, theater, music that is typical of new post-postmodern scenarios. This aesthetic strategy is clear, for example, in the films by Edoardo De Angelis, leading member of a "new Neapolitan cinema," a visionary director who combines an adhesion to "reality" (suburbs of Naples, African prostitutes, and immigration) with a surrealist approach. His *Indivisibili* (*Indivisible* 2016) suddenly opens a glimpse onto a Fellinian world, when the two twins are invited by a villain onto his yacht, and the *mise en scène* creates characters and atmospheres worthy of the Rimini maestro. A similar aesthetic strategy appears in *Il vizio della speranza* (*The Vice of Hope* 2018), where the colorful prostitutes remind us of Fellini. And finally, in *Vieni a vivere a Napoli!* (2016), a collective film by Guido Lombardi, Francesco Prisco, and De Angelis, scenes and costumes recall various Fellini's clichés, arguably via Almodóvar.

Similar observations can be made about Pippo Delbono, a leading figure in Italian theater but also director of experimental videos and films (for example, *La Paura/Fear* 2009, shot with a cell phone). His most recent play, *La gioia* (*Joy* 2019) creates a scenic universe that clearly looks like a homage to Fellini: the hypercolored costumes, the exaggerated characters and other grotesque elements, the clowns, the circus. He also performs in a circle reminiscent of *8½*'s ending.

As we have seen, Fellini's diverse origins, work, and influence pull him in numerous directions simultaneously: toward mainstream cinema, including commedia all'italiana and its Hollywood imitations, or toward the niche markets of arthouse cinema, such as that of Ciprì and Maresco. He can be repurposed in order to construct a critique of Italy: *Ginger e Fred* and *La voce della luna* are optimal probes into an ex-"Bel Paese" in profound disarray. He can also be appropriated for a reflection on aesthetics: of the beautiful or of the ugly, of Sorrentino or of Ciprì and Maresco. *Ginger e Fred* and *La voce della luna* are fascinating not just sociologically but, like all Fellini's films, from a cinematographic point of view. They remain young even as they speak about aging and death. The Fellinian phenomenon, precisely because it is multiple, "untidy," is rife with suggestion and experiment in light of emerging political realities, social conditions, and modes of audiovisual production. His work, as he once described himself (Fellini 1964, 103), is "voluptuously open to everything." Or, as Pasolini/Welles put it, more concisely, "Egli danza."

Notes

1 Editors' note: for further discussion of Fellini's pre-cinema work and experience, see the essays by Bellano and Parigi in this volume. For an extended discussion of Fellini's early films, see Parigi.
2 Although various sources identify Enrico De Seta as the cofounder of The Funny Face Shop, Fellini himself (2015, 108–109) identifies the cofounder as a certain O.G., whom he nicknamed "Caporetto."
3 Editors' note: A mistranslation of "there's room up ahead" or "up front."
4 Pasolini wrote an illuminating text on Fellini's film: *Nota su "Le notti"* (Pasolini 2001).
5 We could even say that Fellini peers out from behind *The Young Pope*—a fresco-like portrayal of Vatican Rome and another reflection on beauty and the aesthetic of cinema that can't help but reference Fellini's *Roma*.
6 On the contrary, the cinema of gay film directors Almodóvar and Waters does not limit itself to the male universe; rather, it shows a deep, profeminist responsiveness to women.

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Part V
Contemporary Dialogues

Jane Campion

Fellini was one of the directors whose work I found unbelievably inventive. More than any other director, he was fluent in 'camera' in the way some people are fluent in a foreign language. Some people are amazing conversationalists, and that's how Fellini was with his camera.

He never flinches from the realities of human nature. His characters are tough and cruel, yet there's a sentimentality as well as a pragmatism within the story.

I so embrace his inventiveness as a film-maker. I know I'm influenced by him. I try to be influenced by his camera style, which is far in advance of most directors' capacity to see through the camera. He's in a class of his own. He's in a class of his own all round.

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/3605641/Film-makers-on-film-Jane-Campion.html

25

Remote Control Politics: Federico Fellini and the Politics of Parody

Kriss Ravetto-Biagioli

> Benigni wanders the countryside at night and looks up into the moonlit sky, as if to ask for meaning to, or an explanation of, this arcane thing which is life. It is the distant and unreachable moon that takes on the features and representation of a loved one, of the ideal woman. It is this little face inside the moon that responds to all of Roberto's anguished, pressing questions, as if to unveil the mystery of everything. She sings out only one word, "*pubblicitàààà…*" ["commercial break"], and this voice fills the whole cosmos with echoes…. It is there, I thought, that instead of the girl's face, Berlusconi's should appear. He was almost convinced, but then he wrote me a letter so genuine, so sincere, that I had to take it into consideration. He told me that he is against advertising, and therefore could never accept such a role. Well, I really appreciated this sincerity [Fellini laughs heartily]. (Rai Uno 1993)

In a television interview shortly before his death, Federico Fellini lamented his lack of success in convincing Silvio Berlusconi to play a small part at the end of what turned out to be his last film, *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990). The film concludes with Ivo Salvini (played by Roberto Benigni) desperately wandering the Italian countryside at night, gazing up at the moon, and looking for answers to life's most important mysteries, while not just one voice of the moon but many different female voices respond to his imploring gaze. Each voice seems to mock him, and each woman speaks in a different Italian dialect. Some of these women laugh and ridicule Ivo's funny face, while others tell him how fortunate he is to be receiving their messages. One of the last voices we hear changes from a Roman dialect to the proper Italian of a television announcer. She tells him that he does not need to understand what these voices mean; instead, he needs only to listen, to hear what the voices say and be grateful that they do not tire of calling on him. Suddenly, a Neapolitan woman's voice interrupts, as if she remembers that they all live on television and need to cut to commercial. This line cues Aldina, the beautiful blond woman whom Ivo obsessively pursues throughout the film, to appear on the surface of the moon and sing, "pubblicitàààà…." ("advertisement!!"). It was this tiny but iconic role of the television announcer calling for a commercial break that Fellini had envisioned for the former cruise boat singer turned Italy's first media mogul, who would become Italy's prime minister a year after Fellini's death.[1]

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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The ironic story of Berlusconi's refusal to play the part—because he was "against advertisement"—was all the more poignant because Fellini unsuccessfully sued Berlusconi's cable TV channel (Canale 5) in 1985 for violating his moral artistic rights. As soon as Berlusconi bought the Rizzoli publishing group and with it the rights to broadcast *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952), *I vitelloni* (1953), *La dolce vita* (1960), *8½* (1963), and *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965), Canale 5 immediately aired them all (see Angelucci 2013). Each film, however, was interrupted multiple times by pubblicità for frozen foods, diapers, and deodorants. Deeply offended, Fellini launched his own publicity campaign, "*Non si interrompe un'emozione*" ("Don't interrupt an emotion"), and filed a lawsuit against the media mogul (*La Repubblica* 1985a). The *pretore* presiding over the case acknowledged that Fellini's films were masterpieces whose integrity was harmed by commercial interruptions, thus violating his moral rights of authorship. But the Roman magistrate added the caveat that "viewers had [already] become addicted to the phenomenon of intervals" (*La Repubblica* 1985b). Rather than adjudicate whether or not to impose an injunction on Canale 5's use of commercials during the airing of Fellini's films, the judge (in a nonsequitur move) imposed a time limit on the amount of advertising each station could broadcast during the transmission of any film. For his part, Berlusconi suggested that the commercials aired on Canale 5 were possibly even more beautiful than Fellini's films, and that Fellini's "grotesque" vision of television depicted in films like *Ginger e Fred* (1985) had nothing to do with the reality of television programming on his cable stations (*La Repubblica* 2010).

In what can only be described as poetic justice, Fellini managed to secure funding for *La voce della luna* through the producers Mario and Vittorio Cecchi Gori, whose projects were funded by Berlusconi (Bondanella 1992a, Burke 1996). And just to demonstrate the "appreciation" of Berlusconi's "sincerity" expressed in the interview, Fellini did manage to "cast" him in the film, in the form of a mural: a realistic depiction of Berlusconi appears along the back wall of the fictional Pizzeria Las Vegas, together with the soccer team AC Milan, which he had purchased a few years before. Unlike Arrigo Sacchi (the coach) and the European Champions League's winning squad of 1988–1989,[2] who are all painted life-size along the restaurant wall, Berlusconi (whose nickname was already, *Il Cavaliere,* "the knight") is placed behind the kitchen door. In a formal black blazer with the club's insignia, donning black shorts and long black socks, Berlusconi with arm's crossed, tan and smiling, looks more like a hated referee than a member of the team (Figure 25.1). And standing apart from the team on the swinging door to the kitchen, he is seemingly kicked in the ass every time a waiter enters and exits to pick up and deliver an order (Figure 25.2).

Aside from his public battle with pubblicità and its Cavaliere, it has been a common assumption that "Fellini's lack of interest in politics … is an essential part of his myth" (Minuz 2015, 1). Yet his relation to mainstream Italian political parties is, in fact, rather complicated. In contrast to his early films such as *La strada* (1954) and *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957) that elucidate the poverty and desperation featured in postwar and 1950s neorealist films, *La dolce vita*, *8½*, and *Giulietta degli spiriti* focused on personal crises and the decadence of bourgeois culture. Although his early films were clearly associated with left-leaning neorealist cinema and *La dolce vita* was publicly condemned by the right, Fellini did not align himself with left-wing parties. Concomitantly—and similar to their right-wing counterparts—leftist intellectuals and film commentators maintained a critical distance from Fellini and his work. Rather than accusing him of hedonism and blasphemy (as the right wing did), leftist critics condemned his work for what they found to be sentimentalism, bourgeois individualism, and what Pier Paolo Pasolini called "neodecadentism" (Aristarco 1955 and 1958; Pasolini 1964; Bondanella 1992a; and Marcus 1993a). Given his refusal to engage in any type of political proselytizing, it was simply presumed that Fellini's political stance was more in line with the center-right Democrazia Cristiana (DC or

Figure 25.1 A mural with Silvio Berlusconi (center right) and members of the soccer team AC Milan, which he had purchased a few years before. *Source*: *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Mario and Vittorio Cecchi Gori. Frame grab captured by Kriss Ravetto-Biagioli from the 2017 Blu-ray version.

Figure 25.2 As he leaves the kitchen, the server effectively kicks Berlusconi in the "culo." *Source*: *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Mario and Vittorio Cecchi Gori. Frame grab captured by Kriss Ravetto-Biagioli from the 2017 Blu-ray version.

Christian Democratic Party). This view was buttressed by the fact that his later films were seen as moving even further away from neorealism and that in the 1980s he exchanged personal correspondence with DC leader Giulio Andreotti (Minuz, 162–167).[3] Films such as *Fellini - Satyricon*

(1969), *Amarcord* (1973), *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976), and *E la nave va* (*And the Ship Sails On* 1983) took yet another turn from contemporary political and social issues to focus on historical and mythic subjects, while films such as *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980) indulged in the inner world—exploring paranoid fantasies about feminism, the crisis of masculinity, and the shifting demographics of postindustrial Europe.

This shift in subject matter has been read as Fellini's retreat from the charged political discourse of the 1960s and 1970s. Frank Burke (1996, 312) points out that the perceived lack of political engagement during the 1960s and volatile *anni di piombo*—the leaden years of the 1970s and early 1980s that were punctuated by political terrorism and massive corruption—took a toll on the director's critical reception and ultimately his canonization in film studies:

> Fellini's decline coincides with the emergence of a highly politicized form of film and cultural theory, deriving in large part from the revolutionary politics of the 1960s and from the crisis in political theory occasioned by the failure of the worker/student revolts of May 1968 in France.... Within this context, Fellini, as self-mythicizing artist-genius, became a supreme example of bourgeois individualism and hubris—and all the pitfalls of depoliticized high modernism (1996, 312).

Many of the films Fellini made after *La dolce vita* were rebuked for their refusal to articulate any sustained political commentary, for their blunt treatment of sex and bourgeois decadence, and for a perceived moral indifference. At the same time, film critics on both the left and the right continued to recognize Fellini as one of the world's most famous auteurs (Sbragia 2015). But by the mid-1970s, his reputation began to wane even here, with critics largely rejecting Fellini's parodic visions of contemporary popular culture, arguing that they were reactionary and aesthetically inferior to his earlier films (Marcus 2002).[4] As Scott Eyman (2006) reflects, "in retrospect, there's a sense of a man slowly losing his sense of intimacy with everyone but himself. The movies become less like life and more like vast, slightly remote frescoes." What in the early 1960s was considered a radical (modernist) form of satire—the biting criticism of the inherent contradictions of bourgeois culture—was dismissed as "solipsistic," "carnivalesque," and "reactionary" by the end of the decade. Contrary to his critics, I would argue that it was not Fellini (the man) who lost his sense of intimacy but rather a nascent and quickly burgeoning consumer culture addicted to the vulgar spectacle of meaningless entertainment. If Fellini's later films looked cheap, it was only because they were mimicking the popular culture of their time.

Prova d'orchestra (*Orchestra Rehearsal* 1979) stands out in Fellini's oeuvre because, as Claudio Fava and Aldo Viganò (1987, 154) write, "it was the first, and in some sense, only 'political' film he ever made." However, the film is also an example of the increasing difficulty critics had in interpreting Fellini's satirical and carnivalesque representations of Italian social politics. *Prova d'orchestra* provides a parodic response to the fragmentation, ongoing corruption, and violence of the political scene during the 1970s, which led to the 1978 kidnapping and assassination of DC leader and prime minister, Aldo Moro, by the Red Brigades. Yet the film's parodic treatment of cultural politics makes it difficult to categorize along standard political lines. It was a made-for-television film about orchestra musicians revolting against the totalitarian conductor, who shouts insults in German (an obvious reference to Nazism). Although the musicians are unionized, they seem to hold more individual than collective gripes against their demanding and oppressive conductor. Starting with their rejection of authority, their anger escalates into infighting and petty bickering that bring about total chaos, which in turn draws the attention of outside, violent forces that tear through the walls of the auditorium with a wrecking ball. The film ends with another twist: the absolute submission of the individual musicians to the authoritarian rule of the conductor. Given the disturbing conclusion of the film, Fellini's "response" to the anni di

piombo has been debated as either a sign of his "refusal to portray Italy … through the prism of the politically 'correct' Marxist or psychoanalytical ideologies so popular in the political film in Italy" (Bondanella 1992b, 37), or just more evidence "that Fellini isn't much interested in examining the ideological assumptions under representation, but merely wants to complain about the decay of the standing order … such charges seem supported when one examines a film like *Orchestra Rehearsal*" (Sharrett 2002, 134). It might also be viewed as Fellini's own critical engagement with social conformism.

Since parody and the aesthetics of the grotesque are integral parts of the carnivalesque, Fellini's lasting reliance on such aesthetic modes of expression has made, and continues to make, it even more difficult to situate him in terms of Italian, European, radical, and sexual politics. Mikhail Bakhtin (1984a, 5–10) defines parody as double voiced—both crowning and decrowning its target-subjects—imposing one voice over another and one image over another in the practice of reciting or reanimating images of authority, notions of truth, and systems of belief. Through parody, the auteur "speaks in someone else's discourse [but in a manner] that is directly opposed to the original one. The second voice, once having made its home in the other's discourse, clashes hostilely with … the host and forces [it] to serve directly opposing aims" (Bakhtin 1984b, 193). At the same time, parody "excludes all one-sided or dogmatic seriousness and does not permit any single point of view … to be absolutized"; it functions by embracing both authority and its overturning. It is for this reason that parody is deeply ambivalent (Bakhtin 1984b, 165). Similarly, Fellini's use of parody often makes his own stance on politics (including sexual and racial politics) unclear and slippery. But as James C. Scott (1985, 304–350) reminds us, parody does not assume a privileged critical position. It is a "weapon of the weak," a "clandestine expression," and a "resistant subculture of dignity" that harbors and nurtures counterhegemonic "vengeful dreams" by "pressing, testing, and probing the boundaries of the permissible." For the weak or the disenfranchised, open resistance is knowingly dangerous if not suicidal. Even Rabelais (the source of Bakhtin's literary analysis) was keenly aware of the limitations to the radical potential of carnival (Bakhtin 1984a, 119).[5] Bakhtin completed his famous book on the carnivalesque in the mid-1930s, during the height of the Stalinist purges, but could publish it only some 30 years later. Fellini's reliance on the carnivalesque places him within the camp of folk-humor and strategies of resistance that do not amount to revolutionary calls to action, but which are also not conservative. His use of farce makes us realize the weaknesses and limitations of human behavior, arousing explosive laughter by crude means.

It is this testing of the limits of the permissible, coupled with the anti-bourgeois style of the grotesque, that produces wildly diverse interpretations of Fellini's use of the carnivalesque in his later films. Áine O'Healy draws attention to the fact that "representations of bodily excess are not always transgressive, since the carnivalesque can also be used in the service of repressive ideologies." With this in mind, she reads "the grotesque transformations of femininity in *La voce della luna* [as] largely inspired by a reactionary sentiment, […] infused with a note of resentment that is more strident than the irony that underpins most of Fellini's earlier configurations of female excess" (O'Healy 2002, 226–227). Similarly, Teresa de Lauretis sees Fellini's hyperbolic images of female sexuality in *Giulietta degli spiriti* as "misogynistic deployments of the feminine" that slip over into the "director's monumental homophobia" (de Lauretis 1987, 101–102). On the contrary, Bondanella (1992b, 36) believed that "Fellini anticipated the feminist movement and … provided devastating critiques of images men have projected upon women that he and his generation inherited from Italy's traditionally male-dominated culture." Peter Harcourt suggests that such discrepancies can be attributed to the fact that Fellini has a gift for self-parody—he is revered for "creating a world that is uniquely and personally his own"—but Fellini has no such gift for parody that comes off as a social critique. In his lambasting of Fellini's early "Le tentazioni del dottor

Antonio" ("The Temptation of Dr. Antonio") as "tasteless" and "unsympathetic," Harcourt (1966, 16–17) argues that "Fellini has certainly succeeded in creating for us images that convey the innermost recesses of his own teeming mind. But what about the mind of another kind of person essentially different from himself…. He would appear to be trying to convey to us how another person thinks and feels, which is perhaps what makes the film so unsubtle in the effects that it achieves, so lacking in compassion, finally so lacking in taste."

Readings of Fellini as "politically incorrect," as a "misogynist," or as an "incurable narcissist" who is fixated on phantasms, "fables, magic, and infantile fantasies" (Natta 1979, 41–42) attest to the critics' difficulty in disassociating Fellini-the-man from Fellini-the-public-persona (*il maestro*) and the felliniesque characters that are featured in his films (see Ravetto 2005). While many film scholars might disagree over whether Fellini deploys parody as a cathartic safety-valve that bursts forth only to return to order, as a cynical form of ridiculing women only to justify patriarchal social and political domination, or as a liberating act, open to women's resistance to patriarchal social and political authority, they all seem to agree that Fellini's use of parody, farce, and the aesthetics of the grotesque is not easy to pin down.

Un Animale Extraterrestre

The main difference between the Fellini of *La dolce vita* and *8½* and the Fellini of "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio," *Ginger e Fred*, *Intervista* (1987), and *La voce della luna,* as Andrea Minuz describes it (2015, 176), is that the later Fellini "is Fellini without his characteristic levity. The tone is angry." In his later films, Fellini uses farce openly to question the impact of popular and consumer culture on the social fabric of Italy rather than to invoke Bakhtin's "joyful relativity" (Bakhtin 1984b, 126). Fellini neither invented this divisive parade of overly sexualized women, who engage in self-parody, and aggressive, reactionary men, who fear their masculinity slipping away, nor did he reduce political thought to strict binary terms (for or against, left or right, critical or reactionary). In fact, Fellini appropriates and parodies kitsch depictions of gender, sexuality, and politics that have been an integral part of Italian cinema from the start. The following are some of the sources from which his satirical sensibility draws:

- Early peplum genre films, such as Enrico Guazzoni's *Quo Vadis?* (1913) and Giovanni Pastrone's *Cabiria* (1914) and *Maciste Alpino* (*Alpine Maciste* 1916);
- Pro-Fascist films of the 1930s, such as Alessandro Blasetti's *Vecchia guardia* (*The Old Guard* 1934), Carmine Gallone's *Scipione l'Africano* (1937), and Goffredo Alessandrini's *Luciano Serra, pilota* (*Luciano Serra, Pilot* 1938);
- Sword-and-sandal films and historical epics of the 1950s and 1960s, such as Riccardo Freda's *Agi Murad, il diavolo bianco* (*The White Warrior* 1959), Carlo Campogalliani's *Maciste nella valle dei Re* (*Maciste in the Valley of the Kings* 1960), and Roberto Rossellini's *Vanina Vanini* (1961)
- Romantic comedies of the 1950s and 1960s (e.g., Blasetti's *Peccato che sia una canaglia* (*Too Bad She's Bad* 1955) and Pietro Germi's *Divorzio all'italiana* (*Divorce Italian Style* 1961)
- And the 1960s Spaghetti Westerns of Sergio Leone, the softcore porn of Tinto Brass, and the horror films of Dario Argento, Mario Bava, and Lucio Fulci.

More than just cinematic self-reflexivity that calls attention to itself as a form of representation, Fellini's installation of stereotypical characters, gestures, and scenarios in his farcical films undermines any unproblematized symbolic and cultural value. Fellini points out that behind

these images of Latin lovers, American superheroes, and Swedish sex symbols are some rather unpleasant realities. Even the most iconic scene in *La dolce vita*—in which Sylvia (Anita Ekberg) wades through Rome's Trevi Fountain followed by Marcello (Mastroianni)—ends badly when Syliva returns to her drunk and violent fiancé, Robert (Lex Barker), who slaps her and punches Marcello. Marguerite Waller (2002, 113) suggests that "[t]hrough his use of the two Hollywood personalities Anita Ekberg and Lex Barker, Fellini comments on the anticinematic nature of these pleasures [of fetishized sex and violent action] and on the self-destructiveness of a cinema that tries to pander to them" (Waller, 113).

Like Gilles Deleuze, Fellini saw the crisis of cinema as a shift away from a reflective, hypnotic, and immersive medium (film) to the promise of a "more intimate," personal relationship between the author and the public on television—a shift that prompted viewers to expect immediacy and sensationalism, to which they responded with distracted indifference rather than enthusiastic engagement. Fellini's declaration that "cinema has entered into a very profound crisis" (nd[a]) shares Deleuze's (1989, 186) understanding that "cinema is dying" of its "quantitative mediocrity," and that with its proliferation of clichés and its commercial control over the masses, it has "degenerated into state propaganda and manipulation." In Fellini's case, it was cable television and Berlusconi's push to deregulate the media industry that would even outmaneuver the state politically. Fellini (2009, 82) describes television as "un animale extraterrestre" haunting us with "the presence of this greyish eye, gaping open in the house," but promoting itself "as a more delicate, more intimate, more personal kind of bridge between the author and the public." Television is an "alien species" that brings about a new regime of social subjection. While TV establishes a more intimate relation with its viewers, "it subjectifies individuals by assigning them—as either subject of enunciations or spectators—precodified roles that reflect the dominant order" (Deseris 2017, 132).

The dominance of television also ushers in a new order of deregulated capital. A new *telecrazia* brings about the collapse of the Christian Democratic Party with the exposure of the party's deep-seated corruption, which ironically occasions the rise of Berlusconi (despite his own pervasive corruption). Deregulation of the state-run public broadcasting company RAI (Radiotelevisione Italiana) under the auspices of liberating the media market ultimately resulted in shifting power from the DC-run RAI to Berlusconi's privately owned holding company Fininvest, all within a decade. By 1984, Berlusconi controlled the commercial television market, and the RAI had been split into three channels, each representing different political constituencies. Commercial television networks were seen as innovative because they created 24-hour cycles, new forms of advertising revenue, and market-analysis driven programming. However, they did not invent new images as much as they cynically regurgitated hypersexualized and hyperbolized clichéd forms of advertisement: what Guy Debord (1967/1994) called the "society of the spectacle," and Jean Baudrillard (1983, 130) described as the "unclean promiscuity … where the most intimate processes of our life become the virtual feeding ground of the media." Commercial television offered an escape from the social conflict, terrorism, and economic austerity that followed the oil crisis of the mid-1970s. Cable TV "offered pure and headless entertainment, a flight from reality into phantasmagoria" (Barra and Scaglioni 2013, 80). Baudrillard, like Debord before him, argues that pubblicità has disorganized class-based identifications and even political organizations by promoting a society of individual consumers who conform to the demands of the products with which they identify. According to Serge Daney (1992, 288), television is a receptacle of slogans and commonplaces that disseminate an ever more derealized image of reality, a society without "belief in this world" (Daney, 288). Fellini (nd[b]) suggests that commercial television has quickly and radically transformed the relations of power, including not only our social dynamics, our ambitions, but also our emotional expectations and sense of gratification:

> It seems to me that the apparatus through which we are currently appearing to a television audience, provided that they have not already changed the channel with that [remote-control] device, I think has raised a crowd of spectators [who are] impatient, indifferent, distracted, vaguely racist—because that device is a firing squad that takes away the face, the word, and cancels you. To see four films at the same time might seem like the work of a great mind, someone with some kind of extraordinary powers. In effect, it is only the inability to pay a minimum amount of attention to those who are talking; the inability to be seduced, enchanted by a story.

For Fellini, the remote reprograms us to be less attentive, incapable of thinking or reflecting, offering us the power to cancel, to turn others on and off at will. It is the concept of remote control that makes the public "vaguely racist," explicitly sexist, and ethically indifferent, and strips it of any sense of responsibility. And it is the invasion of pubblicità at every level of political, social, personal, and interpersonal experience that drove Fellini to campaign publicly against it (Gozzini 2014).

But Fellini's criticism of pubblicità cannot be completely aligned with Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* or Adorno and Horkheimer's "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" (1994/2002). In their work, mass media is treated as the voice of bourgeois hegemony or a dominant ideology that creates false needs and desires as a means for the total manipulation of the public. Neither does Fellini embrace the populist belief that such mass-mediated cultural products amount to working-class empowerment (Stam 1989, 219–239). Films such as *Ginger e Fred*, *Intervista*, and *La voce della luna* do not display a simple hatred for consumer culture or some confused rejection of postmodernism. Rather, they contemplate the effects of the promise of immediate gratification, the distortion of voices broadcast on television, the false sense of intimacy produced by the overexposure of private details, and the attention (deficit) economy that feeds on constant stimulation. These films examine the medium of television, not just the content (or lack thereof) presented on it. As Samuel Weber (1996, 109) explains: "television is different, not just from film … but also from what we generally mean by the word perception." Television has the ability to be in your living room and on the scene at the same time, but, as Weber explains, this confuses two experiences, the here and now and being there: "if television is both here and there at the same time, then … it can never be fully here nor entirely there. What it sets before us, and in the television set, is therefore split or … a separation that camouflages itself by taking the form of a visible image" (120). This is not only an issue of taking images out of context, but also one of screening, filtering, and controlling events, people, and the public in the form of images. The result, as Weber sees it, is radically unsettling: "the more the medium tends to unsettle, the more powerfully it presents itself as the antidote to the disorder to which it contributes" (126).

In *Ginger e Fred*, there are television sets on everywhere: in Rome's Termini railway station, in hotel lobbies, in cafés, even in the city's streets. Millicent Marcus (2002, 177) points out that "the presence of at least one TV monitor on each set" complements Fellini's carnivalesque aesthetic, but these monitors also "divide the visual field into two planes, each vying for the viewer's [and the characters'] attention." Even the most inane television programming demands our attention, beckoning us to watch game shows, sporting events, pageantry, reality television, political commentary, and pubblicità of beautiful women suggestively posing to sell olive oil. Our uncontrollable absorption in the television set turns us all into what Pippo (Fred) calls *teledipendenti* (television addicts). Having endured the experiment of being deprived of watching television for a whole month, one of Fellini's characters complains that she is emotionally distraught and unable to function. Yet tuning into the television does not render us capable of committing to any particular image or channel. Even Pippo's one-time costar, Amelia (Ginger), cannot help but

channel-surf through soccer, music videos, commercials, tele-dramas, and a program on facial calisthenics promising that "old age exists no longer."

Television unsettles our sense of presence, but it also uproots historical culture in favor of live televisual events that claim to be "history in the making." In such a climate, canonical works of Italian literature, such as Dante's *Commedia,* can be reduced to selling watches, as in one of the parodic ads that appropriates the famous opening lines of *Inferno*, staging a marionette Dante who easily finds his way through the *selva oscura* (dark forest) with a "compass watch." Obscene amounts of food are poured or thrown before us, making us aware that the culture of consumption is coupled with a culture of disposability and waste.

The overly sexualized vulgarity of television is matched by a billboard advertisement that is even more explicit and grotesque. An image of a topless "woman" is used to sell hundreds of sausages with the slogan "l'altra parte" (suggesting that maybe this woman is not what she appears to be). On another, a bare-breasted woman suggestively rides a lipstick tube that turns into a cobra. Both figures scan as feminine and, at the same time as phallic, sexual objects, making their objectified bodies sexually ambiguous. What is clear is the explicit eroticization of the product, regardless of the way the spectator perceives or wants to imagine these sexualized figures. What Bakhtin calls the "privileging of the lower bodily stratum" can no longer be confined to, or understood as, the counterhegemonic discourse of "market place speech." Now the carnivalesque also becomes "pregnant with its opposite"; it is aggressively self-promoting, inauthentic, thoughtlessly contradictory, and fundamentally opportunistic, capitalizing on every impulse. These hypersexualized advertisements are juxtaposed next to signs that read "perfumo eleganza" (perfume elegance) and "Roma pulita" (clean Rome), which stand over steaming piles of garbage. Slogans like these may give us pause, for they are indeed ironic, and as such they "turn away from obvious meaning" (Frye 1957, 40), to remind us that "la spazzatura"—the word for "trash" but also for trash TV that exploits these kinds of slogans and objectifies women for financial and political gain—became "Berlusconi's primary contribution to modern Italian culture and politics" (Cotignola 2014).

Fellini's parody of pubblicità is neither an act of heedless excess—a form of pure cynicism (the indulgence of self-destruction)—nor is it an unwitting act of self-destruction—what Lauren Berlant (2011, 24) might call "cruel optimism": "a relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility whose realization is discovered either to be impossible, sheer fantasy, or *too* possible, and toxic." *Ginger e Fred* relentlessly exposes how relations among subjects, objects, space, and time become quantifiable in terms of market share and entertainment value. Fellini uses parody in the form of self-quotation, allusion, reproduction, repetition, and distortion, as well as irony, in order to demonstrate how cascading images, which produce complex commentaries on and multiple understandings of subjectivity, also perform a cover up of the spiritual and moral bankruptcy of Italian culture. While his use of parody and farce may promise some joyful renewal, his use of irony cannot help but cast doubt on both the utopian impulse of carnival and its cruel optimistic double. Ironically, the utopian and cruel optimistic approaches try to harness or control the more radical aspects of irony by reducing it to an aesthetic practice that, as Paul de Man (1996, 168) argues, "allows one to say dreadful things because it says them by means of aesthetic devices, achieving a [playful] distance." At the same time, the desire to contain or control irony defuses the more radically disruptive aspects of parody, by turning them into acts of self-reflection or self-parody (for example, Harcourt's insistence that self-parody is Fellini's only brand of auteurship), or self-destruction (such as Berlant's bodily adjustments to "fantasy sustenance," 24).

Ginger e Fred asks us to think about how television has remade the carnivalesque in its own image. The film brings together Giulietta Masina and Marcello Mastroianni playing Amelia and

Pippo, a former vaudeville duo who imitated Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. The aging pair, as Burke (2002, 37) puts it, "are asked to appear on television to imitate their former imitations." The two are already parodies of their former selves. William Van Watson (2002, 76) describes the casting of Mastroianni, the iconic Latin lover of Italian cinema, as designed to debunk his own mythic status, since Pippo "suffers from incontinence and is incapable of controlling his genitalia for purposes of elimination, let alone copulation." Similarly, Amelia has her own anxieties over aging. Marcus (2002, 183) suggests her "self-mystification, her own belief that she has become, for the space of this dance, both the legendary Ginger and her own younger self … is at once pathetic and sublime, the aged relic who makes a fool of herself for public consumption, [is also] the heroic trouper who believes in the transformative power of spectacle."

The film is indeed aware of the pathos of becoming an "aged relic" in an industry that is preoccupied with body image and blindly committed to youth culture. Yet, it is not only Amelia who suffers from such anxieties and is enticed by the promise that "old age exists no longer," who considers cosmetic surgery, hair-dye, transplants, wigs, and other forms of body modification to conform to the media's obsession with youth and beauty. Played by Franco Fabrizi, the host of the variety show "Ed ecco a voi" ("Here's to you") seems to have undergone a series of modifications to appear "ageless." They have, in fact, rendered his appearance inhuman and completely artificial—exactly what has happened to Berlusconi as the result of innumerable plastic surgery interventions and other cosmetic alterations. Rather than deride its two aging characters, the film criticizes the fixation we have with looking and acting younger. This is a fixation that pervades all aspects of Italian television—from the parade of *veline* (showgirls), to the crassly sexualized commercials, the overly nipped, tucked, and touched up game show hosts, and newscasters. Old age is aired on television only as a curiosity, a failure to adhere to set beauty regimes, or as something to be ridiculed—as the "comic impotence" of the power outage during Ginger's and Fred's dance routine or Fred's subsequent live-television tumble (Barry 2010).

While Ginger and Fred are reunited after 45 years to perform once again on the variety show, they are just one act among a string of curiosities: a monk who flies, a transsexual who offers sexual relief to male inmates, a doddering old war hero, a clairvoyant who claims to tape record the voices of the spirits, a cow with 18 udders, dancing little people, etc. It is as if Fellini's own circus or "freak show … of midgets, admirals, transvestites, impersonators, violinists, intellectuals, imbeciles, [and] angelic bandits" (Marcus 2002, 172) have taken over television. But the freak show is not a reflection on Italian culture or an allegory of social politics. Instead, it is the product of a culture already habituated to immediate gratification, lacking critical attention, and indifferent to the plight of others. There is no contagious joy in this freak show, only a demand for attention.

The parasitic relation of publicity to spectacle, where paparazzi feed on publishing intimate details about the stars (as we see in *La dolce vita*), has been overturned. Now everyone is his or her own paparazzo, who self-promotes and self-exposes for the purpose of self-validation. (The selfie has become the inevitable fulfillment of sardonic Fellinian prophecy.) Television is a carnivalesque (radically unsettling) medium, but it is one that works on a tight schedule of programming flow that reduces the spectacle to soundbites, commercials, and programs that have already been test-screened on live audiences (see Williams, 1974, 86–120). Fellini asks us to think about how television evolved from spectacle to self-promotion, producing a feedback loop where self-legitimation is combined with self-regulation. But how does this "self" that emerges from publicity confront an industry that Paul Virilio describes as possessing "the exorbitant power of lying by omission, by censuring or ruling out news [ideas or images] that do not suit them or that might damage their interests" (Virilio, 1)? Self-fashioning, body-modifying, making oneself media-ready are also forms of self-disciplining and self-censorship. For Fellini, censorship is a weakness, a

political tool that stands in opposition to criticism, which he identifies as an intellectual tool: "to censor is to destroy, or at least to oppose the process of reality. It buries away the subjects it wants to bury and prevents, indefinitely, the form becoming reality" (Fellini 1996, 84). "Far from being satisfied with a negative or parodic critical consciousness" (Deleuze 1986, 214), Fellini provides us with critical tools with which to explore what Marcus calls the "irresistible fascination for the medium" of television. But for Fellini, commercial television offers little by way of content, other than its spectacular cheapness and vulgarity, managing all the same profoundly to influence public opinions, patterns of behavior, and the way we present ourselves.

It is true that Fellini made films for television, and directed commercials for Barilla, Campari, and Banca di Roma, but this does not make him "complicit" (see Marcus 1993b),[6] nor does it make him a "hypocrite" as Beppe Grillo, (the one-time television variety show comedian turned cofounder of the *Movimento 5 Stelle*, the Five Star Movement that in spring, 2018, formed Italy's government in collaboration with the Lega, or League, party) once claimed (Minuz, 176). Tullio Kezich points out that Fellini's turn to pubblicità is a tragic irony. He recalls that on the occasion of his 72nd birthday (20 January 1992), *Corriere della Sera* ran an article entitled, "Fellini, out of work on his birthday: he hasn't worked in two years," thus indicating that "it was under these circumstances that Fellini [was] commissioned to make his last work, three commercials for Banca di Roma" (Kezich 2006, 391).[7] Fellini was indeed forced to rely on making commercials as a source of income, and also to rely on companies owned by Berlusconi to fund his films—understanding all the while that the sister companies of his funding sources owned, profited from, and interrupted his most famous films when aired on their television networks. Like many film auteurs of his generation, Fellini's films maintain a critical perspective on the relationship of film to money. Deleuze quotes Fellini as saying, "the film ends when the money runs out" (Deleuze 1989, 77).

Once film makes money its object and objective then it reveals all relations as potentially quantifiable, thus questioning the "authenticity" of such relations. For Deleuze, the film-within-the-film, a trope that appears throughout Fellini's long career, "expresses the infernal circuit between image and money, this inflation which time puts into exchange.... The film is movement, but the film within the film is money, is time" (Deleuze 1989, 78). Time is not just money, money puts time into circulation (Adamson, 247). But Fellini's films forestall the relation of the film to a commodity, delaying the making of the film and questioning rather than directly taking on what Deleuze called cinema's "most indispensable enemy"—its "internalized relation with money" (Deleuze 1989, 77). Rather than embracing the political militancy of cinéma vérité or the avant-garde, Fellini engaged in an ongoing parody of "finance capitalism," what Morgan Adamson calls the "financialization of the image" (Adamson, 247). More than product placement (or the treatment of a film simply as advertisement for merchandising), the financialization of the image marks a shift in perception: a move away from the cinema of the knowing subject (whether the camera or a character), with whom the spectator can identify, toward perception that is no longer linked to a subject but to the device of the remote control that captures our inattention, as we constantly shift our focus from one image to the next. What circulates is our attention, and it is what determines value.

In this sense, commercial television represents a transformation from older narrative forms of subjectivity (and with them sovereignty) to newer affective modes of sensationalism. It is the many voices circulating on satellite television that drive Ivo Salvini in *La voce della luna* to pursue an idealized woman; to identify with infantile puppet boy, Pinocchio; and to wander from one scenario to the next without really committing himself to any. While these female voices suggest they know intimate details about Ivo's life—that his mother could not stop laughing when she saw his face, that he had always been curious about many things, that he hears voices, and, as a

result, had been institutionalized—the derisive tone and final line seem to indicate that they are more a product of mass-produced male fantasies, created by men like Berlusconi to arouse male viewers, than actual women. As in *Ginger e Fred*, images of ideal (objectified) women appear throughout the film on billboards, posters, and television screens, and each image calls for a passerby or a casual viewer's attention. Even Aldina (the idealized blonde) gets her 15 minutes of fame when she is crowned "Miss Farina" ("Miss Flour") at a grotesque provincial gnocchi festival beauty contest sponsored by a large agro-business company. Ivo, who like many of Fellini's protagonists is a Pinocchio figure, a puppet, heeds the voices featured on television only to be told by the woman of his dreams that she, and by extension his ideals, drives, and desires, are constructs of "pubblicitàààààà…" Fellini's filmic depiction of pubblicità may indeed "lack levity," "be angry in tone," express a certain "unsympathetic" vulgarity, "tastelessness," worn out or exhausted forms of "misogyny," "homophobia," "aggressive machismo," "narcissistic self-indulgence," and "infantile fantasies," but all of these qualities are ones that we have come to expect with and on television.

What films such as *Ginger e Fred* and *La voce della luna* ask us to think about is how television and remote control give us the false impression of being empowered—to choose, to turn on or off, to cancel, to mute, to not waste one's time on that which does not interest us—when instead it is the audience that is programed to stay home, to demand instant entertainment, be distracted, indifferent, to become addicted to interruptions and distractions that do not require commitment or accountability, but allow us to wander virtually from one scenario to the next.

Notes

1 In 1973, Silvio Berlusconi set up a small television company in Milan, TeleMilano, which was designed to broadcast to the 4000 residential apartment complexes he had developed east of Milan in the 1960s. These buildings made up the center of the town of Segrate. By 1978, Berlusconi founded Fininvest (Finanziaria d'investimento Fininvest S.p.A), an Italian holding company that also owns Mediaset, which is still the largest media conglomerate in Italy, giving Berlusconi direct access to three powerful cable channels: Canale 5, Italia 1, and Rete 4. In 1980, TeleMilano became Canale 5 on the private television network owned by Mediaset and was made available on a national scale. It is currently the most watched channel in Italy. In 1982, Mediaset bought Italia 1, and, in 1984, Rete 4.

2 In 1986, Berlusconi bought the AC Milan Football Club and also purchased a number of players from other European clubs to win the Serie A league (1987–1988) and the European Champions League (1988–1989 and 1989–1990). Depicted in the mural are: coach Arrigo Sacchi; defenders Mauro Tassotti, Paolo Maldini, Franco Baresi, and Alberigo Evani; midfielders Angelo Colombo, Frank Rijkaard, Carlo Ancelotti, and Roberto Donadoni; strikers Pietro Paolo Virdis, Marco Van Basten, and Ruud Gullit; and the goalie Giovanni Galli.

3 Minuz (2015, 187) provides evidence of a sustained correspondence between Fellini and Andreotti, but shows how their friendship became acrimonious when Andreotti supported the Mammì Law, passed on 6 August 1990, which granted Silvio Berlusconi a substantial monopoly on public television. In his column "Bloc Notes" for *L'Europeo*, Andreotti asked Fellini to reconsider his position on television advertising; Fellini responded in *La Repubblica*, suggesting that Andreotti was trying to rid himself of guilt, but that "the whole thing smacks of a moral, even more than a palpably political loss of direction" (quoted in Minuz 2015, 187).

4 Marcus (1993a, 170) likens Fellini to Casanova as played by Donald Sutherland, "whose aged and decrepit narrator enables the filmmaker to vent his own anxieties about the decline of a career dedicated to crowd-pleasing but transgressive spectacles."

5 Bakhtin writes: "In reality, however, Rabelais was never an enemy of this power, but on the contrary … understood fairly well the relative nature of this progressiveness" (119).

6 Marcus suggests that Fellini's denunciation of television "is never unequivocal. Like his spoof of television commercials in *Ginger e Fred*, whose carnivalesque exuberance exposed the director's own ill-concealed complicity (he has himself filmed various commercials over the years), *La voce della luna* has a series of ecstatic moments that allow Fellini to indulge his love of spectacle" (2002, 246).

7 The editors of *Corriere della Sera* ran an article the following year reporting that after all the outpouring of support, nothing came of it. Fellini would not make another film.

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Maurizio Porro

Thank you, dear Federico, for making us love cinema and life more. For taking us on the roller-coaster of your emotions, under your personal guidance. For telling us the story of Italy […]. You were a humble, kind master, who never let a birthday or an anniversary go by without a well-wishing phone call. Sometimes yours was the first, against all likelihood of etiquette, because you saw something truly sacred in the relationship of friendship […]. And thank you for so generously offering your incredible sense of humor to those who could reap its benefits—a sense of humor that was surely rooted […] in the days of Marc'Aurelio *and in the caricatures that you were constantly sketching, as everyone knows, even on the napkins in restaurants […]. But the trademark on your humor came perhaps from some more distant place, was more profound. It was, as happens in the best of cases, a sort of skepticism adorned with fulminating wit, as one glance was enough for you to understand almost everything about whoever crossed your path. And not only on the set—around the dinner table as well, or in some fashionable drawing-room (among the very few that you frequented), chatting with friends. Your talk was not like that of others. Your dialectic was extraordinary: its strength came from your unorthodox choice of terms; from your linguistic systems; and from your personal, unusual, inimitable combinations of words […].*

A Century-Long Letter, like Cinema. In: Fellini: Costumes and Fashion *(Milan: Charta, 1996), 19.*

26

"Il Maestro" Dismantles the Master's House: Fellini's Undoing of Gender and Sexuality

Marguerite Waller

It matters what ideas we use to think other ideas.

Marilyn Strathern (1992, 10)

Introduction

Perhaps it is not surprising that watching Fellini's films generates stories. He was, as many of his friends testify (see Angelucci and Mollica in this volume), a great storyteller, offscreen as well as onscreen. Though the films increasingly eschew grand narrative, they are made up of stories, that point to other stories, that suggest still more stories. I have written elsewhere about the freedoms and responsibilities involved with this fluidity (Waller 2002a, 6). Reading the richly layered, hypnotically paced scene in Steiner's elegant living room led me to connect stories, not present in a literal way but not absent either, about colonialism, slavery, Orientalism, the Cold War, masculinity, and the threat of thermonuclear catastrophe. My point was that *La dolce vita* (1960) was proposing a new logic that made the spectator's actions and reactions the issue. A highly contingent and unpredictable but nevertheless readable interactivity between spectator and film could take place if the relationship between viewer and screen were egalitarian and if the viewer allowed sound images equal status with visual images, a woman of color equal status with white men, background equal status with foreground, and so on. Each viewer's resulting story about a particular scene will be different under these circumstances, and the same viewer's story may change with each viewing (Miller 2008, 73–74), but experiencing those shifts, however disconcerting, constitutes yet another (illuminating) story.

My contingent stories in this chapter are intended to be evocative and open-ended, rigorous in their attention to Fellini's film texts, but not exclusive of other stories. The finely nuanced attention to genders and sexualities in Fellini's films has come to interact, for me, with twentieth and twenty-first century feminist/queer decolonial readings of Western genders and sexualities. This essay sketches just a few of the rhizomatic possibilities opened by reading what I see as Fellini's undoing of genders and sexualities in relation to a conversation about the "coloniality" of gender

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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in which philosopher Maria Lugones, historian Silvia Federici, feminist border theorist Gloria Anzaldúa, and African-Caribbean-American poet and essayist Audre Lorde have been engaged. I will address the shifting historical and geographical circumstances to which the terms "coloniality" and "decoloniality" allude as this conversation unfolds.

I also address how important it is to consider "what ideas we use" to read Fellini's films. What notions of gender and which strains of feminism are we bringing to bear and what understandings of the history of European and non-European sexuality? Much ink and even some celluloid have been expended on the question of whether or not Fellini's films are compatible with an unspecified but generally white, Western "feminism."[1] Rarely is it suggested that Fellini's films and drawings are engaged, not in "understanding" or "resolving" gender relations, but in deepening their opacities, exploring the mystifying tyrannies of a sex/gender system in which Fellini himself, his characters, many film viewers, and diverse political systems are entangled. That the adolescent Paola in *La dolce vita* wants to learn typing so that she can extricate herself from a life of menial labor, for example, gets lost in sentimental readings that decontextualize her image, framing out her multiple exploitations—by her father, her employer, and Marcello—and her colonization by a heavily Europeanized cover of a Latin mambo called, significantly, "Patrizia" (literally "patrician" and a derivative, like patriarchy, of the Latin *pater*, or father). Replicating Marcello's diegetic two-dimensionalizing objectification of her as an Umbrian angel (Waller 2002b, 111–112), critics want to make her just the kind of salvific figure that Claudia Cardinale refuses to represent in *8½* (1963). Like many viewers, distinguished film historian Gian Piero Brunetta (2016, 16) and astute film critic Guido Fink (2004, 168) want to make her a *creatura angelica* akin to Dante's Beatrice, collapsing the difference between Dante's formidable lover, spiritual guide, and teacher—who freely corrects, on various points, the Western pantheon of thinkers, rulers, and saints whom she and Dante engage in *Paradiso*—and Fellini's uneducated, lonely, homesick, young waitress. Paola would, on the other hand, be able to teach Marcello a great deal if he were able and willing to interact with, rather than to objectify, her (Waller, 1993).

In the concluding section of *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, philosopher Gilles Deleuze seeks language with which to describe a "new" kind of cinematic image that operates differently from those he has designated "action images" (1986, 205–210). The latter imply agency, sensory motor control, and actions that take place in homogeneous, three-dimensional space—in short, a Western subject operating within a Western metaphysical realm in which questions of illusion vs. reality and subjective vs. objective make sense. The "new" image is an ontologically ungrounded "mental image" that not only frames the others, but transforms them by penetrating them. To evoke the sensuous and spiritual affect of these images, Deleuze refers to the "love which is necessary for the birth of the new image" (214). In more philosophical terms, neorealist film language does not stop with a critical problematizing of *how* we know (an epistemological project), but transforms or transfigures the very nature of what there is to be known (an ontological project). Deleuze cites Fellini's early films as a particularly salient example of how postwar Italian cinema attacked a "dark organization of clichés" (Deleuze 1986, 210), which passed for or constituted "reality," by weakening habitual and institutional ways of linking events, actions, people, and places—foregrounding what we might call, in gender/queer theorist Judith Butler's terms, the performativity of the everyday (1990, 16–25). "In a very special way, it is Fellini who put his first films under the sign of the manufacture, the detection and the proliferation of external and internal clichés" (Deleuze 1986, 212).

Fellini's films seem to be focused with particular intensity on the cliché or set of clichés known as "gender," and, not least, on how this binary, hierarchical classification system troubles sexual relations. In a sense, this is not to say anything new. Anyone who engages with Fellini's films quickly realizes that they are hugely concerned with gender and sexuality. More often than not,

though, this has led to approaches that essentialize Fellini's characters (de Lauretis 1993; Reich 2004; Rigoletto 2014; Minuz 2015) in terms of "men" and "women," downplaying the rich "fabric of relations" (Deleuze, 1986, 200) that make Fellini's framings, camera moves, and editing so distinctive.

Of Men and Rodents

When Fellini was called upon to direct a shot in the Florentine segment of *Paisà* (*Paisan*, Roberto Rossellini 1946), he scandalized cinematographer Otello Martelli by calling for the camera to be placed as close to the ground as possible. "The point of view of a rodent," Martelli called it (Kezich 2006 85). The shot, unanchored to any character's POV, pans jerkily from right to left, at "eye level" with a demijohn of water being pulled bumpily, by means of rope and dolly, across a city intersection. On either side, forming a kind of visual parenthesis, knots of anxious neighbors try to stay out of the line of fire of unseen Fascist snipers, as one group scoops water from an underground water main into the demijohn and sends it across the no man's land of the intersection to the group on the other side. The shot's bumpiness and unorthodox angle call attention to the creaturely performance of the camera in a way that Martelli's virtuosic moving camera style would not have, and, likewise, "animates" the demijohn. When the camera "looks" at the demijohn, it is as if the water—lifeblood of any community, culture, empire, or financial system—looks back, as several of Fellini's human figures including Paola do in later films. Forty-four years later, in *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990), Ivo Salvini (dressed in Fellini's trademark black jacket and red scarf) will continue, against the grain of almost everyone and everything in his noisy, neoliberal town, to remain in relation to the subterranean waters, empirical and metaphorical, upon which they all depend. (See Agnew, Hough-Dugdale, and Past in this volume.)

Already in *Paisà*, the contrast between the official, historical accounts given in the abstraction-laden voice-overs at the beginning of each segment, and the way those histories play out at ground level ("the POV of a rodent") suggests the logic of Fellini's focus on masculinity in his two "period" films, the costume dramas *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969) and *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976). Neither film has major female speaking parts. Official European "history," after all, takes male power relationships as its subject. Though I will focus on the latter, both films offer complex, historicizing presentations of masculinity as severely bounded, hemmed into constricted conceptual and physical spaces.[2]

In *Fellini - Satyricon*, Encolpio's and Ascilto's threesome with a young Black slave woman at an abandoned patrician household soon morphs into a twosome between the two young men, the young woman of color extruded to the margins to sing an indecipherable song that envelops but does not awaken the sleeping lovers. The slave woman's role here retroactively prefigures the even more marginalized, sari-wearing, Afro-Caribbean woman whose guitar playing and singing subtly envelop much of the action in Steiner's mid-twentieth-century living room in *La dolce vita*. (See Greene and Sisto in this volume.) In *Fellini - Satyricon*, a female actor plays the Roman emperor we see assassinated, suggesting that what might appear to be a progressive, antiauthoritarian "revolution" may amount to the replacement of one patriarchal order by another that is more violent and misogynist than the one it overthrows (Burke 1996, 175). The premonition that whatever is associated with the "female" will fare still worse in the film's "new order" is confirmed when Lichas, the virile buccaneer who nevertheless identifies sexually as a "bride," is beheaded on the orders of the new Caesar. Encolpio, Ascilto, and a thief later do away with the very principle of gender and sexual fluidity that the film has been unfolding when they abduct a

young hermaphrodite (in today's terminology, an intersex person) who had been worshipped (though also sequestered and exploited) as a demi-god, intending to commodify their mysteriously material dematerialization of gender as a materially profitable sideshow. Moving from its complication of gender binarism with the feminized Caesar and the bride Lichas to the death of the hermaphrodite from thirst (lack of water), the film slouches toward the production of what queer theory would term "heteronormative masculinity," strongly associated with whiteness. (Encolpio is played by the conspicuously blonde, blue-eyed British actor Martin Potter.) At the end of the film, Encolpio's virility has been reconfigured in relation to the Black female Oenothea (see Greene in this volume), his sometime lover Ascilto has been murdered, and, though ostensibly fleeing the constriction of the new Caesar's regime, he embarks on a remarkably tiny vessel to materialize his "free" sovereign masculinity in North Africa, a site of Roman colonization for six centuries, and, in the twentieth century, of Fascist colonial imperialism.

In a sketch Fellini drew in preparation for his cinematic meditation on eighteenth-century Venetian Giacomo Casanova, Casanova lies in a fetal position in a bare, cramped cell in Venice's Piombi Prison, regarded by three large rats (*E il Casanova di Fellini?* ["And What About Fellini's Casanova?", Gianfranco Angelucci and Liliana Betti 1976]). As the essay film *E il Casanova di Fellini* unpacks this densely signifying image (literalizing *Paisà*'s POV of a rodent), it prefigures stories of the co-construction of heteronormativity and colonialism that New World feminist decolonial thinkers and queer theorists will begin telling in the late 1980s. These stories, in turn, bring the underappreciated historiographical and philosophical rigor of Fellini's investigation of eighteenth-century European Enlightenment masculinity into sharper focus.

With his mechanical "uccello" ("bird" but also a colloquial word for "penis"), his huge, gleaming egghead (Fellini specified that Casanova's hairline had to be a certain number of centimeters from his eyebrows in every shot [*E il Casanova di Fellini?*]) and his precisely laced corset,[3] Fellini's Casanova incarnates a dissociated, desensitized, mechanized, rational, masculinity that appears to be yet more reduced and restricted than its Roman imperial predecessors in *Fellini - Satyricon*. Marxist feminist historian Silvia Federici (2004) provides a materialist back story, missing from most history books, to this devolution. Beginning with the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and consolidated simultaneously in Europe and its colonies, she argues, Europe engaged in a three-hundred-year process of self-colonization during which hundreds of thousands of mostly peasant class men and women, but primarily women as time went on, who resisted being dispossessed by the forces of capital accumulation of their land; their labor; their knowledges of agriculture, medicine, and reproduction; their festivals and rituals; and their communal personhood were executed as heretics and witches. Federici underscores the divisive impact of these witch-hunts on both community and male/female relations. Men came to fear the power of women, undermining class solidarity and fueling misogyny, while whole universes of practices, beliefs, and social relations were lost (165). The giantess, whose appearance saves Casanova from suicidal despair in London, could be read as a deracinated trace or token of those losses, a physically strong, sensuously alive, friendly woman, banished, like the hermaphrodite in *Fellini - Satyricon*, to sideshow liminality.

Federici's study has inspired decolonial feminist philosopher Maria Lugones (2010, 2016) to consider in more detail how bodies and affective lives were restructured by the forces of colonial capitalism and its co-creation, the industrial revolution. Men of the lower classes were turned into labor machines (Lugones 2016, 3); women were transformed into machines for the reproduction of new workers or into prostitutes (2016, 4). For both men and women of the working classes, though in different ways, the forms that sexual pleasure might take were streamlined, estranged, and heterosexualized (2016, 5). Historian of gender and sexuality, Henry Abelove (1992) has hypothesized that during the "long eighteenth century" in England, the paradigm of

productivity redefined a wide array of sexual behaviors, originally practiced in both same sex and cross-sex situations by people who did not strictly differentiate between the two. These behaviors were reorganized as "foreplay" and subordinated—made the narrative prelude—to the one proper form of sexuality that might eventuate in the production of a new human being: "cross-sex genital intercourse (penis in vagina, vagina around penis, with seminal emission uninterrupted" (337). Male sexuality itself thus became, Abelove's speculations imply, a mechanized and routinized affair, forestalling the desire for sensory and spiritual integration, permeability, and communication that it might otherwise arouse.

Lugones notes that the desensitizing of the human sensorium and the severing of the body from the person cut across classes, though it played out most debilitatingly, perhaps, for those in power. In the interests of securing their position as morally and intellectually superior humans, entitled to dehumanize indigenous peoples and slaves for the purposes of extraction and exploitation, nonlaboring classes of men, she writes, were abstracted from both manual labor, which was constituted as "a repugnant and dangerous enemy," and sexuality (2016, 6). All mind and executive function, "[t]hey were ideologically constructed as planners, decision makers, able to command, to make moral judgements, to conceive and put into practice the construction of the social in every respect.... They were constructed as fundamentally rational" (2016, 2). Under these circumstances, sexuality becomes the Achilles heel of colonial gender, a messy but constitutive surplus that leaves the "masculine" subject always in crisis, undecidably quivering between its embodiment as male, upon which its authority depends, and its disembodiment as the subject of virtue and rational thought. The perfumed, bewigged, expensively tailored (in colonially extracted textiles) male body of privilege is fundamentally threatened by its own construction, just as its power and authority are at once constituted and threatened by the dangerous "wildness" of the laboring classes that could breach the dams and canals into which it is channeled—a fear well-founded in the age of the French and Haitian revolutions.

Federici (2004, 188–192), meanwhile, focuses on the implications of these developments for women's sexuality. As it comes increasingly under the control of the state, because reproduction needs to be managed in the interests of supplying labor power, female desire is reshaped to provide a compartmentalized pleasure, release, and sense of mastery for men that does not impinge on their productivity and efficiency.[4] The release and pleasure in question are not, of course, women's. As women became disconnected from the land, reproduction, and sexual pleasure, any residual female desire came to be seen as anomalous, dangerous, even monstrous, threatening to lure men away from proper masculine sexuality, to steal their power, to bewitch them.[5]

Il Casanova di Federico Fellini brings these stories to alarming, entertaining, nonjudgmental life. In the film's first episode, the ancien regime French ambassador, de Bernis, takes his sexual pleasure by remote control, deploying his mistress Maddalena to have sex with Casanova in a specially designed optical space whose visual field he commands from a peephole incorporated into the lifeless image of a fish.[6] The tile work on one of the room's walls further secures aristocratic male mastery from the threat of sensory permeability by imaging sex as "Oriental," depicting Chinese figures engaging in graphically erotic activities. The punch lines of this comic scene are the French ambassador's subsequent grading of Casanova's performance (overall good but a little lacking in creativity when he was on top) and Casanova's earnest request of him for a letter of recommendation to the French king. The wholesale subjugation and recuperation of the sensory within the economies of the old boys' network, and the primacy of homosocial relations negotiated across the bodies of women (Sedgwick 1985) are hilariously performed in this opening circus-like set piece, making the relations relatively easy to grasp. But the film grows darker and relations more obscure as Fellini's Casanova learns to manipulate the strings of imperial/colonial masculinities.

The film's most elaborate episode, set significantly in a Roman palazzo and presided over by a British ambassador, tracks a shift in the meaning and operation of class while brutally exposing the contradictions of disembodied aristocratic and rising bourgeois masculinity. In a mise-en-scène abundantly furnished with the spoils of both Roman and British imperialism, the arriviste Casanova and the bankrupt Prince del Brando, owner of the palazzo, which he has had to lease to the ambassador, take an immediate and competitive dislike to each other. Prince del Brando brings up Casanova's stretch in prison and his reputation as a sexual "stallion," either of which would invalidate the Venetian's claims to moral, intellectual, aesthetic, or scientific superiority in the eyes of the aristocrat. In self-defense, Casanova uncannily anticipates Lugones's criteria of colonial masculinity by insisting that sexual success "requires remarkable *moral* maturity, not to mention *imagination*, and most of all *knowledge* of the movement of fluids and of the influence of the planets and stars" (emphases mine). When del Brando shifts the focus to the sexual stamina of his coachman, who can achieve seven orgasms in one night, the British ambassador proposes a competition to determine whether the "poet or the filthy beast" can perform Taylorized sexual intercourse (penis in vagina, vagina around penis, with seminal emission uninterrupted) more times in an hour. Casanova accepts this unseemly challenge under duress, but ever adept at improvising, he demolishes del Brando before the contest has even begun by choosing the prince's mistress, Romana, as his partner. The coachman, Righetto, tellingly, cannot choose his partner, but is chosen by a British princess who has helped maneuver Casanova into accepting the challenge. She hopes, it would seem, that "the impulses of [Righetto's] rustic loins" will translate into some good sex (finally) for her.

The machinic nature and the exact sameness of the sex act as it is performed by both Casanova and Righetto are graphically and sonically conveyed by the camera work and by the verbal reactions of the onlookers. Shot through an ornately carved wooden barrier along one side of the theatrical space in which the two men are performing, their horizontal pumping bodies mime the horizontal piston rods of a steam locomotive. Toward the end of the clock-timed hour, the audience's "heh, heh, heh" accompaniment to the action gradually slows, miming the sound of a steam engine slowing down.

The immediate outcomes of this faux contest between two versions of the same thing (neither intellectual nor bestial, but machinic) are acclaim for Casanova, Romana's devastation at being raped, del Brando's anguish and humiliation (his and Romana's feelings for each other appear to be at least somewhat reciprocal), and the eclipse of the underclass male's and the upper-class female's desires. To put the significance of this performance in more philosophical and sociological terms, Casanova emerges, at least in the eyes of those who wish to see him this way, as an unlimited, universal, sovereign subject—superior to, though identified and competitive with, the aristocratic male. He appears perfectly to harmonize mind and body, culture and wildness, poetry and labor, morality and libertinage, freedom and domination. Fantasmatically, if one ignores the wreckage left in his wake, his way of doing gender and sexuality appears to glue back together the pieces of personhood that the epoch has so industriously broken apart. At least it camouflages the seams and rivets of deadened, mechanized, colonial-industrial man. Perhaps Fellini made Donald Sutherland's forehead huge, not only to suggest the privilege of "rationality," but also to make Casanova look like a literal egg—a *Hump*ty Dumpty restored to uncracked wholeness—an image that will reappear tellingly in *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980). The scene and the entire film, meanwhile, demolish the myth of Casanova as a superior being—as a profound thinker, a brilliant scientist, a true lover of women, a liberatory sensualist, etc.—constructed by Casanova himself and perpetuated by generations of *casanovisti*.

Once Fellini's Casanova has conquered and colonized the "rustic" male, displaced the still somewhat sensuously attuned aristocratic male, satisfied the whims of (the British) Empire, and

reduced "women," regardless of class, to what Lugones (2016, 5) describes as "reproductive holes or holes for the release of men's sexual 'needs,'" it remains to conceptualize an ideal female to mirror and ontologize the totalizing masculinity modeled by Casanova. Rosalba, a life-sized, exquisitely dressed, and coiffed "female" automaton, not found in Casanova's memoirs but half-invented and half-lifted from the Decadent literature of the late nineteenth century (Karetnikova 1997, 91; Gubareva in this volume), fits the bill. A cross between a Judy doll and a Stepford wife (and anticipating the sex doll brothels described in this volume by Zambenedetti), without a voice or any desire or intellect of her own, Rosalba (the rosy dawn of a new era?) has been ingeniously fabricated by an older man, referred to by Casanova as her "father." She leaves no inconveniently organic leftovers (she does not eat, sweat, defecate, grow old, or give birth) and brings with her the blessing of uncomplicated patrilineal authority. With her, Casanova can enjoy the ecstasy of complete colonial mastery, and, indeed, he weeps with happiness after engaging in "sexual intercourse" with "her."[7] His final dream is to dance with "her," in sync with the mechanically reproduced music installed in the doll's entrails, on the surface of a frozen canal in his home city of Venice, beneath which the head of Venus, goddess of love, has remained submerged since the opening of the film and is now securely locked.

Rosalba and Her Sisters

As *8½* (1963) had already made explicit, it takes a harem to maintain the ontological illusions of colonial masculinity. In relation to Fellini's male figures, his female figures and their sexualities also become readable in terms of colonial gender construction. As many commentators have noticed, though, Fellini's subalternized women have a tendency to identify less seamlessly with the roles they are hailed to perform. Put another way, if the ideal woman within the Casanovan sex/gender economy is the automaton Rosalba, then females who do not conform to this ideal (who *do* eat, sweat, defecate, grow old, speak, desire) will appear to some degree monstrous, grotesque, or perverse. These have, in fact, been dominant terms in readings of female figures in Fellini's films, although they have been deployed in essentializing rather than relational ways, not taking into consideration the status and provenance of what passes for "normal."

Rosalba has many sisters, though they tend to be minor characters in the films. Giulietta's perfectly coiffed and made-up (pun intended) mother and actress sister do not want Giulietta to touch them. The instant Giulietta defies this mother figure, it turns into something that looks very much like a broken doll. Snàporaz's "ideal woman" in *La città delle donne* is a giant, soubrette-shaped hot air balloon. Ivo Salvini's beloved Aldina in *La voce della luna* walks through town dressed like a mirror in a silver coat, looking for her reflection in a store window full of wedding dress mannequins (O'Healy 2002, 227–228). Marisa, also in *La voce della luna*, seems to her husband like a female Casanova, a "powerful locomotive, whose energy terrifies the defenseless Nestore" (O'Healy 2002, 262). Nestore, meanwhile, is in love with his even more machinic (and more manageable) washing machine, which seems, like Guido's imaginary Claudia in *8½*, to murmur reassurances about *pulizia* and *ordine*.

In *La città delle donne*, the "master's house" of "Dottor Sante Katzone" (Doctor Holy Big Dick) offers a whole gallery of still images of women accompanied by audio recordings of their orgasms, delighting Snàporaz with its push button convenience. Katzone's achievement is to have reduced all ten thousand of his conquests into Rosalbas by using their images and voices to create a Nam June Paik-esque, floor-to-ceiling bank of monitors that constitute one big peep show (any reference to Silvio Berlusconi's emerging commercial television empire was surely

intended). His other paraphernalia, conspicuously featured in the scene where he welcomes Snàporaz to his heavily defended mansion, recapitulate the iconography of *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*. A model train set occupies the foreground of their initial conversation, during which Katzone also shows off a mechanical tongue that emerges grotesquely from an orientalist face mask to tickle the human ear, and an oversized mechanical phallus that vibrates at "3000 rpm."

A broad, though age-delimited, spectrum of what passes for "femininity," Katzone's installation suggests, aligns in late twentieth-century Italian media culture with the mechanistic Casanovan ideal, which appears to have become so hegemonic that viewers, and characters themselves, glimpse its grotesque creepiness (and desperate sadness), if at all, only in flashes, dreams, and small ruptures in their quotidian realities. Giulietta, an isolated, suburban bourgeois housewife, is startled by such a flash during a séance in which a "Turkish" spirit named Olaf insists harshly that she is nothing and does not mean anything to anyone. Olaf proves both correct and ultimately helpful. Soon after, Giulietta begins to recover her childhood capacity to see visions—darker now than when she was younger—including a raft draped with dead and dying horses and a barge of "barbarians," bristling with weapons. Indecipherable visitations, that are intrusions, perhaps, of Giulietta's own dissociated passions and rebellions, they are also remnants of the waves of imperialism and rebellion that have characterized European history.[8] Surviving, somehow, a long, painful, sanity-threatening crisis, the otherwise ordinary Giulietta emerges from her Rosalba-hood to find that the spirits of these "grotesque" visions are really her friends. A pre-Betty Friedan middle class housewife (a *brava donnina di casa* her acquaintance Val calls her), Giulietta appears even to herself as committed to remaining a Rosalba, but a kind of incomplete colonization—her inability to meet the demands of the female masquerade—extrudes her from the ballet mécanique into which she has tried to immerse herself.[9] Her husband Giorgio, by contrast, disappears into the gray fog of cliché that as a PR man he promotes, exiting the film along a path bordered by stunted, prophylactically plastic-covered phallus/trees into a trackless waste where all points of orientation are lost.

From Anitona to Saraghina

Another exception are the characters and caricatures performed by Anita Ekberg (too often set up as the antithesis of Giulietta Masina) and the characters she plays, who, with ever greater degrees of explicitness, present a wonderfully unstable mixture of automaton and giantess. "*È una bambola*" ("she is a doll"), defensively declares the celebrity journalist Marcello to his jealous girlfriend Emma over the phone from a hotel suite where "Sylvia Rank," the Nordic film star (played by Ekberg) who has just arrived in Rome to make a movie, is speaking lines fed to her by her female assistant to a crush of breathless journalists. Sylvia's mechanical vitality reveals itself as she climbs the steps of the dome of St. Peter's without breaking a sweat, exhausting the male journalists, including a sweating Marcello, trying to keep up. "She is an elevator, that one," pants a photographer. Not by coincidence, Fellini pairs Sylvia both diegetically and extradiegetically with an abusive, alcoholic, colonial male—her fiancé, Robert, who is said to have played Tarzan in Hollywood, as in fact, Lex Barker, the actor who plays Robert, had.

Sylvia is also presented as a manufactured cliché in the Deleuzian sense. The larger than life, seemingly vital figure is not an original, not "the first woman," as Marcello whispers to her as they dance to the musical cliché of "Arrivederci Roma." In appearance, she is most obviously a copy or look-alike—the phenomenon Fellini explores in *Ginger e Fred* (1985)—of Rita Hayworth's celluloid image in both Charles Vidor's *Gilda* (1946) and Vittorio De Sica's *Ladri di biciclette* (*Bicycle*

Thieves 1948).[10] Sylvia's dress in the Baths of Caracalla and Trevi Fountain scenes reproduces the iconic, strapless black gown worn by Hayworth in the poster for *Gilda* that Antonio Ricci tries unwrinkle in De Sica's film. Their hair is also identically styled, though Sylvia's is bleached blonder, and their large busts are similarly accentuated, though Sylvia's is larger (Figures 26.1 and 26.2). This intertextual connection leads to a network of ramifications, only a few of which I can pursue here.

Figures 26.1–26.2 In *La dolce vita*, Sylvia (Figure 26.2) reproduces and exaggerates Rita Hayworth's look in *Gilda* (Charles Vidor 1956), and on the movie poster (Figure 26.1) in *Ladri di biciclette* (*Bicycle Thieves* 1948). *Ladri di biciclette* directed by Vittorio De Sica. Produced by PDS. *La dolce vita* directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Riama Film in coproduction with Cinecittà and Pathé Consortium Cinéma. Frame grabs captured by Frank Burke from the 2014 Blu-ray version of *La dolce vita* and the 2007 Blu-ray version of *Bicycle Thieves*.

First, Hayworth was in several senses a border figure. Born in New York to an Irish-American mother and a Spanish, possibly gypsy, father, she was performing with her father in a Tijuana, Mexico nightclub when she was recruited by Hollywood. Her persona was "whitened" by a name change—from Cansino, her father's name, to her mother's maiden name—a new, lighter hair color, and the alteration of what was considered her overly "Latin" hairline (Nericcio 1992). Hayworth's image in *Ladri di biciclette* thus becomes a mise en abyme of the gendered and racialized seductions deployed in the colonization of Italy by the United States after World War II (Waller 1997, 259–260). Oversimplifying somewhat, the Hayworth who was colonized/constructed by American Hollywood becomes a means of hailing new, US-centric, Italian male and female subjects, neatly recapitulating, with a twist, Federici's story of Europe's self-colonization. The new Italian man should become obsessed with, and the new Italian woman (or at least the Italian cinematic female) should try to emulate, the objectified, voluptuous image of Hayworth deployed by the US military industrial complex to shape the desires of Italy's future consumers and allies.[11]

Not unlike Hayworth in *Ladri di biciclette*, "Anitona," or Big Anita, as Fellini affectionately referred to her, was neither Italian nor American, but becomes complexly entangled in assaying the supposedly liberal and prosperous international boom era that succeeded the postwar years. In *La dolce vita*, Sylvia Rank (her name's oxymoronic evocation of sylvan wilderness and hierarchical organization signaling her metaphysical *mescolanza*) is conspicuously associated, as both perpetrator and victim, with Fascism and imperialism. Even before we see her abused at the hands of Robert/Lex/Tarzan, her arrival at Ciampino Airport and her procession into Rome put her image in dialogue with Leni Riefenstahl's staging of Hitler's arrival in Nuremberg for the Nazi Party Congress in *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will* 1936). The nightclub scene in the Baths of Caracalla recalls an emperor reputed to have been one of Rome's most tyrannical. As the superficially multicultural nightclub scene unfolds, the dance of the priapic Hollywood actor Frankie with the deracinated (she is literally picked up off the ground by Frankie), abused, and exploited Swedish/Hollywood actress, Sylvia, produces a kind of pseudo borderland; homogenizing the apparent diversity of historical eras, nationalities, races, and musical and dance styles in a superspectacle of Hollywoodian colonization.

Like De Sica's Hayworth, that is, Sylvia occupies an ambivalent position as both colonizer and colonized, a mystified and mystifying position, which, if fully inhabited, offers both Fellini and genderqueer border poet-theoretician Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) a possible way through coloniality's deadening to a reconnection with sexual and spiritual aliveness. Anzaldúa's story of her own identification as, and with, a "grotesque femininity" that could not be disciplined into Rosalban conformity, leads her to the discovery/creation of what she calls a "*mestiza* consciousness," a psychic, emotional, and political "borderland" that allows/compels its inhabitants to operate on a daily basis in a realm in which paradigms are shifting and ontologically ungrounded. For Anzaldúa, this means navigating among the incompatible Mexican, indigenous, and white North American cultures—all of which look upon each other with fear and suspicion—that propel *la mestiza*, the product of all three, into a state of "floundering in uncharted seas" (79), "subject to intense pain" (80), resulting in insecurity and indecisiveness (78). But then, "I'm not sure exactly how" (79), Anzaldúa writes, inhabiting this borderland becomes the means of survival, not only for la mestiza but also potentially for its constitutive cultures, whether they be colonizing, colonized, or, as is often the case, both. From discovering that "she cannot hold concepts or ideas in rigid boundaries," (79) la mestiza can take advantage of this fluidity to confound distinctions between inside and outside, friend and enemy, center and margin. Deleuze's dark organization of clichés begins to deontologize and ways of seeing, interacting, and changing proliferate. Eurocentric gender, a constitutive binary of cultural and political borderlines, unravels once bor-

ders become cross-roads, zones of permeability, connection, and exchange, rather than exclusionary entrenchment. The same border*lines* that hem in Fellini's "men," push his other than male figures into the border*lands*, the spaces between more hegemonically organized contexts, cultures, genres, and events, where realities have no grounding in a single dominant discourse.

Viewers predictably defend themselves from the painful (though potentially beautiful) confusion of these borderlands, tending to laugh at, idealize, or ignore the precision with which Fellini deontologizes Rosalban femininity. Sylvia's own words, on one of the rare occasions when she is not following prompters, are generally not heard by viewers. She complains in English, while seated with her back to the camera in Marcello's car, that she has had "enough of it. They're all the same, men. They have such long nails. They never cut their nails, never!" an appropriate complaint for a "woman" constructed on scratchable celluloid (Waller 2002b, 114). The figure herself, in other words, denies the ontology projected onto her image. Were "she" perceived *as an image*, a shifting mestiza hologram produced in the borderlands between male and female, black and white (see Greene in this volume), victor and vanquished (both Sweden and Italy emerged in an ambiguous position from World War II), colonizer and colonized, Ekberg would exceed in every dimension, as Fellini's emphasis on her size suggests, her reduction to the triviality of a first world sex goddess.

"Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio ("The Temptation of Dr. Antonio" episode in *Boccaccio'70* 1962), a kind of coda to *La dolce vita*, takes particular aim at the near-universal ensorcellment exercised by Ekberg's image on viewers, whether they are erotically attracted, morally outraged, or both. The central character, conservative Catholic Antonio, compares to radioactive fallout or "rain"—in Italian, *pioggia radioattiva*—the ruinous effect on his community of Ekberg's recumbent image on a billboard advertising milk that has been installed in a park next to his EUR apartment. While the film language emphasizes the billboard's two dimensionality—we see it being constructed out of wood and strips of paper, and whenever Antonio says "look at her" to some official, the reverse shot shows only the scaffolding on the back of the billboard—the two-dimensional Anita comes to three-dimensional life in Antonio's fevered imagination, pursuing him through the streets of the EUR like Godzilla,[12] the monster in Japanese director Ishirô Honda's 1954 antinuclear film.

Honda's film was made in the aftermath of a disastrously miscalculated US hydrogen bomb test in March 1954 that sickened 20 000 Japanese fishermen, crippled the Japanese fishing industry (whose catch was radioactive for many months), and destroyed the lives of thousands of Marshall Islanders. As radiation from this and other tests circled the globe, it contaminated food worldwide, and by the late 1950s and early 1960s, radioactive milk had become a central trope in Cold War political discourse. That Fellini's monster movie star is selling milk links her literally with the "radioactive rain" to which Antonio has metaphorically compared her effect. Read in the context of nuclear testing, the jingle, "Bevete più latte" ("Drink more milk"), sung in children's voices and played incessantly by the billboard's loudspeaker (a precursor of Rosalba's music box), does, in fact, carry diabolical overtones—of imperialism, white supremacism, violence against women and children, and technological hubris. Via the wide screen image of Ekberg with her cool, tall, glass of white milk and the ceaselessly playing jingle, the legitimation of dominance and racialized genocide become synchronized with desires for purity, health, modernity, glamor, and sexiness, all of which are made to seem compatible with, even grounded in, Italian nationalism (the jingle includes the phrase "prodotto d'Italia"). The blond bombshell and the angry sea creature are, as Antonio's unconscious intuits, projections of the same politically and philosophically colonial imaginary.[13]

In the archives of the Fondation Fellini pour le cinéma in Sion, Switzerland (housed, by a coincidence that Fellini would surely have appreciated, in a nuclear fall-out shelter), one can find a

drawing by Fellini of "Anita," in which Ekberg is indistinguishable from Fellini's other great sea creature/woman, Saraghina, played by American opera student Eddra Gale. On screen Sylvia and Saraghina are linked by their scarves—the one Sylvia wears as she emerges from her plane and the one Saraghina wears during Guido's second visit to her (Carrera 2019, 62), and by their dancing in tight black dresses. Commentators, however, routinely refer to Fellini's Saraghina as "grotesque," generally missing her metamorphosis, like that of Giulietta's spirits, from overwhelming and frightening to gentle and friendly (see Burke 1996, 129–130). Invoking the grotesque to segregate Saraghina, or any other of Fellini's female figures, from the flow of Fellini's images, however, precludes their operating as shape-shifting border figures. Indeed, classing any female figure as grotesque privileges the aesthetics that pose Rosalba and her sisters as normative ideals. As Germaine Greer (1993) puts it in a recollection of her responses to images sent to Fellini by ordinary women hoping for a part in one of his films, "I was chastened to realize as I sat sneering at the grotesque homemade pinups that it was I who was applying too narrow a standard of female beauty" (230). In Fellini's complex swims through focal lengths, scales, camera moves, frames, images, music, action, and dialogue (see Vanelli and Sisto in this volume), it is the persistent habit of ontologizing—a dead giveaway that the old imperial will to mastery is busy protecting the boundaries of coloniality's solipsism—that is at issue.[14]

The intersection of Catholic schoolboy Guido, the subproletarian sex worker Saraghina, and the ruins of a 1930s-era military bunker or "pillbox" on what appears to be the same western-facing shore where film director Guido's huge, expensive, rocket launch pad is being constructed, presents a montage of instances of nonrelation: the demonization and commodification of sex, gendered poverty, heteronormative nationalism-militarism-imperialism, and—the reductio ad absurdum of Western rationality and colonial/industrial development—the threat of nuclear holocaust.[15] Then, unanchored diegetically—simply erupting on the soundtrack—a raucous rumba potentially transforms this Eisensteinian montage into an Anzaldúan borderland. The rumba, before it became popular in postwar Italy, was a working-class Cuban dance, developed in the late nineteenth century in northern Cuba's poor neighborhoods; its name came to be synonymous with "party." Here it sounds like the harsh transmission of a small transistor radio—the globally popular electronic communication device that radically changed popular music listening habits and became an important cultural tool for many poor people around the world (Gündoğdu, email communication, 26 July 2018). Political events in Cuba—the revolution of 1959, the CIA-organized counter-revolutionary Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961, and the Cold War Cuban missile crisis of 1962, which was unfolding as Fellini was editing *8½*—update Steiner's Cold War nuclear fears. But the "third-world" working-class provenance of the music, its mass dissemination even to Italy, and the success (at least provisionally) of Cuba's resistance to American imperialism evoke a political imaginary that deprivileges the binary win–lose politics of the Cold War by placing it in relation to the "party" of the Cuban revolution's working class. This ontological shift lends a depth to Guido's words near the end of the film that counters their superficial triteness: "È una festa, la vita. Viviamo insieme" ("It is a party, life. Let's live together.") Though these words have generally been subtitled and translated more colloquially as "Life is a celebration. Let's live *it* together," (emphasis mine) much is lost when Guido's phrasing is forced into the code of ordinary language. This scene will connect powerfully with the Saraghina episode a moment later when the image of the schoolboy Guido appears. Putting "festa" first, before "la vita," Guido's word order is evocative of a trans-subjective life distinct from that which Guido has been trying to lead. The soundtrack becomes unclear at this point, some auditors hearing an elided "l'insieme" (it together) and others simply "insieme" (together) without the objective pronoun. The difference between what amounts to two different ways of imagining subjectivities and how they might come together is not insignificant. Addressing an objective "it" puts Guido and Luisa

right back where they started, while living relationally, moving "together" without an objective "it," releases them from the impossible and mutually damaging requirements of Western subjectivity. If the soundtrack is ambiguous, so is the outcome of Guido's crisis.

The rumba scene also visually anticipates the deontologizing turn that the adult Guido experiences when confusion and ambivalence metamorphose into "something else" (Anzaldúa 79). Saraghina's rumba in front of the ruins of a military defense line (a kind of hologram that images the difference between a borderline and a borderland) includes a focus-pull in which a pattern of reeds in the window of a ruined wall comes into sharp focus (Benderson 1974, 111–112).[16] These reeds mimic and miniaturize in a much lighter material the launch pad originally intended as the central image of Guido's stalled film about an uninhabitable earth completely destroyed by thermonuclear war.

Little Guido's return visit to Saraghina without the other boys and despite the humiliating punishment he has received at the hands of the priests (played by women, linking even these figures of punitive authority to a general slipping away of identity as ontological) initiates him into (or perhaps just offers him a premonition of) the borderlands of noncolonizing, fully erotic, interactive human connection. No money is exchanged. Saraghina, facing seaward, toward both contemporary Cuba and Guanahani, the first landfall of Columbus, softly hums her own version of the Cuban rumba melody as her diaphanous scarf flows gracefully in the wind. Protecting this fluid (but significantly not transcendent or ahistorical) space, she gestures to Guido not to approach, but smiles and offers him a gentle "ciao," a rare example of reciprocal, affective interaction that makes what passes for sexuality in the adult Guido's world appear deathly by comparison.

Feminist Imperialism and the Politics of Difference

La città delle donne, Fellini's response to the rise of Euro-American feminism, might be read as an attempt to offer the fruits (and frustrations) of his attempts to deontologize gender to this movement with which he found a kinship both welcome and regrettable. The film is dense with references to his earlier films[17] as well as with references to the explosion of feminist theory, performance art, and activism of the 1970s. The laughter on the sound track that prefaces the opening credits evokes the work of Hélène Cixous, one of French feminism's founders, whose widely translated essay, "The Laugh of the Medusa," was published in the mid 1970s. The theorizing of another French feminist, Luce Irigaray (1980), author of "When Our Lips Speak Together," echoes in the commentary accompanying a slide show on female genitalia at the feminist convention Snàporaz finds himself in the midst of. (The commentator urges, "Let's explore her with her lips perpetually kissing.") The convention also invokes Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818; 1994), and indirectly her mother Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792;1988) in a crude but very funny and beautifully choreographed feminist skit portraying the typical housewife as the victim of a Frankensteinian monster husband. Later in the film, Snàporaz's extended exploration of Katzone's heavily defended but soon to be demolished "master's house" pays homage to one of Anzaldúa's most influential predecessors, African-Caribbean-American poet and essayist Audre Lorde (1984). Lorde's presentation, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," at a 1979 feminist conference in New York City (alluded to by several attendees in the film's convention) charged the predominantly white, middle class, heterosexist feminist movement with excluding differences of race, class, sexuality, and age—the very differences from which its strength needed to come if it were not to reproduce colonial patriarchy.

One of the cruxes of *La città delle donne*, which calls for much deeper and more extensive readings than space will allow here, is feminist imperialism and the politics of difference. Though there are plenty of interesting debates within the confines of the convention at the Hotel Mira Mare (from which none of the feminists ever looks at the sea), its overwhelmingly urban, bourgeoise, and young- to middle-aged demographic suddenly snaps into focus when Snàporaz is pushed down a flight of stairs into the hands of a stout, middle-aged, ambiguously working class/peasant woman, who both stokes the furnace of the hotel and farms (among her other roles, she is a seed keeper), providing the infrastructure that allows middle-class women to convene in hotels. This "grotesque" woman (who is in no way idealized and who tries to rape Snàporaz in one of her greenhouses), is, in turn, disciplined by her elderly but athletic mother in a scene of slapstick comedy that eventually leaves Snàporaz in the hands of a third generation of unruly females, a teenage granddaughter and her druggy friends. Their behavior—a mirror reflection of Snàporaz's own lecherous behavior earlier in the film, as is the proletarian/peasant woman's sexual aggression—reduces him from urbane sophisticate to tantruming toddler, as he screams that they are "all monsters."

Lorde's galvanizing metaphor (1984, 112) of the master's house emerges from a critique that cuts straight to the issue of "grotesque" women:

> Those of us who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable women; those of us who have been forged in the crucibles of difference; those of us who are poor, who are lesbians, who are black, who are older, know that *survival is not an academic skill*.... It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. *For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house*. They may temporarily allow us to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. And this fact is only threatening to those women who still define the master's house as their only source of support. (emphasis Lorde's)

In a visually intriguing sequence that occurs during the convention, Fellini appears self-critically to associate himself with the colonial/imperial feminisms that Lorde calls out. A high angle shot places the back of Snàporaz's head in the foreground facing the projected image in the background of an egg being cracked (as we know from a previous shot) by a spoon held by a woman's hand. Drawn on the egg is a caricature of Fellini's eyes and iconic eyebrows (Figures 26.3 and 26.4). As angry women yell "fuori" ("get out") at Snàporaz from the space between him and the screen on which the image is projected, the eyes on the egg stare straight into the camera, one shut and the other open. In at least one shot, this winking Fellini/Casanova egg-head returns the gaze of both the camera and Snàporaz, the white male cliché. The predominantly white, middle-class women, though, are so focused on Snàporaz that they ignore the questions raised by this ricochet of gazes. Will the female hand go ahead and crack open the Casanovan eggshell? Is what this egg has to offer worth the effort? Is the wink satirical or conspiratorial, the feminists' projection or an attempt by the director to communicate with and to them about his own attempts to crack the egg? Is the tangle of different picture planes, projections, and looks potentially generative of new ways of seeing? The answer to this last question may be "no." Somewhat later, like a female Daumier, the woman Snàporaz first met on the train speaks accusingly into the camera: "We performed our rites without reserve or feminine modesty in the futile hope of making someone who cannot and does not want to understand how much freedom, how much authenticity, how much love and life have been denied us. ... Those eyes are the eyes of the male we've always known. ... He has the same rotten core...."

None of these accusations is false in terms of the framework out of which they emerge. But a kind of focus pull, analogous to the one that brings the transmutation and miniaturization

Figures 26.3–26.4 A ricochet of gazes among angry feminists, Snàporaz, a Fellini/Casanova egghead, and the camera creates a tangle of planes, projections, and gazes. *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980) directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Opera Film Produzione/Gaumont. Frame grabs captured by Frank Burke from the 2013 Blu-ray version.

of Guido's launch structure into focus, may transmute this discourse of lack into one element of a more transformative interaction. The accuser's binary oppositions between the absence or presence of an ontologizing "authenticity," between a conscious, generous femininity and an oblivious, selfish masculinity, and between those with "rotten cores" and those who by implication have pure and healthy centers—merely an inversion of the masculinist colonial

imaginary—differentiates itself from the "love" and "life" that, for Lorde (1984, 111) takes shape rhizomatically in the spaces between such polarities:

> Advocating the mere tolerance of difference between women is the grossest reformism. It is a total denial of the creative function of difference in our lives. For difference must be not merely tolerated but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependence become unthreatening. Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters.

It could be argued that viewers who would like to find "acceptable" female ego ideals in Fellini's films inadvertently foreclose their access to these spaces between, to the borderlands within which difference sparks relation.

Notes

1 See Milliken 1990; 28–45; De Lauretis 1993, 203–213; Waller 1993, 214–224; Burke 1996, 311–342; O'Healy 2002, 209–232; Minuz 2015, 111–135. See also the film *E il Casanova di Fellini?* ("And Fellini's Casanova?" Gianfranco Angelucci and Liliana Betti 1976).

2 Very near the beginning of *La dolce vita* (1960), the image of three men crowded into the transparent bubble of a state-of-the-art news helicopter economically figures this bounded and ungrounded masculine space.

3 Casanova's metaphysical confinement, even after he escapes the Inquisition's prison, is iconographically registered by the cage-like corset that he never removes, even or especially when having sex. Fellini's riff on the undergarment worn by eighteenth-century upper-class men to cinch their waists, make their shoulders look broader, and lend their bodies a smooth overall outline is not historically accurate. Fellini's Casanova wears a loosely fitting, singlet-like, grid of straps—evocative of a ladder as well as a cage. It will appear again in *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980) in the form of the harness within which a male mannequin is suspended and toward the end of the film, when Casanova's twentieth-century avatar Snàporaz climbs a ladder completely enclosed within a metallic version of Casanova's corset as he tries to reach his own Rosalba. The cage/ladder figures a masculinity whose constriction and illusions of transcendence are co-constitutive.

4 In "*Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio*" (*Boccaccio'70* 1962), this version of male sexuality, as it has evolved in mid-twentieth-century bourgeois culture, is broadly caricatured when the huge legs of Anita Ekberg's billboard image, filling his home office windows, make it impossible for Antonio to concentrate.

5 It is interesting to note that critics, male and female, read the desires of Fellini's female figures in exactly these terms, testifying from an unexpected direction to the accuracy of Federici's diagnosis (Dacia Maraini, personal communication cited in O'Healy 2002; Minuz 2015, 114; Bertetto in this volume).

6 Several dead sea creatures, from the one hauled onshore at the end of *La dolce vita* to the two headless dead fishes Giulietta's nieces report they saw on their beach outing, anticipate the lifeless fish painting through which the French ambassador peers in *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*.

7 It is important not to oppose the capacity for emotion/affect to colonial masculinity. It is a site of intense affect with which females as well as males may identify.

8 I am thinking here of Théodore Géricault's painting, *The Raft of the Medusa*, which references the handover of Senegal from British to French colonial rule.

9 Giulietta and her maids watch a television model demonstrating eye exercises "to make eyes sparkle." The shots of the model opening and closing her eyes recall several shots in Fernand Léger's *Ballet mécanique* (1924).

10 I have discussed De Sica's use of Hayworth's image in *Ladri di biciclette* more fully in Waller 1997, 258–260.

11 In the early 1950s, Italian directors began to use voluptuous women, referred to as *maggiorate fisiche*, in leading roles (Reich 2004, 105). Within *La dolce vita*, a worker at Ciampino Airport says, "Now I'm going to have to kill my wife," when he catches sight of Ekberg.

12 Reading the giant Ekberg figure as a reference to Godzilla does not preclude also reading it, as Shelleen Greene does in this volume, as a reference to the *Attack of the 50 ft. Woman* (Nathan Hertz 1958), a film that also indexes acute Cold War anxiety about gender and sexuality.

13 It is worth noting in this context that Rita Hayworth's image was stenciled onto an earlier hydrogen bomb, which, like the 1954 one referenced by *Godzilla*, was tested in the Bikini Atoll.

14 Lina Wertmüller, in this volume, comments on the variety of nonstandard females in Fellini's work, and Gianluca Lo Vetro notes Fellini's inclusion of "anti-model" models, such as Nico.

15 This will be "updated" to include environmental degradation in *La voce della luna*.

16 I am indebted to Cihan Gündoğdu, whose work on Fellini in Turkey appears in this volume, for calling my attention to Benderson's reading of the correspondence between the launch structure and the reeds in the window of the ruin. He also suggested the significance of the transistor radio sound of the rumba music.

17 Among the many images in *La città delle donne* from Fellini's previous films are a Cabirian faux fur, Mastroianni reprising his role as a playboy journalist, a Steinerian tape recorder, a juke box like the one in the seaside restaurant where Paola waitresses, a tattered billboard reminiscent of the Ekberg milk advertisement, a circus ring, a "harem" (though male), Fregene, a slide reminiscent of Suzy's, a mechanical madam, two trains, and Katzone's sartorial parody of Fellini himself, his red jacket and black scarf reversing the colors in several well-known photos of the director. (See Lo Vetro in this volume on the significance of the scarf.)

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Ettore Scola

He was a master of imagination, the first who truly transfigured Italian reality. When people say he wasn't interested in politics or social issues, they were wrong. Rather, he was very deep into social problems, and naturally he transfigured them with his […] imagination.

The Magic of Fellini *(2002). Directed and Produced by Carmen Piccini, 2002 DVD version.*

Gillo Pontecorvo

8½ *is the opposite of the kind of films I make, but it is also one of the films I prefer the most. I have seen it seven times.* La dolce vita *and* Satyricon *touch me less, but that doesn't keep them from being works of a great fresco artist. Fellini has an instinctive, immediate, gift to "elasticize," to create spectacle, to communicate.*

https://www.cinquantamila.it/storyTellerArticolo.php?storyId=4ea8145ac575d

27

Racial Difference and the Postcolonial Imaginary in the Films of Federico Fellini

Shelleen Greene

While Italian directors such as Pier Paolo Pasolini, Michelangelo Antonioni, and Gillo Pontecorvo are better known for their commentaries on Italian colonialism and Italy's relation to the Global South,[1] Federico Fellini also engaged histories of Italian colonialism and Italian racial identity formation in the post-World War II era. Fellini's youth (he was born in 1920) and early career were spent during the Italian Fascist and World War II eras, periods of both Italian colonial expansionism and the rearticulation of modern Italian racial identity formation (Giuliani and Lombardi-Diop 2013). After the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935–1936, the Fascist regime extended Italy's North and East African territories and established the Italian East African Empire (1936–1941). In 1938, after forming an alliance with Nazi Germany, the regime issued the "Manifesto of Racial Scientists," a statement that argued for the "Aryan Mediterranean" origins of the Italian race (Gillette 2001). The manifesto served as basis for the 1938 Racial Laws, which extended racial segregation and anti-miscegenation laws in the African colonies, and enacted anti-Semitic laws within the Italian state.

The Italian Fascist regime sought to construct a homogeneous Italian race as "white" European vis-à-vis the racialized difference of black Africans and Jews. As Giuliani and Lombardi-Diop (2013, 1) argue, beginning in the post-Unification era, the "whiteness" of the Italian race exemplified "that social and cultural construction (explicitly or implicitly sanctioned by juridical or political means) that the dominant group puts into being by way of a process in which it 'racializes' itself or imposes itself as neutral in relation to other subjects that it defines as black or non-white." This construction of racial identity continues into the contemporary period of non-Western European migration.

While Fellini spoke of his upbringing during the Fascist era and commented upon his work in relation to the economic, political, and social conditions of postwar Italy, he distanced himself from any overt political position throughout his career (Fellini 1996). However, the colonial legacy, as seen in the orientalist fantasies that became part of the nation's colonial imaginary, can be traced throughout his oeuvre. In her analysis of *Amarcord* (1973), a film inspired by Fellini's childhood memories of the Fascist period, Linde Luijnenburg (2013, 41) argues that Fellini contends with the historical revisionism, and often erasure, of Italy's modern colonial enterprise. She writes: "[Fellini] tries to tell the Italians to 'grow up' and recognize the [Fascist and colonial] past so as to come to terms with the present. The dangerous Other stays within the Italian society

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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until it is acknowledged and dealt with." A broader survey of Fellini's works reveals not only reflections upon the Italian colonial legacy, but also on racial difference and its relation to the articulation of an Italian "white" racial identity.

A dream recounted by Fellini provides a point of departure (Figure 27.1). During an interview in which Fellini speaks of the importance of caricature to his work as a film director, he discusses a "chimerical movie," a film that wants to be made, but "still hasn't decided to trust me…" (quoted in Mollica 2003, 16). Fellini then describes a dream he had of a "mysterious Chinese

Figure 27.1 Fellini's disquieting dream of a foreigner. *Il libro dei sogni*. Courtesy of the Comune di Rimini, Guaraldi Srl, and Francesca Fabbri Fellini. Cineteca Comunale di Rimini, Archivio Federico Fellini @ Comune di Rimini and Francesca Fabbri Fellini. Digital rights, © Guaraldi Srl. The original manuscript is preserved at the Museo della Città del Comune di Rimini.

gentlemen" who is a passenger on an overcrowded airplane. The plane has landed at an airport for which Fellini is an immigration officer responsible for issuing visas to foreign travelers. In the dream, Fellini equivocates, attempts to pass responsibility to a higher authority, and is unable to look the passenger in the eye. The dream does not offer a conclusion to the impasse between the traveler and Fellini as "superintendent." However, Fellini ends his description by posing a question: "What would I be more afraid to see if I looked up? Of seeing him still standing there, dusty and glistening, near-at-hand and out-of-reach, the mysterious stranger who came from the Orient still waiting for me, or of not seeing him at all?" (17).

In psychoanalytic theories of subject formation, the encounter described within the dream is one of lack, in which the racial other, like the film, is a constantly deferred object of desire. However, as Bhabha (1994) has argued, racial difference raises anxiety, which leads to the recognition and disavowal of difference through the use of fetishism and stereotype. In one reading, the dream is laden with orientalist metaphors of the "mysterious," cryptic, and passive Asian. However, the meeting is also staged as an ethical challenge: whether or not to grant entrance to a foreigner. The figure in the dream is a disquieting threat, not only to the film director/superintendent, but also to the nation's borders, as the Asian traveler waits in silence. Taking our cue from this dream, we may read Fellini's films as staging encounters with racial difference and the colonial imaginary that subtended Italian national identity formation.

The presence of racial discourses within his films, though unacknowledged diegetically or in the director's commentaries, can be considered a kind of "racial evaporation," or what Caterina Romeo (2012, 221) describes as the presence of race as "something that has momentarily become invisible but has not disappeared." Submerged or "hidden" racial discourses, particularly those that pertain to Italian racial identity formation in the Fascist and postwar eras, appear through the presence of actors of African and Asian descent (both credited and uncredited), but also through the trope of whiteness, as seen in the colonial-inspired exotic fantasies of *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1950), the hyper-whiteness of Anita Ekberg, and the return to the Italian Fascist era, either by way of nostalgia (*Amarcord*) or the urban geography of Rome (the EUR/Esposizione Universale Roma district).

To illustrate, I examine films from three distinct periods: the immediate post-World War II era, the 1960s economic boom, and the late 1980s to 1990s. In Fellini's films, the presence of people of color is often fleeting, marginal, and stereotyped, so much so that little commentary or scholarship has been devoted to their presence (O'Healy 2009). Some of the principal performers of color in films are John Kitzmiller in *Luci del varietà* (*Variety Lights* 1950); singer Gloria Jones, a member of Paparazzo's entourage in *La dolce vita* (1960); Archie Jones, dancer and choreographer for *La dolce vita*; and Donyale Luna and Hylette Adolphe in *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969). Their appearances make evident Italy's position within the geopolitics of the postwar era (including the Cold War, the decolonization movement, and new global migratory patterns), and also within the circuits of transnational film production. These individual appearances should also be read in the context of the tropes of whiteness and racial difference that play out in Fellini's films.

I

In 1942, three years after moving to Rome and while working for Alleanza Cinematografica Italiana (ACI), the film company led by Vittorio Mussolini, Fellini was sent to the Italian East African Empire (AOI) to work on the never completed "I cavalieri del deserto" ("Knights of the Desert") for which he had written the screenplay (Kezich 2006, 70). While the decision to go to

Tripoli was partially based upon Fellini's attempt to avoid conscription into the Italian military, his stay in the Italian East African Empire was a formative moment in his development as a film director. Production was halted due to the British invasion and eventual capture of Tripoli, and Fellini, along with the crew, made a harrowing escape aboard a German military plane to Sicily and, eventually, to Rome. What is missing from accounts of this brief period is the acknowledgement that Fellini's career begins amid the end of the Italian African Empire and the fall of the Fascist regime. More than coincidence, the use of the North African territories to film the great "adventures" of Italian colonialism and orientalist fantasies of the overseas colonies can be found in the first film Fellini makes with full credit as director, *Lo sceicco bianco*. Fellini's early career as a cartoonist in Rome is also tied to Fascist colonialism. During the Nazi occupation of Rome, just prior to liberation, Fellini opened The Funny Face Shop, where he drew caricatures for American GIs. Working alongside Fellini was Enrico De Seta (1908–2008), who beginning in the early 1930s, created propaganda in support of the Italian Fascist East African colonial campaigns, including racist cartoons for Edizioni d'Arte Boeri (Friedl 2009).

Linking Fellini to Fascist Italian colonialism and its legacies in a different manner was his screenwriting collaboration, begun in 1949, with novelist, critic, and journalist Ennio Flaiano (1910–1972). From 1949 to 1965, Flaiano along with Tullio Pinelli cowrote ten of Fellini's screenplays. Flaiano is perhaps best known for *Tempo di uccidere* (*A Time to Kill/The Short Cut/Miriam* 1992), his 1947 novel based on his experiences as an army officer during the Italo-Ethiopian war of 1935–1936. *Tempo di uccidere* narrates the story of an Italian lieutenant who, after a vehicle accident, encounters, rapes, and murders Mariam, a young Ethiopian woman. Racked by guilt for his actions and desperate to return to Italy, the lieutenant encounters an elderly Ethiopian man, Johannes, and his son, who we later learn are Mariam's father and brother. When the lieutenant develops a mysterious illness, Johannes heals him, allowing the lieutenant to leave for Italy and return to his wife and quotidian life.

Flaiano expanded his critique of Italian colonialism into his film criticism and screenplays, including a film treatment, "Un dio nero, un diavolo bianco" ("Black God, White Devil"), about the use of non-Western countries as sites for tourist pleasure and fantasy (Trubiano 2010). Whether or not he shared Flaiano's critique of Italian colonialism, Fellini's screenwriting contributions to films in which we see African and other nonwhite, non-European subjects deserve greater attention. Fellini contributed to the screenplay for Roberto Rossellini's *Paisà* (*Paisan* 1946), which prominently features a black American GI, Dots Johnson, as "Joe" in the Naples episode. I have written elsewhere about several reappearances of African-American GIs in subsequent Italian neorealist and postwar narrative films, where, unlike Rossellini's Joe, they operate as a complex sign of a Christian humanism that transcends race but also as a warning against the potential for sexual violence in interracial relationships involving white Italian women (Greene 2012). The black American continues to appear in films that Fellini both cowrote and codirected with Alberto Lattuada, such as *Senza pietà* (*Without Pity* 1948) and *Luci del varietà*. Both films feature John Kitzmiller, the best known African-American actor in the Italian cinema of the postwar period.

As Fellini begins to move away from his neorealist origins and as Italy transitions to its postwar economic boom period, the figure of the African-American GI gives way to the black American expatriate. Kitzmiller's Johnny, the trumpet player in *Luci del varietà*, signals racial difference in the form of black modernity (notably jazz music), which exists alongside the formation of Italian "whiteness" in the immediate postwar era.[2] This shift is enacted in the relationship between Johnny and Checco Dal Monte, the middle-aged vaudeville-troupe director in the film. Their relationship advances the film's thematic concern with a postwar Italian society in transition, here seen in the tension between older forms of communal performance (vaudeville) and modern entertainment (international troupes and commercial variety spectacles).

Johnny appears in the film after Checco has abandoned his original troupe in order to win the affections of Liliana, an ambitious ingénue. As Checco, locked out of his Rome pensione, calls out to be let in, Johnny's trumpet can be heard offscreen, as a kind of counterpoint to Checco's call. When the proprietor throws Checco's belongings out the window, Johnny laughs, and like the trumpet music, the laughter reverberates through the streets. As Johnny speaks about his life, they encounter other expatriate street performers who perform in concert with one another. This representation of cultural difference takes place in the piazza, a site in which Fellini stages the changing ethnic and racial dynamics of Italian society. Checco will then try to form a new troupe, one which attempts to incorporate the piazza's internationalism more than his former, traditional Italian troupe.

Meanwhile, Melina Amour, Checco's partner in life and in art whom he has abandoned, continues to perform vaudeville with members of the first troupe, and in one scene, she impersonates a series of historical figures, including Napoleon, Verdi, and Garibaldi. As Checco walks into the performance hall with Johnny and Bill, Amour changes into Garibaldi, the hero of Italian unification, and the audience succumbs to the kitsch display of nationalism. Having won over even a prior heckler, Amour stands defiantly in the face of Checco as Italian jingoism meets nascent internationalism.

Unfortunately, "diversity," as Checco has "accumulated" it, has its limits. Checco's new troupe becomes a tower of Babel, exemplified by the inability of Johnny to reconcile his jazz with the classical compositions of the troupe's Russian composer. Black modernity in the form of Johnny's jazz trumpet remains unassimilated within either an internationalized or a more traditional postwar Italian society. Similar tensions between two visions of modern Italy will persist in Fellini's following film.

In *Lo sceicco bianco*, Wanda, a recently married young woman, is infatuated with the "White Sheik" / Fernando Rivoli, a character from her favorite *fotoromanzo* (a photonovel created with live action still photography). Like Checco, Wanda desires a more exciting life, an existence beyond the provincial petite bourgeoisie represented by her husband Ivan and his family. During her honeymoon in Rome, she leaves Ivan to seek romance with the sheik, only to become disillusioned by the reality she encounters upon meeting Fernando and being pulled into the fotoromanzo production. *Lo sceicco bianco*, by way of orientalist fantasies circulated in the silent era desert romances featuring Rudolph Valentino, speaks to the persistence in the early 1950s of the Italian colonial imaginary—supposedly suppressed after the fall of the Fascist regime and the establishment of the postwar Republic.

The only African character in the film is an ostensibly Ethiopian priest who appears briefly at the beginning of the film, after Wanda has pretended to take a bath in order to escape to the fotoromanzo offices. Awakening from a nap, Ivan finds the apartment flooded, and the priest enters, shouting in heavily accented Italian that the entire pensione floor is inundated. The African priest's appearance marks the first "break" between Ivan and Wanda. It also introduces the "underside" of the postwar Italian state, which will be further exemplified by the fotoromanzo's reference to Italy's history of colonial expansionism (Burke 2018). In other words, the crisis in Ivan and Wanda's marriage is figured in terms of encounters with difference in the form of the African priest and the pseudo sheik.[3]

Fernando's White Sheik may be directly inspired by Rudolph Valentino, the southern Italian actor who became a matinee idol of the early silent Hollywood cinema after the successful release of *The Sheik* (George Melford) in 1921. Valentino's dark complexion and good looks garnered him the title "Latin Lover." Gaylyn Studlar (1989, 23) suggests that Valentino's reception within the American film industry and his allure for white American women were due to his ethnic difference, even in a period that saw the rise of xenophobic, anti-immigrant policies that

targeted Eastern and Southern European immigrants. She writes: "…the popularity of the 'Vogue of Valentino' is … part of a wider web of popular discourses that linked the exotic to the erotic in forging a contradictory sexual spectacle of male ethnic difference within a xenophobic and nativist culture."

As opposed to the "dark" Latin lover, Fernando is cast as the *White Sheik*, an inversion that speaks to different national contexts and to Wanda's investment in the matrix of orientalist fantasy. In the location shoot, the White Sheik battles against the racially other Oscar, "the cruel bedouin" and his "legendary Moorish ships." Unlike Valentino, who rose to fame just prior to anti-immigration legislation and in the midst of changing cultural and social norms for women, the White Sheik sustains a world that is fixed, permanent, and absolutely fictive (Burke 1984, 17). This "fictiveness" pertains not only to the orientalist fantasies of the fotoromanzo, but also to Ivan's subservience to religious and state authorities. He has come to Rome partly to meet his Vatican-associated family and to see the Pope. If read within the context of Italian Fascist colonialism, Ivan's and Wanda's fantasies, one of the "white" Italian nation, the other of the exotic, overseas colonies, are interconnected and sustain each other.

At the end of the film, Wanda returns to Ivan, leaving behind what has turned out to be the unglamorous world of the fotoromanzi. In a sense, Wanda trades in her orientalist fantasy for Ivan's heteronormative, Catholic family fantasy. Their march through Rome toward St. Peter's also carries with it resonances of Fascist Italy. The major street leading to the Vatican, Via della Conciliazione, was begun in 1936 as part of the Fascist regime's architectural and structural redesign of Rome. The final scenes of the film also include images of the square's Egyptian obelisk, a symbol of both ancient Roman imperialism and Fascist colonialism in Africa. Giuliani (2019, 109) notes that the postwar era adopted from the Fascist period "a highly racialized reading of the national Self and its postcolonial Other." While *Lo sceicco bianco* does not offer overt commentary on Italian racial identity formation, its semi-comedic critique of both secular and religious Italian parochialism suggests that racialization is inextricably entangled with national self-conceptualization.

II

Unlike the Ethiopian priest in *Lo sceicco bianco*, black subjects in *Le notti di Cabiria* appear in the form of racial fetish. The film concerns a young Roman prostitute, Cabiria, who through various encounters—amorous, spiritual and mortal—emerges with renewed faith and optimism. In the first night sequence, a famous actor, Alberto Lazzari, picks up Cabiria after he has argued with his girlfriend and instructs Cabiria to enter the Piccadilly nightclub. The music in the club shifts to a monotonous "tribal" drum beat with a flute accent, and when Cabiria enters the club, the camera cuts to a black woman dancer performing with a live band. As the dancer moves across the stage, she is joined by another black woman, costumed like her, with a horse's tail. Once Alberto and Cabiria are seated at the bar, we see Cabiria looking at the dance with skepticism and befuddlement, then looking at Alberto and the other patrons who are casually observing the two women. As Áine O'Healy (2009, 7) notes:

> Visualizations of African femininity decreased dramatically in Italian popular culture after the end of the Fascist era. … the figure of the African woman haunts the margins of the mise en scène, never occupying the central narrative focus, but encroaching in silent, yet highly visible ways on the space of the 'real' agents of the narrative action—white, Italian men. During this period, women of colour tend to appear on screen for no more than the length of a dance routine or cabaret act.

As the two dancers exit the stage to the applause of the audience, the band shifts to a mambo, and Alberto takes Cabiria to the dance floor. Cabiria breaks away from Alberto and begins to dance solo. While Alberto remains listless, the other audience members begin to look with bemusement at Cabiria, who upon noticing their gazes, becomes uncomfortable and slowly moves back to dance with Alberto.

The nightclub scene suggests both a similarity and a difference between Cabiria and the black women dancers. Although she and the dancers are of different races, they both become available for sexual consumption by the Roman elite in the nightclub. The exoticized space accentuates Cabiria's social class difference from Alberto and the other audience members. Nevertheless, the visual regime also allows Cabiria to take the black women dancers as objects of her gaze, suggesting that racial consumption is a privilege of whiteness across class. The difference between Cabiria (as marginal class subject) and the black women dancers (as marginal racialized subjects) is acknowledged even as it is disavowed.

At the end of the first episode of *Le notti di Cabiria*, Alberto returns to his girlfriend Jesse, a blonde bombshell type who, like Anita Ekberg from Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1960), epitomizes the beauty standards of the 1950s and early 1960s. By way of the figure of Ekberg, I turn to Fellini's first color film, "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio" ("The Temptation of Dr. Antonio," episode in *Boccaccio '70* 1962), to examine the "blonde bombshell." Specifically, I read the "bombshell" image in Fellini's film as a form of excessive or hyperwhiteness, and as a figure by which to trace both the Italian colonial legacy and racial identity formation in the years of the economic boom.

Narrated by a cherubic Eros, the film tells the tale of Doctor Antonio Mazzuolo, a moralist whose indignation is provoked by the placement of a large billboard, in a park directly in front of his apartment in the Roman EUR neighborhood, that displays a sensuous model (played by Ekberg), lounging on a chaise, holding a glass of milk in front of her breasts. At the top of the billboard is the phrase "Bevete più latte" ("Drink more milk"). Despite Antonio's complaints to civil and church authorities, the billboard proves a great success, with crowds gathering to celebrate its sensuality and playfulness. One night, Doctor Antonio has a hallucination in which the billboard model comes alive as a 50-foot woman. As Ekberg walks through the city, she taunts Antonio, picking him up and cradling him in her large bosom. The hallucination ends, and the Doctor is found the next morning, clutching the large billboard in his desire to possess the model.

Ekberg's image, complexion, and hair color exemplify an ideal of beauty that harks back in complex and contradictory ways to the Fascist era (Giuliani et al. 2018), evoked by the film's setting in the EUR, when Italian women negotiated their gendered identities among various images and imperatives. Italian women performed traditional roles as "mothers of the nation" as opposed to African women (associated with beauty, but also with primitivism, miscegenation, and contamination), and in relation to Hollywood beauty icons (Di Barbora 2018). By the 1950s, the Italian ideal of feminine beauty was characterized by the voluptuous *maggiorata* figure, exemplified by Ekberg, but also by Italian actresses such as Sophia Loren and Silvana Mangano, who provided a "hybrid" model of the traditional Italian woman, between the maternal, populist everywoman and the film icon (Perilli, 2018).

However, I suggest that Ekberg's excessive eroticism may also be read through Fascist-era whiteness and its division between Aryan-Mediterranean Italians and their African colonial subjects. In "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio," Ekberg's combination of hyperwhiteness and eroticism reveals the inherent instability of these ideologies of race and racial hierarchy; her sexuality takes on significations of primitivism and sensuality often associated with nonwhite subjects. In the film, Ekberg is associated with blonde hair, white milk, and the dazzlingly bright neoclassical architecture of the EUR. At one point in the film, Antonio hurls black ink at Ekberg's "Bevete più latte" billboard, an allusion to the "darkness" he perceives in Ekberg's

Figure 27.2 Hyperwhite Anita complains of Antonio's ink-throwing, an act that implies the "darkness" or "evil" he perceives in her. *"Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio"* (*"The Temptations of Dr. Antonio,"* episode of Boccaccio '70 1962). Episode directed by Federico Fellini. Film produced by Cineriz, Concordia Compagnia Cinematografica, Francinex, Gray-Film. Screen grab captured by Frank Burke from the 2017 Blu-ray version.

transgressive sexuality. In fact, the references to Ekberg as "evil" or "the devil" suggest that she's so white, she's "black" (Figure 27.2).

The press coverage of the film's production noted the meticulous scale model reproduction of EUR used for Ekberg's 50-foot sequence (Todisco 1961). The Roman neighborhood was first constructed by the Fascist regime to celebrate the capture of Addis Ababa in the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935–1936. Later, the EUR commemorated the Fascist *ventennio* and was to have served as site for the 1942 World's Fair (Pinkus 2003, 303). It remained incomplete at the end of World War II, but by the early 1960s became a residential community. As Karen Pinkus (303) argues, the EUR "was … inherently tied to Italian colonialism, a conceptual and psychological reflection of what Italy aspired to achieve in its empire…." Pinkus further argues that, for Antonioni's *L'eclisse* (1962), the EUR became a site for the "non-event" of Italian decolonization and for the lack of a language with which to articulate an Italian postcolonial condition. The setting of "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio" thus opens provocative links among Ekberg's hyperwhiteness, Antonio's repressed sexual impulses, and Fascist racial ideologies.

In a later scene, as Antonio speaks in front of the billboard to a Boy Scout troop about his boyhood sexual temptations, crowds begin to gather, among them a busload of African-American musicians. The musicians play a jazzy version of one of the themes from *La dolce vita*, and when one of the workers asks them to stop so that they can test the more conventional musical accompaniment for the "Bevete più latte" advertisement, the musicians appropriate the tune and sync with the prerecorded music. They then parade along the periphery of the park, slowly making their way into the crowd of white Italians. Their appropriation of both Fellini's *La dolce vita* music and that of the billboard ad resists Antonio's form of hegemonic authoritarianism. Set against the pale blues and whites of the EUR's minimalist architecture, the black musicians' presence comments ironically on the Fascist project, challenging the racial segregation and hierarchies that Fascist colonial architecture sought to produce and secure (Pinkus, 2003). By placing the black musicians in this "'national' space," "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio" suggests an awareness of the racial and gender discourses that subtend the Italian national project.

The Ekberg billboard, meanwhile, is a projection of Antonio's latent sexual desires, which later become manifest as an overpowering, monstrous Ekberg who rampages through the EUR. The film references 1950s horror films, such as *The Attack of the 50 Foot Woman* (Nathan Juran 1958), which utilized miniature sets to create the 50-foot-tall woman. In Juran's film, a troubled middle-aged woman grows to a height of 50 feet through her contact with an alien and then proceeds to trample her Western town in search of her philandering husband. *The Attack of the 50 Foot Woman* addressed Cold War fears of atomic attack and contamination, as well as anxieties over changing societal gender roles.[4] Similarly, Ekberg's figure in "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio" addresses a changing Italian postwar society, but in the guise of a clash between Antonio's parochialism and the more socially (and sexually) permissive society of early 1960s Italy.

As Ekberg comes to life, she begins to move through the miniaturized EUR, her image often appearing in front of the film's model of the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, the building most associated with Fascist neoclassicism. Her cascading bleached, blonde hair, bosom, and white skin eventually drive Antonio insane. "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio" can be read as a destabilizing "consequence" of the compulsory "whiteness" articulated in the 1938 Manifesto of Racial Scientists, the document that served as the basis for the racial policies of the Fascist regime. This is emphasized in a self-referential gesture in the sequence, in which Antonio, attempting to hide Ekberg's striptease performance, repeatedly throws his black jacket in front of the camera, shouting: "Don't look!" The sequence directs us to the scopophilic nature of the medium, a pleasure which Antonio seeks to suppress. However, it also exposes the constitutive role of blackness in the formation of cinematic images. By implication, the sequence, as does the film as a whole, reveals the sociohistorical constructedness of race. The film's ending reinforces the consequences of abjecting blackness. The song "Bevete più latte" mockingly accompanies Antonio's encasement in a white straitjacket and removal in a white ambulance, the mischievous Eros on top, a little white angel, singing the film's ode to milk.

Like "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio," *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969) can be read as a film that invokes Fascist-era racial discourse to comment upon the changing social landscape of 1960s Italy. This commentary appears perhaps most forcefully in Fellini's extraordinary vision of ancient Rome, one that diverges from the Fascist regime's heroic invocation of the imperial past. Since the post-Unification period, the Italian state attempted to legitimate its nationhood status and modern colonial endeavors by creating a "historical continuity" with ancient Imperial Rome (Wyke 1997, 41). The ancient past was envisioned on screen through the historical spectacle film of Italy's silent era, but also during the Fascist period with films such as *Scipio Africanus* (Carmine Gallone, 1937). The Fascist regime's establishment of the Italian North and East African empires form a central part of its plan to build a successor Roman empire.

As opposed to the Fascist vision of Imperial Rome, *Fellini - Satyricon* is a dystopian, hallucinatory vision of the ancient past. The ancient Rome of the film is a place of poverty, crime, excess, ribald humor, debauchery, and sudden, iniquitous death. While the representation of same-sex relations, fluid sexualities, and Mediterranean cultural and racial hybridities creates parallels between antiquity and the countercultural generation, the representation is notable in its difference from the heroic and decidedly whitened image of the imperial past of the Fascist imaginary. The film loosely adapts extant fragments of Petronius's *Satyricon* and depicts the adventures of the student Encolpio, his lover Gitone, and his wayward friend Ascilto as they encounter figures such as the poet Eumolpo and the wealthy Trimalchio—concluding with Ascilto's death and Encolpio's departure for North Africa.

I will focus on Encolpio's encounter with the sorceress/earth goddess Oenothea, which I read as a kind of return to, and deconstruction of, Fascist masculinities. This encounter is precipitated by the loss of Encolpio's sexual prowess, brought on by his failure to consummate in public with a woman offered to him as a prize after he escapes death at the hands of a gladiator Minotaur. Notably, this

episode is not from Petronius's novel. However, the journey of the blue-eyed, blonde-haired Encolpio to visit a beautiful black woman who, he believes, will restore his virility resonates with liberal and Fascist era colonial conquests sustained by the myth of the "Smiling Negress" and the "Faccetta Nera," the "little black face," of the Fascist marching song for whom the Fascists, according to the song, will provide "another law and another king." Of the "Smiling Negress," Pinkus (1995, 51) writes:

> the smiling Negress fits neatly into the logic of the fascist campaign to arouse a colonialist "interest," for soldiers were more likely to go "down there" ("*laggiù* was the generic terms used by Italians to indicate Africa, but it might be a euphemism for the dark continent of the female genitalia) if they could expect erotic encounters.

Though not an allegory of Fascist colonialism in Africa (Oenothea's ethnicity is not identified, nor is the region in which her tale takes place), the Oenothea episode does aid my inquiry into the legacies of Fascist racial and gender ideologies within Fellini's oeuvre.

In the story recounted by the film, Oenothea[5] was a beautiful young woman whose humiliation of an old, unattractive sorcerer and suitor, led him to cast a spell condemning her to "birthing" fire from her genitals—an accursed power that seems to offer promise for the restoration of Encolpio's potency. As he enters her sanctuary, we see the young Oenothea behind a raging fire, smiling enticingly. When her smiling face turns into that of a decaying corpse, we realize Encolpio is hallucinating. Aroused from his stupor, Encolpio finds himself confronted not by the beautiful young Oenothea, but by a full-figured black woman, played by an Italian woman in blackface. The fantasy of the "beautiful black (face)" is broken by the appearance of the formidable and intimidating figure of the earth goddess, who appears almost naked, with exposed breasts and buttocks. Earth goddess Oenothea embodies a construction of African femininity that abounds in contradictory signifiers of primitivism, mysticism, abjection, and hypersexuality. The blackface performance suggests that not only is African femininity a construct within the white imaginary, but so is "Africa" as a geography of conquest. Although repelled by certain manifestations of the earth goddess, Encolpio copulates with her to regain his virility. The function of blackness as fantasy or hallucination for Encolpio is accentuated by the fact that Encolpio's rejuvenation occurs amid obliviousness to the murder of Ascilto, which we can see from an opening in Oenothea's cave. When he exits the cave, he is unmindful, in his jubilation at potency restored, that Ascilto has been mortally wounded.

In the film's closing moments, Encolpio learns of Eumolpo's death and of the latter's macabre will, ordering his heirs to eat his carcass in order to inherit his fortune. Cannibalism is perhaps an apt metaphor for Fascist colonialism and its libidinal fantasies of conquest. In this sense, *Fellini - Satyricon* operates as a kind of revisionist historical film, one that counters the former triumphal cinematic narratives of ancient Rome produced during Italy's silent and Fascist eras. Leaving the elderly to feast on Eumolpo's remains, Encolpio embarks for North Africa with a group of youths, a nod to the possible social revival promised by the 1960s countercultural moment. The next destination is never shown, however, and the film ends during Encolpio's narrative of his journey to the new shore, interrupted and lost in time.

III

Ginger e Fred (1986) and *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990) are set against the rise of non-Western European immigration to Italy beginning in the late 1970s. While it satirizes the Italian television industry, then entering a phase of privatization, *Ginger e Fred* also reflects upon

an era of global multiculturalism and includes some of Italian cinema's earliest images of African migrants in Italy.[6] While both films offer stereotypical, one-dimensional images of African, Asian, and other nonwhite subjects, which mainly contribute to the mise-en-scene of scenes set at the Rome's Termini Station or the now globalized space of city centers, I will discuss scenes illustrative of the films' inquiry into the new era of postindustrial capitalism, consumer society, migration, and global telecommunications. I suggest *Ginger e Fred* and *La voce della luna* register cultural and social shifts in postwar Italy through their attention to its changing urban and rural geographies.

In *Ginger e Fred*, two retired vaudevillians, Amelia and Pippo, reunite to perform their "Fred and Ginger" dance routine for a television variety show. "Ginger and Fred" are, of course, "copies" of Hollywood's Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. The show, *Ed ecco a voi*, is composed, ironically, of countless lookalikes or "doubles," and the film engages postmodern televisual simulation and reproduction with reference to cinema (Marcus 2002, 192). At one point, it uses racial difference as a means to comment on this relation. When Amelia and Pippo are interviewed about their dance style, Pippo, after searching for words, ventures:

> At first, tap dancing was not a dance at all…It was the "Morse Code" of the black slaves. A wireless telegraph…On the cotton plantations, when slaves talked instead of worked, the slave driver whipped their skin off…So what does your black slave do? He communes with his brother like this: (Pippo rhythmically slaps his thighs) "Watch it, the guard's around!" (Pippo rhythmically slaps his thighs again) "I have a knife… Shall I do him in?"

This brief scene takes place after Pippo and Amelia have discussed another of the program's guests, a young mafioso who is being escorted by police through a security check. While Pippo praises the man for his defiance of authority and the capitalist system, Amelia speaks of her work as a shop owner making an honest living. Pippo chides Amelia for being a bourgeois, but Amelia defends herself, stating that she should not be compared to a "slave driver." As Amelia speaks, a television screen emits various, nonsequential images, one of which is a figure in blackface.

Pippo's references to slavery and resistance are an attempt to position himself as a rebel of sorts. In these two scenes, black vernacular culture might be posited as a mode of authenticity countering the encroachment of postmodern simulation. Marcus (2002, 193) argues that Pippo's return to tap dance manifests the director's "longing for the referent, to his nostalgia for an art form that can signify." Evoking the Slave Act of 1740, Marcus further suggests that "tap dance is both a response to historical injustice and an appeal to act in a way that will bring about its alleviation" (193). However, the blackface image (an imitation or "copy" of blackness) implies that Pippo's "understanding" of slave communication is itself a form of simulation or blackface, belying both his rebellious posturing and Amelia's protest, both of which are caught within televised spectacle (they, too, appear on the security monitors as they enter the studio).

The final scenes of the film return us to Termini Station. Like the urban park, the airport, and the piazza, Termini Station is a transitional space, not only for local, national, and global travelers, but also of generational transitions. Amelia and Pippo watch the beginning of a new media era in which television has displaced traditional film as well as prior forms of theater and vaudeville entertainment. After Amelia departs, Pippo goes into a station café and takes a drink with a group of African men. The gathering is filmed in a long shot, the group seen from outside the café's decorated front windows. Once again, Fellini deploys multiple screens and framings. In the foreground, the front windows invoke the film frame, while in the background, the television screen refers to another order of simulation. Between the "frame" and the electronic emission, Pippo and the African men hover within an interstitial

space, as society's marginal figures, or perhaps in the process of forming another sphere of social interaction beyond either of the media screens.

Based upon Ermanno Cavazzoni's novel *Il poema dei lunatici* ("The Lunatics' Poem" 1987) and the poetry of Giacomo Leopardi (1798–1837), Fellini's final film, *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990), concerns Ivo Salvini, a well inspector, who has recently been released from a mental hospital. Wandering through the outskirts of his town in the Emilia-Romagna, Ivo meets Adolfo Gonnella, a former town prefect who was removed from his position due to mental instability. Ivo also encounters the three Micheluzzi brothers who are attempting to capture the moon.

La voce della luna can be read as extending Fellini's engagement with Italian racial discourses, particularly by way of Aldina, Ivo's love interest and a woman whose blondness and hyper-whiteness he associates with the moon. However, a conception of whiteness can also be found in the relationship between Ivo and Gonnella, two characters who can be read as "Auguste" and "white clown" figures in line with Fellini's lengthy musings on the subject (see Fellini 1996, 115–130). Both Ivo and Gonnella pose challenges to the postmodern commodification of Italian society (Marcus 1992, 242), Ivo as the "Auguste" or "fool" type, and Gonella as the "white clown," who, by Fellini's own account, stands for "repression," authoritarianism, and Fascism (Fellini 1996, 124–126; Degli-Esposti 1994, 47). Fellini (1996, 129) further comments:

> The white clown…with his moonlit charm and unearthly midnight elegance, reminded me of the cold authority of some of the nuns who had run nursery schools, or else of certain stout fascists, in their gleaming black silk, their gilt epaulettes, their whips…their big overcoats, their fezzes and their military medals, men who were still young but had the pale faces of sleep-walkers or inhabitants of the underworld.

In several of the film's scenes, I suggest, "whiteness," in its various manifestations, including Aldina, Gonnella, the Duchess d'Alba (the "white Duchess"), and "white" plaster Madonnas, is associated with authoritarianism—both of an older or "dead" Italian culture and of late capitalist society—and as the attempt to cancel or circumscribe all difference.

The film's first piazza scene takes place in the daytime, when the square is filled with residents, vendors, city officials, and Japanese tourists. It is a space of dynamic temporal transition, in which an ancient church, covered by scaffolding, is undergoing renovation, and mass transit, construction projects, billboard advertisements, and a new church are juxtaposed with centuries-old fountains, buildings, and city monuments. The scene shifts to a truck in which we see mass-produced white plaster statues of the Madonna. In the foreground, the Japanese tourists take photos, while in the background, workers unload the statues under the supervision of the priest, Don Antonio.

A lawyer approaches and comments: "Isn't it an emblematic demonstration that the Madonnas are a race?" As Don Antonio turns to listen to the lawyer, we see that the Japanese tourists in the foreground have been replaced by an African worker. Don Antonio begs the lawyer to stop "speaking nonsense," to which the lawyer responds: "Why do you consider my theory blasphemous? I speak of race, not the people!" Here, the presence of the African worker provides greater emphasis to the lawyer's ironic distinction between "race" and "people," which evokes language reminiscent of the Fascist regime's discourses of racial purity during the 1930s. Amid the nascent ethnic diversity of the urban center, the white plaster Madonnas come to represent the stasis and hypocrisy of an outdated religious authoritarianism—and colonialism lingering as machinic mass production. Moreover, the heterogeneity of the piazza raises the question of what constitutes the "Italian people" in this new period of global migration and changing demographics (Burke 1996, 306).

The white plaster Madonnas can also be read in relation to a later scene in which Ivo arrives at the piazza during the *Gnoccata* (a traditional celebration of the nineteenth-century uprising of millers against government taxes), and the Miss Farina 1989 contest, in an attempt to win Aldina's affection. The "whiteness" of the Miss Farina contest is accentuated by orientalist motifs, in particular the presence of two African men who appear dressed as Turkish moors, framing the contestants as they make their way to the main stage. Aldina's victory is celebrated by a showering of flour upon the guests, making for an absurd scene of the contestants and guests dancing, covered in white, an obvious effacement of difference.

Disillusioned by seeing Aldina dance with an unattractive city elder, Ivo departs with Gonnella for the outskirts of the city. Gonnella takes Ivo to his "prefecture"—an expanse of land through which they are guided by a group of African women. The figures of the African women invoke racial and sexual fetishism (the women appear only as singing performers and they are shot from behind moving seductively); however, Gonnella and Ivo do not directly engage the women. Eventually Ivo reaches the women's camp, where a group of white Italian and black African women are seated in a circle singing and clapping hands (Figure 27.3). The group serves as a counterpoint to the industrialized agricultural production that looms over the countryside throughout the film. However, Gonnella, in his guise as "white clown," draws Ivo away from the group with his fixation on maintaining authority over his imagined prefecture.

Gonnella's obsession with an older, traditional Italian culture carries over into the following scenes in which he and Ivo arrive at a high-tech disco improvised within an old, abandoned factory. In the disco, predominately white Italian youth dance to Michael Jackson in another form of community influenced by the dissemination of black American cultural production within global media cultures. Gonnella rebels against this youth culture, which he refers to as "…the center of Africa, *malebolge*,"[7] first trying to destroy the DJ station and then interrupting

Figure 27.3 Group of black and white women in an agrarian setting serve as counterpoint to agribusiness in *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Cecchi Gori Group Tiger Cinematografica in coproduction with Films A2, La Sept Cinéma, and Cinémax, and in association with RAI1. Screen grab captured by Shelleen Greene from the 2017 Blu-ray version.

the scene by dancing a waltz with the Duchess of Alba. The older culture represented by the waltz at first coexists with, but is eventually overtaken by, the popular culture of the Italian youths as they envelop the dancing couple. Ivo, meanwhile, circulates through the disco, asking women to try on Aldina's white shoe. Recalling the row of white plaster Madonnas, the shoe fits all the women. Ivo exclaims: "You are all the same! You are all Aldina!" Here, whiteness is given a dual signification: associated with both traditional, authoritarian Italian culture and postmodern simulation.

This multivalent signification of whiteness continues into the film's final scenes, as Ivo returns to the piazza and the frenzied televisual spectacle of the moon's capture by the Micheluzzi brothers. After appearing as remediation, on film and television screens, the moon escapes, but only to take on the guise of Aldina, and to admonish Ivo for not listening to the disjointed voices that he repeatedly fails to comprehend. Finally, Ivo removes himself from the spaces of urban postmodernity to the countryside and the well, to contemplate silence. While *La voce della luna's* ending returns to Fellini's critique of postmodernism, I suggest that this critique is elaborated through a racial discourse concerning "white" identity formation that can be seen throughout Fellini's films.

This essay returns to the genesis of Fellini's career in the formative context of Italian Fascism and colonialism. From his early postwar films, including *Luci del varietà* and *Lo sceicco bianco*, to mid-career works, such as "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio" and *Fellini - Satyricon*, to his late films *Ginger e Fred* and *La voce della luna*, Fellini engages Fascism and its colonialist legacies by evoking racial discourses pertaining to "whiteness" and ethnic and cultural difference within Italy. In re-encountering Fellini's films through the frameworks of Italian racial identity construction and the nation's colonial legacies, we can extend the analytic parameters by which we read Fellini as film *auteur* and discern a critical awareness of racial discourse within his expansive vision of postwar Italian society.

Notes

1 For Pasolini, see Caminati 2007; for Pasolini and Fellini, see Luijnenburg 2013; for Antonioni, see Pinkus 2003; for Pontecorvo, see O'Leary 2016.

2 For discussions of the African-American GI in Italian postwar film, and actor John Kitzmiller in particular, see Giovacchini (2011) and Greene (2012).

3 I thank Frank Burke (2018, 19–20) for his insights into this scene.

4 Ekberg's metamorphosis also brings to mind *Godzilla* (Ishirô Honda 1954) and related Japanese horror films about the effects of atomic fallout (see Waller in this volume).

5 The young Oenothea is played by Donyale Luna (Peggy Ann Freeman, 1945–1979), an African-American model born in Detroit. Luna was the first black model to appear on the cover of a *Vogue* magazine, appearing on the March 1966 cover of *British Vogue* (Arogundade 2012a). Prior to her work on *Fellini - Satyricon*, Luna collaborated with Andy Warhol in the *Screen Test* series, as well as *Camp* (1965) and *Donyale Luna* (1967), a short film in which Luna portrays Snow White (Arogundade 2012b). Luna was a fashion model during the 1960s and 1970s before her death by drug overdose in 1979. Luna's presence, along with the Mauritian model and actress Hylette Adolphe, speaks to the appearance during the 1960s of black women models and artists, including Marsha Hunt, Lola Falana, Zeudi Araya, and Inez Pelligrini, in Europe and in the Italian culture industry.

6 *Ginger e Fred* was released four years before *Pummarò* (Michele Placido 1990), the first major Italian narrative fiction film release concerning African migration. *Pummarò* was based partially on the life of Jerry Maslo, a South African migrant and activist who was murdered while seeking asylum in Italy.

7 "Malebolge" is the eighth circle of hell in Dante's *Inferno*.

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28

Environmental Fellini:
Petroculture, the Anthropocene, and the Cinematic Road

Elena M. Past

Federico Fellini's cinema exposes the strong ties that bind films and fossil fuels. In July 2016, a playful article in *The Guardian* (Scammell 2016) reported that a lost British star of *La dolce vita* (1960) had been found: the 1958 Triumph TR3, the roadster that ferried Marcello and Sylvia around the Eternal City. Automobiles and automobility were iconic protagonists throughout Fellini's universe: think of the tiny Fiat 600 that Cabiria admires in *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957) and the luxurious DeSoto Fireflite convertible that, together with its famous owner, dazzles her; the car from which Guido cannot escape at the beginning of *8½* (1963); the Triumph in *La dolce vita* but also an enormous convertible Cadillac; the Ferrari that Toby Dammit pilots recklessly to his death in Fellini's episode of *Histoires extraordinaires* (*Tre passi nel delirio*/*Spirits of the Dead* 1968). Cars were protagonists in Fellini's extra-cinematic life, too. Ettore Scola's tribute to the maestro, *Che strano chiamarsi Federico* (*How Strange to Be Named Federico* 2013), features long nocturnal drives with shadowy friends in sequences that are part auteurist legend, part historical record. According to Tullio Kezich (2009, 199), in the late 1950s, Fellini perfected his technique of "kidnapping" collaborators, whom he "drove … around the outskirts of Rome at night until the issue at hand was fully examined." The director's tales of cinematic genesis often involve a motor vehicle: asking producer Dino De Laurentiis to read new scripts illuminated in the car's headlights, for example, or being chauffeured around the Roman periphery by Piero Gherardi or Pier Paolo Pasolini in search of filming locations and inspiration (Kezich 2009, 89).

These lively stories of automobility unveil one way in which Fellini's visionary cinema signals a watershed moment not just in the cinematic record, but in the geological one as well. In our contemporary epoch of slow environmental crisis, a period many are calling the Anthropocene, scientists, environmentalists, and even Italian film scholars are engaged in some historical soul-searching. If we indeed inhabit the Anthropocene, a geological epoch distinct from the Holocene, when human-caused activities (atomic radiation, for example, or mass extinctions) are leaving imposing new marks (or "signatures") in the earth's stratigraphy, when did the writing appear on the rock wall? Scientists advocating this nomenclature propose a series of different possible historical moments as the starting point: the advent of modern agriculture; the Columbian Exchange; the Industrial Revolution. Yet some degree of consensus is forming around the notion that anthropogenic inscriptions on the Earth system increased markedly in the mid-twentieth

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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century and that many of these can be attributed to a human addiction to fossil fuels. In an article arguing that the Anthropocene is indeed "functionally and stratigraphically distinct from the Holocene," Waters et al. (2016, 137) cite the increase of various particulates and residues from fossil fuel combustion, erosion caused in part by road construction, and elevated lead levels from leaded gasoline as evidence that a new epoch began around 1950. As debates about shifting geologies continue, the scientists explain that terminology should matter to all of us, because: "unlike with prior subdivisions of geological time, the potential utility of a formal Anthropocene reaches well beyond the geological community. It also expresses the extent to which humanity is driving rapid and widespread changes to the Earth system that will variously persist and potentially intensify into the future" (137). The Anthropocene, in other words, does not just chronicle a past epoch, but a looming environmental crisis. It is the crisis of a rapidly changing climate, of a world of toxic industrial emissions, of runaway production and consumption of plastics; in short, of deleterious technological impacts on the environment, caused in no small measure by a love affair with fossil fuels.

According to this geomaterial chronology, Fellini's decades of cinematic production coincide precisely with the advent of the Anthropocene: *Luci del varietà* (*Variety Lights*) was filmed in 1950. Such a coincidence is meaningful first because, by relying on extraction, consumption, energy expenditure, and emissions, the film industry is part of the signature legible in the geological record. As Bozak (2012), Maxwell and Miller (2012), and LeMenager (2014) have shown, contemporary media have a significant ecological footprint, steeped as they are in petroleum culture. Maxwell and Miller (64) detail how the motion-picture industry in California rivals the aerospace and semiconductor energies in consuming energy and emitting greenhouse gases, charting Hollywood's "massive use of electricity and petroleum" and its "release of hundreds of thousands of tons of deadly emissions each year." Fellini's penchant for thinking while driving; the lavish sets constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed at Cinecittà; the road trips and traffic jams that traverse his productions—all mean that in material terms, Fellini's films have done their share of consuming and emitting, while simultaneously reveling in the boom in automobility. Drilling through the earth's strata for a "Golden Spike," or that readable moment when one geological epoch looks distinct from another, we might expect to find numerous traces of Fellinian cinema.

In this version of events, Fellini both screens and lives the realities of an Italy that, in the throes of an economic boom, embraces automobility and consumerist excess, the Italy leaving its mark on the geological record. But Fellinian cinema also speaks to the preoccupations of the Anthropocene in more eloquent and subtle ways. It may seem strange to think of an "environmental Fellini," because few directors have chosen to adopt the plastic facades of film production more joyously, or more obsessively. The director (Fellini 1988, 119, 122) claimed that Cinecittà became "a substitute for the world," and wrote that his reconstructions in Studio 5 serve to "purify" the world "of those incidental aspects of real life which are of no use to me." This totalizing process of artistic "purification" recalls the familiar figure of Fellini the auteur, whom we might align with the quintessential "Anthropos" of the inequitable Anthropocene, the patriarchal male Western subject driving (and directing) environmental degradation.[1] In Fellinian films, however, the meditative human subject is also enmeshed in the outside, captured on screen as he admits (willingly or not) the world and its impurity. In his "Autobiography of a Spectator," an essay dedicated in part to Fellini's work, Italo Calvino (1993, 26) observes that for Fellini, "the concept of autobiography has become the concept of cinema. Autobiography is the outside that fills the screen. It is the darkness of the screening room that pours into the light cone illuminating the screen." In other words, Calvino reads cinema as "transcorporeal," its components traversing the bodies of spectators, locations, cinemas; the autobiographic subject is positioned *within* the

energy that generates the film. In the entanglement of media productions and narratives, inside and outside, "the human is always intermeshed with the more-than-human world" in his cinematic cosmos (Alaimo 2010, 2). And in Fellini's Italy, the net of connection is inevitably powered by fossil fuel.

Calvino writes, thinking of Fellini, that a film "may, perhaps, tell me something about how the world will be after I'm gone" (25). Benefitting from the powers of geological hindsight, this article rereads several of Fellini's films from the perspective of the Anthropocene, positing that if on the one hand the director's work delights in the excesses of petroleum culture, on the other, it struggles against (or within) the material and existential costs of this excess. In this project, I follow Serenella Iovino (2017, 68), who proposes that Calvino's early fiction offers "a narrative stratigraphy of the Anthropocene at the time of the Great Acceleration." Like Calvino, I believe that Fellini understood, precociously, that "something in the world's embodied stories was changing" (68). Over the course of several decades, Fellini's films exposed the effects of Italy's movement toward mass automobility; embraced the plastic, disposable cultures of Cinecittà; and delved under the city of Rome, showing how and where media, geological layers, and extractive cultures meet. Fellinian cinema, in this reading, uncannily anticipates the troubling environmental and material realities of the Anthropocene, all the while laying down a layer of manufactured cinematic plastic to mark the director's (and our, and cinema's) passage on the earth.

Fellini's Roads: *Le notti di Cabiria*, Automobilization, Esso, and the "Boom"

In its 2014 report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change underlines in no uncertain terms that burning fossil fuels is responsible for the majority of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, and that the transportation sector is a huge contributor to these emissions. They alert readers that, "Reducing global transport greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions will be challenging, since the continuing growth in passenger and freight activity could outweigh all mitigation measures unless transport emissions can be strongly decoupled from GDP growth" (Sims et al. 2014, 603). In other words, economic booms drive cultures of unrestrained automobility, production, and consumption, and those are the cultures we urgently need to rethink to combat climate change.

Fellinian films document the beginning of Italy's dependence on the automobile, simultaneously charting the seductive appeal of car culture and its tendency to isolate and exclude. His films grew up with the Italian road systems and the mass mobilization of Italians, both of which accelerated in the years after World War II. Although Mussolini declaimed that highways were a "certain sign of our powers of construction, worthy of the ancient sons of Rome" (Bortolotti 1992, 35), under Fascism, very few Italians could count themselves motorists. In 1926, Bortolotti estimates, there were just over 500 vehicles (including cars, buses, and trucks) per 100 000 Italians in many urban areas, including Rome: far fewer than in England, France, Germany, and the United States.[2] Roadways for motoring were limited at best.[3]

That would all change in the postwar period, when reconstruction funds were dedicated to modernizing the peninsula's aging and war-torn infrastructure. As Italy emerged from the protectionism of the Fascist period and into the global marketplace, Italian industry boomed, and with it consumerism and mobility, sparking the uneven so-called "Economic Miracle," normally dated between 1958 and 1963, but with inevitable leakage on both ends. The "Boom," as it was also called, required roadways to move goods and people. The discovery of methane and hydrocarbons in the Val Padana and the cheap energy flowing from overseas also helped fuel a surge in

automobility (Ginsborg 1989). In 1955, the Legge Romita (l.463) established a 10-year plan to build roads, stimulate the economy, and create jobs. The Autostrada del Sole (A1) linking Milan and Naples was one of the major projects financed under this plan ("autostrada," *Enciclopedia Treccani*). Rome's ring road, the Grande Raccordo Anulare (GRA) was also in progress in these postwar years, with the first section constructed from 1946 to 1951 (Via Aurelia to Via Appia); the second between 1949 and 1952 (Via Flaminia to Via Tiburtina); the third from 1952 to 1955 (Via Tiburtina to Via Appia); and the fourth and final link from 1958 to 1962 (Via Aurelia to Via Flaminia).

In *Fellini's Road*, Costello (1983, 5) asserts that the "great Fellini theme and form" is "the road of life," or the journey toward meaning. This metaphorical theme, as Costello recognizes, translates into compositions featuring dynamic movements, arrivals, departures. The road is more than a metaphor for Fellini, though. His vision of the road matures with the Italian roadways, and documents the different ways the road unites, divides, limits access, and stratifies. In *Le notti di Cabiria*, which was filmed on location around the city while the GRA was being built, Cabiria experiences the pressures of an Italy ever more committed to automobilization, where the individual is subject to the flows of traffic and often excluded from this new automobility. Cabiria's slight figure shows how "we are, in many ways, embodiments of the fuel that carries us along our many roads," as Heather Sullivan argues (2017, 414).

Cabiria lives her life beside the road, where she and other prostitutes wait to be picked up by passing motorists. Their encampment is abuzz with petroleum noise: motor scooters, motorcycles, rumbling diesel trucks, the Fiat 600 that a friend has purchased but only her pimp knows how to drive. On the Passeggiata Archeologica, human bodies are not physically confined by a vehicle's enclosed cabin: people pop out of the top of the Fiat 600, music spills into the streets, and passing traffic is relatively infrequent, at least during the evening hours. Cabiria frequently accepts rides from strangers, though, which increases her social and bodily vulnerability.

Although her professional life is based there, time after time, Cabiria is denied full access to the road. She insists proudly throughout the film on her independence as a homeowner, but her dream of independence is destined to be dashed, and not exclusively because of the ill-intentioned men she meets. As Frank Burke (1996) has argued (writing of roads in *La strada*—1954), in Fellini's films, the road's "capacity to separate eventually exceeds its ability to unite, and in failing to lead people to fulfillment, the road becomes an avenue to violence, death, abandonment, and alienation" (50). Cabiria's modest one-room abode in Acilia, near Ostia, is located on intersecting dirt roads where small houses are flanked by dusty fields and horses. The clacking sounds of a train and a neighing horse provide visual and acoustic markers for a semi-urban area in transition from an agrarian past. This is the "marginal landscape of Rome's periphery" that John David Rhodes (2007, ix–x) traces in Pasolini's films, a landscape whose "rapid and reckless growth" accelerated in the 1950s and 1960s. Its detachment from the city center is part of what Matthew Huber (2013, x) describes (outlining the American case, but relevant to the urban sprawl around Rome as well) as the isolating "sociospatial patterns of suburban life made possible by automobility and massive oil consumption." Explicit signs of the growing significance of petroculture appear on the film's narrative map. When Cabiria explains where she lives, the nearest identifying landmark is a gas station at the 19 km marker on the road to Ostia. The liquid energy for purchase at the gas station near her home gestures toward the early stages of Italy's oil addiction, but also suggests the consequences for those who live without access to a car. Although the GRA was not yet finished when Cabiria was filmed, her house is beyond the first stretch to be built, and she is thus already "walled off" from the city center by a road essentially uncrossable for pedestrians.[4] Oil, argues Huber, "is primarily about powering a certain kind of mobility characterized by an individuated command over space, or what Raymond Williams called 'mobile privatization'"

(Huber 2013, x). He writes that increasing oil consumption maps onto "crisis narratives of declining social solidarity and community and the individualization of … culture" (x). Cabiria the homeowner seeks to command her space, but Cabiria the streetwalker is a victim of petromodernity's crisis of solitude.

In a telling long shot just after her rescue from death by drowning, Cabiria walks home down a dirt road, passing a large, cylindrical Esso Extra Motor Oil sign sitting slightly off-kilter in the left-center of the frame, a dense signifier in the bleak landscape. A woman with a gaggle of young children and a large basket on her head walks toward her, and a horse grazes in the background (Figure 28.1). An agrarian past and an already-rickety globalized future coexist, but the former will quickly erode or succumb to cementification under the pressures of petroleum-fired consumer culture, which will be sold relentlessly as the modern dream of success. Huber (76) quotes an Esso tagline from 1950 that succinctly articulates oil's promise: "Petroleum helps to build a better life." So Cabiria hopes, although the film instructs us to see how these promises are illusions.

In fact, in the media-cultural landscape around *Cabiria*, petroleum culture was being sold wholesale. Esso Italiana (now ExxonMobil) was one of the first foreign affiliates of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company, and in 1950, it launched a public relations campaign to market the "better life" through petroleum for Italian audiences. There were a series of Concerti Sinfonici Esso broadcast on RAI (1950); the Premio di Pittura Esso, launched in 1951 with themes like "Strade d'Italia" (1953); and the Club Esso Junior (1958), which sought to interest children in motorization. But there were also less visible ways in which Italian "life itself" was "produced by not just one but multiple petroleum products" (Huber 2013, 76). The postwar petrochemical industry was funneling oil not exclusively into transportation,

Figure 28.1 "Petroleum helps to build a better life"—a promise Fellini's *Le notti di Cabiria* calls into question. *Source*: *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957). Produced by Dino de Laurentiis Cinematografica and Les Films Marceau. Screen grab captured by Elena M. Past from the 1999 DVD version.

but also into a dizzying array of mass consumer products: cosmetics, food products, pharmaceuticals, and plastics of all kinds. In the 1950s and 1960s, oil's transcorporeal properties traversed earthly and creaturely bodies, making them "literally oily," as Frederick Buell has shown (2012, 290). The pliable substance soon became a ubiquitous agent of "chemical and social metamorphosis."

Cabiria hopes to transform her life in marriage, but the success of this future is predicated on petroculture's disposable promises. She and her suitor Oscar often meet in central Roman locations (generally centers of mobility, such as the rail station Termini), but the grifter's nefarious marriage proposal is tellingly made against a backdrop of anonymous, disconnected suburban housing projects under construction. Following Oscar's proposal, Cabiria runs home and begins to sell her belongings, and her friend Wanda protests that she's getting rid of "all of this stuff, this abundance!" Cabiria reassures her that the newlyweds will start over: "new everything, new everything." Her life as an "honest woman" will begin, she thinks, once she can acquire the consumer goods promised by the "better life" powered by petroleum. A Shell ad from 1956 celebrates the paints, polishes, plastic surfaces, and shingles made possible by petrochemicals and cheerily affirms Cabiria's hope for her future: "In many ways, your home is a house that oil built" (Huber 2013, 83). The flip side of this promise, though, is that disposable consumer goods allow for disposable people. Oscar steals Cabiria's money and leaves her wishing for death, denying her the material promises of the expansive petroleum culture transforming the Italian peninsula. When Cabiria cries and mascara runs down her face in the film's heartbreaking final scenes, the petroleum-cosmetic tear demonstrates that she has applied the logic of petroleum culture, but failed to fully understand its risks.

Fellini's Hybrids: *La dolce vita*, Cinecittà, and Rebuilding the Eternal City in Plastic

Fellini's films thus thematize the increasing isolation created by suburban expansion, petroculture, and the boom; as productions, they also actively rely on automobility and the malleable plastics made possible by the growing petrochemical industry. *Le notti di Cabiria* required significant movement around the rapidly expanding urban area on the part of Fellini and his crew: the Passeggiata Archeologica; the Via Veneto; the home of film star Alberto Lazzari, just off the ring road (Kezich 2009, 90). The crew filmed at the Sanctuary of the Madonna of Divino Amore, outside the GRA; in a set built in the studios on Via della Vasca Navale (inside); and at Castel Gandolfo (outside) (Kezich 2006, 180–181). Crisscrossing the newly constructed GRA to film in the far-flung *borgate* to which Pasolini introduced Fellini must have been challenging from a production point of view, partially because many roads that would (initially) ease transit around the city were still being built.[5]

La dolce vita also logged many miles around the Italian city of cinema to film on location at the Terme di Caracalla, the Fontana di Trevi, Bagni di Tivoli, Tor de' Schiavi, Passo Oscuro (30 km north of Rome), and Bassano di Sutri (42 km outside of the city), among other places (Kezich 2006, 200–201). It alternates between condemnation and delight in the cultures of cars large and small, airplanes, and helicopters. A series of automotive parades traverses the film, from Sylvia's trip from the Ciampino airport, to parties at villas outside of the city. But recurrent gridlock is perhaps more significant in existential and kinetic terms. The first automobile we see—the Cadillac driven by Maddalena—makes its way through four lanes of heavy traffic, and cars fill the dark road as far as the eye can see. The Via Veneto, one of the film's central

protagonists, is essentially a traffic jam, as journalists and passersby seek access to the famous figures gathered at the sidewalk tables.

Gridlock is also why *La dolce vita* marks Fellini's embrace of reconstructed reality in Cinecittà's Studio 5, initiating a relationship which would last for the rest of his career. With this film, the director concentrates much of his considerable energy into the workspaces of Cinecittà, and on a material level, into plastic (and petroleum) itself. In Cinecittà, Fellini begins to experience what many of the affluent characters in *La dolce vita* live: the exuberance of a world they can shape with their wealth and expenditures of energy. Of filming in Studio 5, Fellini (1998, 140) says: "Utter excitement, thrill, ecstasy, is what I experience when confronted by an empty studio, a space to be filled, and a world to be created". Kezich (2006, 83) tells us that, during the filming of *Cabiria*, set designer Piero Gherardi built the protagonist's house with no roof, so that interior and exterior shots could be fully illuminated, presumably (also) by the sun. Post-*Cabiria*, in studio, sunlight is still called upon to light the sets, but now primarily in indirect form: it is the compressed sunlight concentrated in fossil fuels, converted into energy to power studio lights. This is the circuitous logic of petroculture, which uses energy to extract energy to produce more energy.

Such circular logic also guides the building practices in Cinecittà, where Fellini reconstructs the realities just beyond the studio gates. Cinecittà is in Rome, of Rome, and irretrievably "other" than Rome: a perplexing and compelling world of hybrids. The two primary reconstructions for *La dolce vita* were the cupola of St. Peter's Basilica and a stretch of the Via Veneto, whose incline was flattened by Fellini's crew. Cinecittà's Via Veneto, the director insisted, was "better and more real than the original" (Kezich 2006, 201). Filming Rome from Cinecittà (which is inside the GRA and just about 12 km from the Capitoline Hill) involves a process of doubling, which, like a cinematic body double, multiplies the energies and resources behind image production.[6] Cinecittà's Rome is disposable, not eternal, although the legacy of many of its building materials will endure for thousands of years as part of the waste stream. Fiberglass, synthetic plastics, and other manufactured materials are certainly part of the toolkit used by Cinecittà's artisans to create the objects of the director's vision. Paper for film scripts, lighting for sets, heating and cooling, film stock, water bottles, props, vehicles: "mise-en-scène has a carbon footprint," as Maxwell and Miller (2012, 85) summarize ably.

Film productions are resource-intensive both in studio and on location, and, even more than *Le notti di Cabiria*, *La dolce vita* mixes and mingles "real" Rome and the cinematic city, provocatively blurring the lines between them; the intensifying culture of automobility invested the film production just as it had Italian society. Before choosing to reconstruct the Via Veneto in Cinecittà, Fellini obtained a permit to shoot the first scene on location, "provided we did not stop once, because that would hold up the traffic" (Fellini 1998, 119). To achieve the shot, he had to create what he describes as a motorcade that was like a "procession of the Magi": the director rode in front, followed by the main car, then the camera car, then "hordes of cars" driving the production team, and Fiat 600s and scooters bearing the film's many assistants flanking the entire parade (119). Furthermore, the production attracted its own paparazzi, and Kezich (2006, 200) describes the on-location shoots as "destination spot[s] for tourists." Filming in and around Rome meant entering the city's petroleum-fired fray, amplifying it while charged with not slowing it down. As this anecdote shows, each procession of automobiles captured on film implies a second convoy transporting the mechanisms of cinematic reproduction, and beyond that, the city itself following the mobile spectacle being reproduced on film.

Buell (2012, 289) suggests that modern extraction methods have given us a "modern catastrophic-exuberant energetics," the most clear-cut example of which is "the new oil-electric technology of film." He writes of a "perceptual kinetics" that accompanies this love for oil energy, and suggests that the "ecstasy of motion is, however, nearly as catastrophic as it is exuberant"

(288). Although "catastrophic-exuberant energetics" could aptly describe the goals of Fellinian cinema, Cinecittà's studio spaces allowed, as the director often articulated, more control over the chaos of "perceptual kinetics" proper to film. In Cinecittà, the isolating experience of automobility could be captured from the perspective of a collaborative, open studio space, rather than from a more elusive "procession of the Magi." The studio thus offered a counterpoint to oil's powers to isolate, at least for those involved in the production. Fellini (1988, 16) describes watching another production in progress on his first visit to the studio, noting that "all the clearly articulated announcements I could hear made me feel as though I was at a railway station or an airport during a major catastrophe." For the chaotic parades of crew members traveling the real Via Veneto in single automobiles, Cinecittà substituted the more convivial commotion of a transportation hub. Rather than always moving the cinematic machine around a fixed object of focus, the studio gave the film production a greater position of stability. Sometimes, it even inverted the very terms of mobility: the giant model ships in *Amarcord* (1973) and *E la nave va* (*And the Ship Sails On* 1983), for example, that floated in the Cinecittà swimming pool, "sailed" when the people standing on "shore" were pulled along on mobile platforms to create the illusion of movement. In the studio, the "world" moves around the camera, and the human bends and adapts to the needs of technologies. In the kinetic space of what Roberto Marchesini (2009, 160) calls "technopoiesis," the human is hybridized, integrated with the nonhuman technologies that are both instruments and constitutive of identities and cultures. Such a cinematic practice is a hybrid "plastic" both literally and figuratively: able to mold and sculpt realities, fusing them into new forms, but also reliant on reconstructed objects made of the synthetic, petroleum-derived materials that litter our Anthropocenic reality.

This hybrid, plastic Fellini invites an environmentally engaged reading of the intriguing sea monster at the conclusion of *La dolce vita*. The giant studio-made beast appears in an on-location shoot, mapping the entanglement of studio and world. In the Anthropocene, anthropogenic waste on the shores is an important reminder of the prolific diffusion of non-biodegradable materials in fragile ecological zones: giant swirling plastic gyres in seas including the Mediterranean, and tiny plastic particulate traversing the bodies of plankton, sea birds, and fish. Rachel Carson's powerful *The Sea Around Us* was first published in 1951 (another significant moment of political-cultural coincidence with the Anthropocene's proposed Golden Spike), and as Stacy Alaimo (2012, 486) outlines, her book recounts how large sea creatures, traveling enormous distances, become "distributors of dreadful anthropogenic threats." Carson's primary concern was radioactivity, another geological marker of the Anthropocene, but petroleum-derived plastics in the ocean are equally vile and also mobile, buoyant, and copious. Alaimo writes that thanks to the constant cycling of the oceans and seas, "everyday, ostensibly benign, human stuff becomes nightmarish as it floats forever in the sea," and the contrast between these objects' fleeting use and their eternal powers to pollute "renders them surreally malevolent" (487).

Had it been real, Fellini's weird sea monster could have carried radioactive or plastic waste in its permeable body. As a creation of Cinecittà, this multivalent creature signals the way cinema itself creates monstrous, plastic, quickly obsolete waste that mixes and melds with other matter. Today, scientists are combing beaches for "plastiglomerates," which are also being called "future fossils": hardened, composite rocks formed when plastics fuse with sand, coral, shells, and other rocks. Such plastic markers have a "strong potential to act as a global marker horizon in the Anthropocene" (Corcoran, Moore, and Jazvac 2014, 7), and constitute a strange geological observation about the hybrid surprises we are leaving for later generations to find beneath their feet. In *La dolce vita*, the gathered crowd expresses uncertainty over whether the creature is alive or dead, accentuating the indeterminate timeline of cinematic-anthropogenic litter, which fuses past and future, organic and inorganic. The plastic discovery on the Roman littoral at the end of

the film can thus be seen through Calvino's lens as telling us something about the world as it will be after we are gone, while also actually being something whose narrative and material traces may outlive us: an uncanny future fossil, a hybrid creation of media nature.

Fellini and a Geology of Media

Immediately preceding the discovery of *La dolce vita*'s sea monster, the camera captures partygoers and a fleet of automobiles arrayed elegantly in a pine forest near the beach. (Figure 28.2). The humans turn their backs to the camera, looking toward the beach, while the cars face forward, parked but poised, aggressively returning the camera's gaze. The elegant framing recalls one of the forest panels of Sandro Botticelli's kinetic masterpiece depicting Boccaccio's novella about Nastagio degli Onesti. Like the dramatic Renaissance painting featuring a woman being attacked by a knight and his dogs, the film contrasts a serene forest setting with an aggressive anthropic presence. What are the automobiles doing on the fragile beach? Scattered among the trees, they suggest the centrifugal force with which the "urban sprawling and spatial shattering" of Rome were flinging objects out of the city's center in the 1960s and 1970s, and into formerly unpopulated hinterlands (Trentin 2016, 223). "Ah, la natura," says the first speaking voice to emerge from the contemplative dawn silence, as the party makes its way toward the creature. "Nature," here, is a hybrid figure poised between the automobilized beach and the manufactured sea monster: an affirmation of the always-already entangled, sometimes perilous, composition of the contemporary world.

While in *La dolce vita*, Fellini digs into the plastic potentials of cinema, creating an Anthropocene cosmography of hybrid matter where cinema's kinetic industry occupies a central position, in later films—and in *Roma* (1972) in particular—he digs deeper, uncovering the palimpsestic extractive geologies that underlie modernity and underwrite film production. "All roads lead to Rome," the saying goes. Not the GRA, however, which circles endlessly around it, and exists to keep traffic out of the city center. In a lengthy sequence in *Roma*, multiple views of slow-moving traffic on

Figure 28.2 Automobiles return the camera's gaze as a serene forest setting contrasts with aggressive anthropic presence. *La dolce vita* (1960). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Riama Film in coproduction with Cinecittà and Pathé Consortium Cinéma. Screen grab captured by Elena M. Past from the 2010 DVD version.

the GRA are followed by images of a traffic jam around the Coliseum, as if concentric circles of immobility are gradually choking the city. Two adjacent hitchhikers hold signs requesting rides, respectively, to Naples and Florence, which lie in opposite directions. The GRA's circular orbit, compared to Saturn's rings in the narrator's voiceover, leads everywhere and nowhere simultaneously. On the GRA, horses, dogs in cars, and humans pushing carts dot the posthuman roadway, while billowing black smoke and filthy water obscure the view. Fellini and his cinematic machine—a camera and cameraman mounted on a crane and a station wagon—roll alongside cement trucks and a military tank. Diesel engines growl on the soundtrack, and a melancholy hum begins to sound when a factory, with scorching fires and belching smokestacks, moves into the frame. Police signal for drivers to move over to avoid an overturned livestock transporter, and bloodied dead cows sprawl in the road, indicating the tragic tensions that rule in what Filippo Trentin (2016, 235) evocatively calls the "city's dismembered materiality." Fellini's GRA alludes to many of the markers of the Anthropocene: pollution, extinction, military-industrial radioactivity, erosion and flooding caused by road construction (see Waters et al. 2016). The film's motorized gyres thus appropriately pull it underneath the city, where the crew explores a new subway line under construction. These are the sedimented layers where anthropic time's future and past collapse, and they also evoke the "deep underground […] where organic matter undergoes the transformations that make it possible for us to devour the sun's energy in fossilized forms" (Ghosh 2016, 73). As a resource-intense product of petroculture, cinema depends on this underground, a generative space for the fossil energies from whence its images are born.

The dive beneath the city surface into the subway excavation shows a mechanical "mole," or tunnel boring machine, working to dig a new metro line. Rome's work on the metro, like its modern road-building projects, also maps onto the temporal arc of Fellini's cinema. Construction on the first metro line began in April 1937 in preparation for the 1942 World's Fair. The Fair was cancelled because of the war, however, and the subway did not open until February 1955. Construction on the second line began in 1964 and continued for 17 years (Costa and Noble 1990, 224–225), coinciding with the filming of *Roma*. Rome had long needed public transportation; around the time this film was made, the journalist and environmentalist Antonio Cederna was advocating a change of attitude toward automobiles. The two primary goals of automobility, he points out in a 1973 article, accessibility and mobility, are negated when they lead to stasis and unbearable traffic congestion. Accessibility is useless, anyway, if all places reproduce the cement and asphalt of the city and leave nowhere to go (3). The metro project is part of a mass transit solution to the problem of the automobile in an urban center, but its reliance on excavation practices in a historic palimpsest like Rome complicates its potential for success. Cederna, who said that the many roadway tunnels that puncture Rome make the city resemble Swiss cheese, points out the hydrogeological and other environmental risks of tunneling (Cederna 1957, 13; Cederna 1973, 7).

Thus, in moving from a traffic jam to an excavation site, the film crew navigates the complexities of modernity in the Eternal City. As they descend into the dig, the crew passes a mammoth's tusk, a necropolis with human skeletons visible in niches in the wall, an underground river. They ride on a pit railway car while being filmed from another such car, suturing one of multiple industrial connections between film and extraction: cinematic trolley shots and mining practices here perfectly coincide. In another such alignment, a noisy drill punches through a crumbly wall while the camera magically accesses the other side, anticipating the ancient mysteries that the drill is about to reveal and showing how both can penetrate the earth. In concert, drill and camera reveal a 2000-year-old Roman villa, replete with vibrant frescoes and tiled mosaics. Suddenly, though, the frescoes begin to whiten as exposure to the air causes them rapidly to fade. The encounter of nonhuman, ancient, and contemporary history exposes the risks of our relationship to the

underground, while unveiling the rich layers beneath us. These layers, in which our legacy (and our bones) will persist beyond us, provide the energies and materials that allow us to be modern.

Peter Bondanella (1992, 197–198) argues that the subway and traffic jam sequences in *Roma* "end in complete failure," and says that the phallic drill and camera crane signal "the presumptuousness of a male director who attempts to fathom the mysterious feminine presence of the Eternal City." Reading Fellini environmentally, these scenes recognize the massive material footprint left behind by industry and by media too, and their expansive power to touch places that seem impossibly distant, from deep earth to deep space. In *A Geology of Media*, Jussi Parikka (2015, 8) urges us to think media in terms of the millions of years of geological history and the broad spatial reach that they require: "things we dig from the (under)ground, the harnessing of the atmosphere and the sky for signal transmissions, the outer space for satellites and even space junk." In *Roma*, the subway tunnel complements the scenes immediately preceding, where air raid sirens and the drone of airplanes underscore the perils of petroculture, of which the war machine is an enormous part. This scene, or the Saturn-like rings of the GRA, or *8½*'s spaceship platform (that to my eye resembles an oil rig), seems to screen the vast, interplanetary and subterranean reach—conceptual and material—of the media. The presumptuous (but confessional) male director here is decidedly our "Anthropos," and the trip underground unveils the future location of the uncanny, hybrid fossils his cinema creates and the extraction culture on which it depends.

Petromelancholia: Fellini offroads, or plastics within

Petroleum addiction has led us into uncharted environmental territory. There are uncertainties about how we will deal with a changing environmental landscape in the Anthropocene. Some argue that massive, high-tech mitigation projects will be necessary, including carbon capture or elaborate, if still speculative, geoengineering of other types. Others maintain that we must radically shift the logic of global capitalism and its relentless insistence on growth. From the point of view of the humanities, researchers organizing themselves into "Humanities for the Environment Observatories" insist on the relevance of creative cultures in our response: "exploring the spectrum of the human imagination—from the mundane, everyday imagination to daydreams and fantasy," they argue, might "provide a key to addressing human issues of consciousness, perception, and agency" (Holm et al. 2015, 983). These human issues, in turn, are critical to urging people to action in the Anthropocene. Celebrating and shaping the spectrum of the human imagination, Fellinian cinema provides one such key.

As I was in the process of planning this essay (and—confession—driving in the Motor City), I heard a story on National Public Radio about an emerging ecological catastrophe in the Pacific Northwest: a pen holding Atlantic salmon ruptured, releasing hundreds of thousands of non-native fish, very likely full of antibiotics and other "pharmaceutical pollution," into a delicate marine ecosystem. Local wild salmon fishermen heard the calls to the Coast Guard and discovered that there was no comprehensive plan in place to mitigate such a disaster. They volunteered to help catch the farmed fish, who spend their lives swimming in circles and are thus not too difficult to capture. The reporter interviewed a fisherman named Riley Starks, who described the fish round-up as visually idyllic: it was a bright, sunny day, and fish jumped from the calm waters as fishers circled in boats large and small. Yet beneath the surface, said Starks, "it's like a Fellini movie; there's the overshadowing despair that underlies it" (Dalrymple 2017). Struck by the evocation of Fellini to describe the horror of ecological disaster, I got in

touch with Starks, who said that the scene was an "absurd carnival," and that "the only thing that came to mind was that it was Felliniesque" (R. Starks, telephone interview with author, December 17, 2017).

This story—and Starks—impressed me for the lucidity regarding both environmental degradation in the Anthropocene and the melancholy underlying Fellinian cinema. Fellinian melancholy has many possible foundations: personal, sociopolitical, existential. But throughout this essay I have pointed to evidence that such melancholy may have something to do with the more-than-human environment and perhaps aptly intuits a contemporary condition of "petromelancholia," a neologism Stephanie LeMenager (2014, 102) coins to describe "the feeling of losing cheap energy that came relatively easily." Petromelancholia results from the awareness that the "age of exuberance" facilitated by fossil fuels is destined not to last because of the high environmental and material costs of supporting it. A scene eliminated from the final screenplay of *La dolce vita* offers an important insight in this regard. During another decadent party on a yacht, Marcello and company witness a young woman burn to death in a gasoline bonfire (Kezich 2009, 116). The young woman's horrific petroleum demise haunts the histories of the film production, though it never appeared in the film. I would argue that it didn't need to. Although petroleum culture can engender such violence and such catastrophe (and sometimes does in Fellini's films, as in "Toby Dammit"), its reach is more pervasive than the sacrifice of an isolated individual would suggest, and its progress slower. Today, viewers can find petromelancholy throughout Fellini's films, as he traces how dependence on mediated realities and the petroleum cultures that support them impacts bodies, cityscapes, undergrounds, memories, dreams, collectives. It is a condition not best manifested in the garish death of one individual, but rather in the compulsive, lingering dissatisfaction of many lives fragmented by petromodernity.

That Starks would call on Fellinian cinema to describe the affective experience of environmental crisis signals a critical opportunity, too. In *The Great Derangement*, Amitav Ghosh (2016, 30), poet and theorist of petroculture, argues that: "It is surely no coincidence that the word uncanny has begun to be used, with ever greater frequency, in relation to climate change…. No other word comes close to expressing the strangeness of what is unfolding around us." Ghosh's concern is that modern narratives (specifically modern novels, not genre fiction) have learned to conceal "the real" and that their human-centered plots "ensure that Nature remains off-limits to Culture" (71). More pertinently here, he frets that critics have, for too long, limited readings of modern novels to see them as an "individual moral adventure," failing to recognize "traces of the collective" within or the nonhuman voices that speak on their pages. Rereading Steinbeck, for example, Ghosh finds "a visionary placement of the human within the nonhuman…, a form, an approach that grapples with climate change avant la lettre" (80). Ghosh shows how, as critics, we can buck the cultures of individualism—petrocultures of isolating automobility—choosing to read environmentally, resituating the human in a more-than-human landscape. In film studies, we can de-anthropocenter our readings of screens, activating audio-vision to recognize cinema as an archive of relational dances that always press beyond human stories. In studying Fellini, we can follow Starks to see cautionary tales about the "global weirding" that has resulted from our disattention to the crises—individual and collective—of petromodernity.

Watching Fellini, Calvino thought he observed that: "The end of the world began with us, and it does not seem to end. The film we thought we were only watching becomes the story of our lives" (29). The film we thought we were only watching unveils the complicity of cinema in extractive cultures and its reliance on plastics, screens the isolation of automobility, projects our future obsolescence. It ends up beneath us, in future fossil layers, landfills, and oceans. It is also lodged in our imaginations, and we can read this "film" in new ways while inviting its visionary revelations to change our culture of consumption. In Fellini's cinema, the world matters—it is

material and plastic, and also mysterious, wonderful, and imperiled. This kind of view can be transformative, argues Alaimo (2010, 2): "Concern and wonder converge when the context for ethics becomes not merely social but material—the emergent, ultimately unmappable landscapes of interacting biological, climatic, economic, and political forces. "It is only an anecdote, but it seems important that right around the time *Roma* was made, biographer Hollis Alpert (1986, 246) reports that the Maestro himself transformed his life: "That summer, Fellini, a lover of automobiles, gave up driving."

Notes

1 Matteo Gilebbi ably synthesized the notion of a patriarchal, male Anthropos of the Anthropocene in a presentation at the American Association for Italian Studies conference in Columbus, OH in April 2017.
2 These numbers can be compared with 608 vehicles per 1000 people in Italy today, the highest percentage in Europe except for Luxembourg (Ficocelli 2015).
3 Moraglio (2002, 23) notes that the 1929 depression was a death knell for the Italian highway system and that in spite of ambitious plans for road building, most projects were delayed awaiting better economic times.
4 In an article on the GRA, Letizia Modena (2016, 200) cites the scholar Umberto Cao, who writes: "To pass on foot from one side to the other means to pass through muddy fields, gradients, ancient Roman roads, railway lines. To cross the GRA is impossible."
5 In the engagement scene, there are several minor glitches in the film's continuity, involving a car and truck that appear in the background of one shot and disappear from the next. Perhaps continuity editors were not yet accustomed to keeping track of the movement of traffic across otherwise barren backgrounds.
6 For *Intervista* (1987), Fellini reconstructs Cinecittà as a scale model, amplifying the process via which a mirror city is created within the city.

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Part VI

Receptions, Appropriations, Dispersions

Robert Altman

Fellini has had a great influence on my life and on my work. Especially in terms of what he has taught me…. The film of his that has struck me the most is La dolce vita. *It is probably closest to the kind of film that I make.* Short Cuts *recalls that experience—and my friends who saw the film before the final version said that it made them think of* La dolce vita. *It's the best compliment they could have given me. (99)*

Fofi, G. and Volpi, G., ed., Federico Fellini. L'arte della visione *(Rome: AIACE, 1993), 99.*

Milos Forman

[Fellini's] films are of his time, of his generation, of his life, of his people, of his personality. It's for this that anyone, in whatever part of the world, can appreciate his films. They are for always and will always be relevant. There are films made yesterday that are already old already out of fashion, compared to the films of Fellini…. It's his courage, his freedom in expressing himself, that are a source of inspiration for everyone. (98)

Fofi, G. and Volpi, G., ed., Federico Fellini. L'arte della visione *(Rome: AIACE, 1993), 98.*

29

Fellini's Critical Reception in Italy

Nicola Bassano

Over the years, a substantial amount has been published about the figure of Federico Fellini, from reviews of specific films, to essays and volumes that have analyzed every last detail of the director's complex system of expressive references. This varied array of critical works knows no geographical bounds and is distinct precisely because it transcends nations and continents. This essay seeks to analyze the relationship between Italian film reviewing and the director's body of film work.

The Earliest Films: Critical Suspicion, Critical Promise

Beginning in 1950, the year that *Luci del varietà* (*Variety Lights*, codirected with Alberto Lattuada) was released, the critics' approach to Fellini's poetic world is initially cautious and at times even suspicious. In the pages of the magazine *Cinema*, Guido Aristarco (1951, 50) emphasizes the illogical nature of the two directors' filmic discourse, which, he argues, starts from a place of negative critique and never manages to say anything profound or constructive. Ugo Casiraghi criticizes the film in *l'Unità* as "petty bourgeois, sad, sorrowful, full of bitterness, incapable of freeing itself from a sterile and destructive polemic" (Casiraghi 1951).

In *Bianco e Nero,* Fernaldo di Giammatteo (1951, 70) notes his displeasure with the directors' decision not to thoroughly explore the humanity of the protagonists of the film, limiting themselves to satirizing the environment in a fairly sterile way. The same discourse greets Fellini's next work, *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952)—his real directorial debut—in which he further distances himself from the realism of Italian cinema during those years. The film is released at a delicate time, when the first signs of the crisis of neorealism are beginning to appear. Critics, however, do not seem ready for a change and limit themselves to pointing out the up-and-coming director's satiric slant and criticism of social customs.

Nino Ghelli's response (1952, 45) in *Bianco e Nero* is decidedly negative. According to him, the film is "of such poor quality because of its crudeness of taste, its narrative inadequacies, and the conventionality of its structure; it legitimizes a suspicion that this example of Fellini as a director should be condemned beyond appeal." Aristarco's (1952, 26) judgment of this film is less drastic;

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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in *Cinema Nuovo* he appreciates the singularity of the work despite a certain inconsistency of tone, which "makes the film itself unbalanced." Other critics, instead, criticize Fellini and the film for a lack of an "educational and ultimately moral presence … if anything, there is a taste for primitive representation, almost for ritual, or séance" (Mida 1952, 165). In the pages of *Cinema*, Edgardo Pavesi (1951, 263–265) analyzes the subject matter of the film while it is still in production, concluding that it is rich in entertainment value, full of amusing findings, with a predominantly ironic tone that does not diminish its fundamental morality.

For the following film, *I vitelloni* (1953), critics continue to speak of social satire devoid of profound analysis of causes. Though Giovanni Salvi (1953) recognizes a significant freshness of inspiration in Fellini's work, for him the film "cannot go beyond the limits of social satire, though sharp and original, with occasional realistic accents." The misguided assumption that Fellini was principally attempting a film of social critique recurs. Critics do not seem to want to valorize the director's effort to explore the precise psychological dimensions of his characters. Nevertheless, in general, he is recognized for the substantial step forward he has made since his debut: "progress in terms of his command of style" (Castello 1953, 109) reflected in "a film that is notable for its narrative agility and rich with remarkable moments" (Ghelli 1953, 9).

Fellini subsequently participates in the project initiated by Cesare Zavattini, *L'amore in città* (*Love in the City* 1953), a film created using a journalistic formula and entrusted to various directors. Fellini's episode "Agenzia matrimoniale" ("Marriage Agency") sets itself apart because of its particular irregularity and its intentional opposition to Zavattinian methodology. In a detailed analysis published in *Cinema*, Giulio Cesare Castello (1953, 109) stresses the success of the episode "thanks to the director's grace and his talent for observation, both environmental and psychological."

The Trilogy of Grace: The Tragic Adventures of the Humble

After this positive parenthesis, *La strada* (1954) arrives, and with it come polemics unleashed within a debate at the center of Italian film criticism. A fracture emerges between those who support a cinema oriented toward analysis and investigation and supporters of creative cinema. Aristarco (1953, 312) distinguishes himself for his extremely negative tones and argumentation. In the pages of *Cinema Nuovo*, he authoritatively declares he is "sorry to see such questionable results, so many unrealistic motives, and perhaps even unknowing arrogance from a director who is certainly among the most gifted." He continues, "Fellini seeks justifications, he struggles in his way, and he remains an adolescent, especially in *La strada*, which he, not surprisingly, defines as his most "youthful," lyrical, and confessional film. He explores his feelings along the dangerous paths of subjectivism and autobiography, and he mistakes the emotion that he feels for a heightened poetic urgency."

While some critics attribute an excessive autobiographical propensity to Fellini, an intermittent search for a lost past and an anachronistic attitude—all geared toward largely outdated themes—there is another group that appreciates this predisposition toward magical realism and transcendence. In just a few lines, Riccardo Redi (1954, 163) summarizes the falseness of this divide. "[P]erhaps the importance of Fellini's current position in Italian cinema lies precisely in this: in summarizing the irrepressible needs for truth and fantasy without programmatically adhering to one or the other side of the divide. This, for him, is a natural, spontaneous position, rendered concrete by his many experiences; it is not chosen out of the convenience of staying in the middle of extreme positions."

Presented with great expectations at the Venice International Film Festival in 1955, *Il bidone* renews debate with even more intensity by critics who have, by now, identified Fellini as the most gifted and promising author in the Italian artistic landscape. Once more there are those who see the film as another step forward and those who judge it to be mediocre and full of missteps. Among the first group, we can cite Gaetano Carancini (1955, 5) who writes in *La Voce Repubblicana,* "it's a great film that makes peace with cinema, a great film in which images and words fuse together perfectly" and Alberto Bertolini (1955, 4) in *Il Gazzettino di Venezia* who states, "with this fourth work Fellini has above all confirmed his happy gift as a narrator of images…." Among the detractors there is, once more, the inflexible pen of Aristarco, who in *Cinema Nuovo* (1955, 208) affirms, "Fellini's crepuscularism, the never-changing themes of his metaphysics and his symbolism, his episodic and fragmentary connection to reality, only partially nourished by realistic elements and attitudes, expose, even more this time … insincerity."

Beginning with *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957), critics seem to discover a new valuation of Fellini. In some cases, the reviews and articles take on triumphalist tones. Morandi Morandini (1957) writes "the narrative arc is rigorous and harmonious, comparable to a symphony," and he continues, "it's a memorable work, and not just in terms of Fellini's career." Lino Del Fra (1957, 1) retraces Fellini's path up to this film, revealing, in this last work, a clear underlying coherence of subject matter, "a very rare example in the world of cinema and a sign of his undeniable personality."

La dolce vita and *8½*: The Spiritual Void of a Nation, the Crisis of Modern Conscience

La dolce vita (1960) marks a fundamental shift for Italian cinema in a certain sense. Up until that moment, neorealism had distinguished itself for its free and spontaneous strength, with which it knew how to look at, and tell the story of, the world and society. Now though, something begins to change. The human being, with its conscience, frailty, and interior world, becomes a new territory to explore and develop, using a new concept of narrative and of artistic exploration. A few days after the film's release, indignant protest arises in the pages of conservative newspapers. The *Secolo d'Italia* stands out, asking on February 7 that the film be removed from theaters, and *L'Osservatore Romano* begins a veritable campaign to discredit the film. The unsigned commentaries "Domande e dilemmi" (1960b), which follow the equally critical piece "Basta!" (1960a), intentionally mangle the title of the film, calling it "Schifosa vita" ("Disgusting Life").

The leftist press, which up to that point had treated Fellini's works with suspicion and mistrust, is unanimously quick to judge the film an appropriate stance against a ruling class that is increasingly corrupt and amoral. The columns of *l'Unità* attack *L'Osservatore Romano* for having started an ideological battle devoid of critical substance: a true anti-Fellini crusade. Then journalist Paolo Spriano (1960), in his article "*La sconcia vita dell'Osservatore*" ("The lewd life of the *Osservatore*"), rises to the defense of freedom of expression: "Defending the freedom of Fellini's film to circulate in theaters is the sacrosanct duty of democrats."

Not all the Catholic world is against the film. Father Angelo Arpa, Father Nazareno Taddei, Milanese Jesuits, Cardinal Giuseppe Siri, and other well-known Catholic critics—such as Mario Verdone, Gian Luigi Rondi and Diego Fabbri—do what they can to defend the director and his work. The survey that appeared in *Paese Sera* on 11 February entitled "Che ne pensate della 'Dolce vita'?" ("What do you think of La Dolce Vita?") includes famous representatives of Italian culture, among them Alberto Moravia, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Ennio Flaiano, and Leonida Repaci.

Pasolini's judgment is clear: "I very much love it (also because I am implicated a bit in this great work of Fellini's: with its often perturbing, often monstrous, often angelic beauty)." So is Moravia's: "I can say that this is Fellini's best film. It is one of the most meaningful and important works of our times."

With *8½* (1963), Fellini abandons the monstrosities of the social, baring his soul to explore the torments of a man and a film director. This time the majority of newspapers and magazines are filled with enthusiastic reactions. Tullio Kezich (1963) writes, "[Fellini's] grotesque and bitter analysis surpasses the limits of filmic biography, to become a brilliant creation," and Gian Luigi Rondi (1963, 23) states that the film "surpasses *La dolce vita* by a long shot in terms of its expressive maturity, visual richness, the sumptuousness of its rhythm, and its linguistic and technical ingenuity." For Lino Micciché (1963), it is an "undisputable masterpiece." Negative voices are scarce and limit themselves to underlining the difficulty of an overly cryptic message that derives from an old and presumptuous intellectualism.

In April 1963, *Bianco e nero* calls upon Giammatteo, Ernesto G. Laura, and Verdone to develop an analysis of the film. The first (Di Giammatteo 1963, 44–49) considers the film a new starting point for a director who, having had the courage to tell about himself and his own fears, now will have to turn his gaze on others. Having said that, however, he stresses the great freedom of cinematic language that breathes throughout the film, a language that tactfully breaks with tradition, without overturning it, limiting itself, instead, to assimilation. Verdone (1963, 50–63) notes the uniqueness of the work, which is difficult to compare to other films. A psychological film, he notes, that willingly and admiringly focuses in close-up on the ego. This introspective text encourages analysis of the artist's creative process, valorizing its liberatory nature. Verdone also stresses the aesthetic significance of the film and its stylistic novelty. Laura (1963, 54–57) focuses on the perfect fusion of reality and fantasy and identifies the film's central theme as the incapacity to give oneself completely to others, the awareness of one's own egotism—as well as of one's spiritual "morbidity" that manifests itself as weariness and compromise.

Federico of the Spirits and the Magical Aspect of Life

On October 16, 1965, *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965) is projected on the occasion of Catholic Cinema Week in Assisi. Following the projection, the conversation is moderated by Father Arpa, friend and consultant of the director, and by Laura, president of the Catholic film critics' association. The discussion, which lasts until three in the morning, immediately makes clear that Fellini has divided critics yet again. On October 22, the awaited Italian preview in Milan takes place. At the end of the screening, a strange atmosphere of confusion and doubt fills the room. In *Corriere Lombardo*, Roberto Serafin (1965) speaks of a disconcerted public. Aggeo Saviol (1965) in *L'Unità* emphasizes how "In *Giulietta degli spiriti*, at times, even amid the clamor of the spectacle as a whole, one is suspicious of a multicolored decorative alibi, more than a substantive enrichment of style." The presentation in Rome on October 23 does not garner consensus either. Gian Luigi Rondi (1965) in *Il Tempo* opens the article with a concise verdict: "a film with flashes of genius, but confused, rich with tacit symbols, somewhat contorted allegories, and psychoanalytic themes that are hardly resolved narratively." Aldo Tessadri (1965) is of a completely different opinion; in his column in *Alto Adige* (Bolzano), he defines the film as a multifaceted masterpiece, "a complex film; so full of surprises and amusing episodes that you could never get bored" and "one of the first modern films where reality is subordinate to a mode of expression."

In the dialogue between Fellini and Alberto Moravia published in *L'Espresso* on October 31, 1965 (12–13), Moravia expresses appreciation and reserve while Fellini tries to propose clarifications and objections. An article in *L'ora* (Palermo) on October 26, signed by Vittorio Albano, provides an anthology of all the critical writings that have so far appeared in the Italian and foreign press. It illustrates how many analyses had appeared in those days, the whirlwind of discordant voices and opinions. The critical attention given to the film points to the enormous importance of Fellini at this moment, after *La dolce vita* and *8½*.

Fellini (1965) does not seem to appreciate the critics' negative judgments about his last work and openly vents, attacking the press and comparing the critics to overbearing, not properly intelligent, sovereigns. In an interview that appeared in *Giornale di Sicilia* on December 3, the director affirms that while in New York they knew how to understand and appreciate the film, in Italy they stopped at the surface, at the exterior, without forcing themselves to analyze the thematic concept of the work in depth. This is because "in our country men don't want to know personal truths, they close doors in the face of every attempt at dialogue" (Cesareo 1965).

Between 1968 and 1969 Fellini takes on two projects. The first is an anthology film (*Tre passi nel delirio / Histoires extraordinaires / Spirits of the Dead* 1968) based loosely on the extraordinary tales of Edgar Allan Poe. Directed by Roger Vadim, Louis Malle, and Fellini, it is presented as a noncompeting film at Cannes during the May uprising. The Fellini episode, entitled "Toby Dammit" received positive reviews. Enzo Natta (1968) writes: "in this brilliant interpretation, witchy and caricatural at the same time, sarcastic and magical, Fellini knew how to recreate the profound and tragic meaning of death that can be found in Poe's extraordinary tales with a precise imaginative flair, adding to this the sense of moral decay and existential impotence that run through all his works."

With *Fellini: A Director's Notebook* (1969), produced by NBC, Fellini takes on the language of television with a "special" that seems journalistic but is overtaken by an impelling autobiographical need to tell of the failed project "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna" ("The Journey of G. Mastorna") and the preparation of *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969). Lino Micciché (1969), in the pages of *Avanti!*, summarizes the strong points of the television special: "There are, in fact, some sequences of rare beauty in Fellini's Notebook… in which Fellini, as has been said, doesn't attempt to objectify himself at all, but, at most, pass on his own fantastical world as objective reality. So we discover […] that the succession of […] exasperated surreal visions, of sex and solitude, of irony and tenderness, […] is, in fact, the way, the only way, Fellini knows how to see reality. It constitutes, therefore, a tormented and inevitable need to deform."

Fellini - Satyricon, drawn from Petronius Arbiter's remaining fragments, is a scathing cross-section of the Neronian age. The film is presented with much fanfare at the Venice Festival on September 4, 1969. In an interview given to Lietta Tornabuoni (1969), which appeared in *La Stampa* a few days later, Fellini finds himself yet again responding to the criticism of journalists. The film is seen as a betrayal of Petronius's realistic spirit, as a ruthless caricature of Ancient Rome, animated and dominated by Catholic moralism and an obsession with sin, death, and sex.

Dario Zanelli's (1969) judgment is positive; in the columns of *Il Resto del Carlino*, he describes the film as a pure fairytale, a marvelous fresco, but also as an allegory of the world today, a metaphoric portrait of the society to which we belong. Natalia Ginzburg's (1969) point of view is interesting and authoritative. In *La Stampa*, she stresses how in the murkier aspects of the film one can find true awareness of our human condition. For Ginzburg, *Fellini - Satyricon* offers us a bewitched and secret world, just as the truth within the darkness and flashes of consciousness is bewitched and secret.

Right after the release of *Fellini - Satyricon*, we witness a boom in Fellini studies, as noted by Lino Micciché (1970) in an article published in *Avanti!* While up till then, little to nothing had

been published in monograph form with the exception of the critical works of Renzo Renzi (1956), Angelo Solmi (1962), and Brunello Rondi (1965; not to be confused with his brother Gian Luigi); we witness a sudden flowering of the Fellinian bibliography.

The Mysterious Eternity of Infancy: From *I clowns* (1970) to *Prova d'orchestra* (*Orchestra Rehearsal* 1979)

Many critics have seen a moment of creative rethinking in the Fellinian filmography of the 1970s; a new, in some ways difficult, season, which coincides with a reawakening in him of nightmares and distressing presences that had seemed to exhaust themselves in the dark (or rather, the light) of his psychoanalytic reflections of the previous decade. Previewed at the Venice Festival, *I clowns* (1970) immediately garners conflicting reviews. In *Corriere della Sera*, Alberto Sala (1970) speaks positively about the elegy and apotheosis of a world that had often shown itself in the director's works; a clamorous and melancholy inventory of monsters and myths. Enthusiastic echoes also come from Gianni Castellano (1970), for whom the film is a work worthy of the wizard of cinema, rich with fantasy, paradoxes, poetic sensibility, and nostalgia for a disappearing world.

Giovanni Raboni (1970) is of a totally different opinion. In *Cineforum*, he accuses Fellini of having wanted to shelter himself in empty autobiographism: "in this sense *I clowns* is once again an autobiographical work, and autobiographical in a visceral sense; once more Fellini doesn't go in search of others, or the other, but just himself; and once again he doesn't do it to understand himself but to exhibit himself." In the same article, Raboni introduces the notion of the convolutedness of Fellinian cinema: "the film seems to me to be completely inserted [...] in the convoluted phase of Fellini's art which began after *Otto e mezzo*." In *Bianco e nero*'s section "Visti a Venezia" ("[Films] Seen in Venice"), the reviewer (Anon 1970, 11) absolves the director, acknowledging the extenuating circumstance of a subject that is too personal and intimate, and therefore difficult to handle with appropriate distance: "[...] this subject that Fellini loves so much that he, perhaps, can't manage to decant it sufficiently, is transmitted to us as a projection of a personal obsession, and... of himself and the mysterious eternity of his infancy."

With *Roma* (1972), from the first previews in magazines and newspapers, Fellini insists on the autobiographical aspect of his approach to the Capital, a city that, according to him, is fat, phony, vulgar, and raucous. In an article that appeared in the news and lifestyle weekly *Men*, Ettore Zocaro (1972, 5) anticipates what the film will be: "a rummaging through valid and spurious things that, surpassing any Proustian contemplation, becomes a chaotic Fellinian magma of oddities and sensations. A work inevitably soaked in fantasy, tenderness, and melancholy—at times vivacious, at times, biting—characteristics that are typical of all of Fellini's works."

It is a work that the critics seem to understand and appreciate, bewitched by the sure style of the accomplished director. In *L'Unità*, Ugo Casiraghi (1972) speaks of a vertical fresco, which, digging into memory, uncovers and brings to light some too often forgotten historic truths. In the columns of *Il Resto del Carlino,* Zanelli (1972) defines the film as dense, penetrating, highly original: the portrait of a world seen with the affection of a son and the distance of a stranger. In *Corriere della Sera,* Giovanni Grazzini (1972) identifies the strength of the film in the swirling vitality of its numerous themes: "a palette of a thousand colors, a film of furious richness, rapacious, and gluttonous. The most successful element is the harmonic coming and going between past and present in a continuous feast of fantasy, in tearing things up into emotions, in the certainty that Rome is incompatible with reason." On May 14, a shorter version (cut by 18 minutes) is presented at the Cannes Festival, earning warm applause from the public and critics.

In January 1973, Fellini begins filming *Amarcord*. The title is still a working one, the cast isn't yet definite, and the plot is a secret. Critics and journalists go out of their way to get a preview, and Fellini continuously betrays their expectations by thinking up unlikely updates. On October 7, after seeing a working copy of the film, Valerio Riva (1973, 12–13) offers his impressions in an article published in *L'Espresso*. Riva is one of the first to emphasize the political aspect of the film and the director's unexpected analysis of the psychological essence of Fascism.

On December 13, *Amarcord* is previewed for critics and journalists, and it is released in Italian theaters on December 18. It is immediately received positively by both the public and critics. Gian Luigi Rondi (1973), in *Il Tempo*, affirms that it is possible to find the key to all Fellinian poetics within this work. Fellini's signature style impels him to define the director as the only poet in Italian culture who has known how to transport from literature to cinema Proust's marvelous inventiveness. For Rondi, everything works in the film, from the alternating of happy, ironic, and melancholy passages to the narrative balance that shines through every sequence. Everything is enhanced by the constant presence of the highest technical and formal quality, from Giuseppe Rotunno's photography, to Nino Rota's music, and the precise performances of the actors.

In *La Stampa*, Ginzburg (1974) writes: "It seems to me the most beautiful of all of Fellini's films, and it also seems to me one of the most beautiful films that has ever been made." Alberto Moravia (1973, 23) in *L'Espresso* defines *Amarcord* as "one of Fellini's best films, both for its high level of expressiveness from beginning to end [...], and the truly classic finesse, measure, and resoluteness of its representation." A triumphant reception at Cannes in May of 1973 makes clear that the film is destined for international success, and its success culminates in Fellini's fourth Oscar for best foreign film on April 9, 1975.

Il Casanova di Federico Fellini (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976), following serious production problems, is released in theaters on December 7, 1976. As usual, critics are divided among those who celebrate its visionary and symbolic character and those, instead, who dismiss it as the umpteenth Fellinian representation of the ultimate void. On December 11, in *Il Giorno*, Morandini (1976) crowns it as the best work after *8½*, precisely because it is free of the usual Fellini-isms. The film is notable for its stylistic inventions in mixing, in an ingenious and balanced way, the horrible with the tender, the fantastic with the ironic, easily passing from caricature to the visionary. In *Rinascita,* Mino Argentieri (1976, 25) highlights the film's frantic and dramatic nature, capable of succumbing to unexpected lyric, melancholic, and nostalgic openings. For Argentieri, Fellini is a marvelous enchanter, becoming bleaker with time, a creator of oppressive visions, and his Casanova loses himself in undertakings that are devoid of light or vitality.

Moravia (1976), in the pages of *L'Espresso*, speaks of the work of substitution carried out by the director as he passes from a real eighteenth century to an oneiric one, made up of a fascinating mix of eroticism and filthiness, monstrosity and madness, in which realism is surpassed thanks to the insistent recourse to cultural deformation. In *La Repubblica*, Kezich (1976) defines the film as "a kind of journey to the end of the night," an "escape from the commitment of his film-confessions," and the director's "coldest and most distanced film."

Fierce criticism is not lacking. In *Il Giorno*, Ferdinando Camon (1977) speaks in no uncertain terms of "a hodgepodge of scraps" and of an "impossible and unrealistic attempt to extend his own world of private traumas to all of our world and our time." For Lino Micciché (1976) in *Avanti!* it is a disappointing film that reveals the director's sterile imprisonment in an infantile and reductive Casanovian eroticism. For Guglielmo Biraghi (1976), writing rather floridly in *Il Messaggero*, the film is a step backward, since the disrupted universe shown by Fellini "collapses onto itself, forming a turbid pond from which the gaudy trash of spectacularized invention emerges haphazardly, pushed beyond the point of no return."

Despite some harsh criticism, in the end what seems to be most convincing in the film is the superimposition of artificial structures that are used to make antirealism the true protagonist of Fellinian reflections on the eighteenth century. The recourse to theatricality never falls into suffocating artificiality but maintains a surprising vitality, precisely in virtue of this overt and flaunted recourse to the false and the absurd as a means of interpretation of a historic period.

In 1977, overwhelmed by production problems while making *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980), the director, in collaboration with Brunello Rondi, develops a project for television entitled *Prova d'orchestra* (*Orchestra Rehearsal* 1978). As usual, in his first interviews, Fellini diminishes its importance, emphasizing the low budget of the project and the speed of production (16 days of shooting). In October 1978, a screening is organized at the Quirinal Palace, where, in addition to Sandro Pertini, president of the republic, Giulio Andreotti, prime minister, Pietro Ingrao, president of the chamber of deputies, and Paolo Grassi, the president of RAI, are in attendance. The press talks about the general approval of those present, who stress the importance of the Fellinian "parable," capable of describing the rediscovery of a collective consciousness reached through the prevailing of harmony over confusion.

In the chorus of praise, the only controversial judgment belongs to Ingrao, who contests the concept of regeneration after chaos (he assumes that is what the film's ending presents). According to him, in fact, change comes slowly and laboriously through small and large achievements. The film triggers an intense debate among the viewers, who, shaken by the tragic events of the preceding months (the kidnapping and murder of Christian Democrat Prime Minister Aldo Moro—events that have a great impact on the film), are divided about the Fellinian message. Everyone, however, is in agreement that the film is an apologue, meant to highlight the great weaknesses of Italian society. Readings become multiple, and the interpretive frenzy strikes every aspect of the film, ultimately exalting its civic value, which for once prevails over the aesthetic one. Finally, the ending provokes a whirlwind of possible interpretations. What does this orchestra conductor represent?

Mario Guidotti (1978), columnist of *Il Giorno,* seeks an interpretation that is not just political: "Fellini said that the horrible events that we are witnessing are not limited to politics, but rather more profound upheavals, disasters, lacerations. It would therefore be wrong to treat the film as mere political condemnation. The condemnation is first and foremost a moral one." In *Il Tempo,* Gian Luigi Rondi (1978) introduces a long interview with Fellini, calling it "the highest poetry—a passionate warning call, an unsettling and dramatic meditation that will leave the deepest trace in Italy's culture and society." Writer and critic Leone Piccioni (1978) praises the film from another perspective: "Fellini's exciting film [...] places sociopolitical reading last, for first and foremost it showcases so many poetic, technical, rhythmic, inspirational elements through its rare and happy ability to synthesize [...] as to be ranked among the most beautiful films of these years, and among Fellini's best." Politician Ugo La Malfa (1978), president of the Republican Party, acknowledges the great ethical value of the film, which "symbolically and with great artistry contains and expresses the extreme plea of a democratic conscience."

According to Alberto Moravia (quoted in Cirio 1978, 177), *Prova d'orchestra* tells once more of the moods, feelings, and fears of the director more than it reflects on the sociopolitical situation of the country: "From his many other films we already knew that Fellini harbors a particular affection for the ugly, if not monstrous, world of the petty bourgeoisie, endowed nevertheless with certain positive qualities, such as probity and an artisanal modesty; he has an underlying tendency toward Catholic pessimism; that is, (let's call it) 'existential' conservatism, with a nearly obsessive accentuation of a sense of death and sin."

The 1980s: Ever Darkening Visions Amid an Industry in Decline

Fellini prepares himself to face a new decade in which the film industry, oppressed by the necessity to compete with television, appears to be undergoing a deep crisis, further enhanced by the chaotic and unregulated proliferation of private broadcasters. The first shooting day of *La città delle donne* is May 10, 1979. From the first days of its production, attacks rain down on Fellini from feminists, who fail to understand the work done by the director on some themes dear to the movement. In particular, *Quotidiano donna* (Anon 1979), the feminist weekly started in 1978 as a supplement to the *Quotidiano dei laboratori* of Avanguardia Operaia, dedicated two entire pages to the film in June—eight months before its release. The title of the article perfectly encapsulates the climate of the times and its accompanying preconceptions: "Fellini's latest wants to sell off feminism."

The film was labeled antifeminist, in disregard of its grotesque, comic, and provocative intent—as well as its critique and parody of masculinity—in particular, implicitly, the director's own. In the daily *Il Giorno* published on Sunday, March 30, 1980, two days after the release of the film, Adele Cambria, a major figure in alternative culture, close to the left and to Marco Pannella's radical party, and a supporter of the feminist movement from its beginning, attacks Fellini and his film. Cambria is not new to attacks aimed at the director, especially his style. Already in an article published in *Effe* in December 1973, entitled "F.F., antifeminist of the month," she attacked the representation of the female body in *Amarcord* as "opulent, ransacked, pricked, sucked, fondled, impaled, commodified" (21).

She was in fact called by the director to collaborate on gathering material for the film—a collaboration that did not succeed. Despite Fellini's desire to involve her in the preparation of the film, Cambria strikes hard, debasing his message and reducing it to a mere product of sports-bar subculture, with whimsical philosophical propositions. According to the journalist's reading, the woman is stripped of her human aspect and reduced to a grotesque mask, the director's denigrating will revealing itself in every sequence of the film.

Fellini had tried to explain his point of view before the release of the film in a long interview he gave to Eugenio Scalfari (1979), published in *La Repubblica* on July 17, but it stood little chance against emerging prejudice. The film is released in Italian theaters on March 28, 1980. Kezich (1980) emphasizes that, despite strong feminist critique, the film is completely on the side of the woman. His analysis focuses on the film's references to "Il viaggio di G. Mastorna," "perfectly analogous in structure, except that this is a film about women, and the other (if we ever see it) will be a film about death."

Gian Luigi Rondi (1980) also speaks of the dark nature of the film: "*La città delle donne* is a film about darkness, about the relationship with the black, unknown part, with the night, with water; whatever rational explanation you try to give it cannot but deprive it of its enigmatic, sphinx-like side, which is its most tangible."

From an aesthetic perspective, Felice Laudadio (1980) notes that Fellini's "dream," like all dreams, is rich with plot twists, with sudden and unexpected sites, with suffused and blinding lights, with nights and fog, with witches' sabbaths and luminescent carnivals, secret games, and violent and uncontrollable emotions.

E la nave va (*And the Ship Sails On* 1983) is presented as a noncompeting film at the Venice Film Festival in 1983. The numbers are impressive: 107 actors with distinctive roles, 171 extras, a troupe of 150 people, 90 000 meters of exposed negative, 1500 costumes, and 700 pairs of shoes (Rinaudo 1983). Immediately the interpretative race begins: is it a political metaphor or a philosophic allegory? Kezich (1983, 82–84) seeks to clarify the "inner workings of "Fellini-thought,"

declaring that *E la nave va* "is completely inspired by the culture of the profound (dreams, the subconscious), to which Fellini has always turned. As in dreams, the *bel canto*, the cruise ship, the world war, the ghosts and the massacres … symbolize something [beyond themselves], something difficult to interpret and analyze."

But, as always, Fellini divides critics: "A great Fellini, the greatest since *La dolce vita, 8½,* and *Amarcord*" (Grazzini 1983). "Dark, sad, melancholy, different from Fellini's usual, and I can't make myself love this Fellini without reserve" (Biraghi 1983). "Between a moving beginning and end, you can sense the painful haze of the doubting artist, who no longer knows how to narrate, and thus wants to communicate his anxiety to you" (Reggiani 1983). "Beautiful, finally free of personal shackles and worries about the future of humanity, here is a film that allows us to rediscover the pleasure of cinema" (Cosulich 1983). "I am not a fan of Fellini, for authors like him who always put themselves in their work don't resonate with me, and this film leaves me even colder than the others" (Caprara 1983). "I don't know if this is a more or less important Fellini work, whether it's very beautiful or not. I know that it's different, and that's enough" (Morandini 1983).

Ginger e Fred (1985) is presented at a special event at the Quirinal Palace on November 17, 1985 before some 30 esteemed spectators, including Francesco Cossiga, president of the republic, journalist and friend Sergio Zavoli, deputy Prime Minister Arnaldo Forlani, and Giulio Andreotti, at the time minister of foreign affairs. The film debuted in Italy on January 21, with a screening at Teatro Sistina.

While appreciating the film as a whole, critics stress the bitter and crepuscular atmosphere, charged with nearly apocalyptic rage that permeates the entire film: "If Fellini was, as Goffredo Fofi affirms, the great clown of Italian cinema, the clown has decidedly lost his desire to make us laugh. He has become the saddest clown that the cinema-circus has ever produced" (Cosulich 1986). "Even where the film accepts feelings and uses them as instruments to let us see and feel, it aims above all at indignation: with the impetus of a smack and the violence of the crack of a whip" (Gian Luigi Rondi 1986). "Fellini has reduced the margins of self-amusement in his work to a minimum. His narrative remains cheerful but also distant and melancholy" (Manciotti 1986). "*Ginger e Fred* ultimately ends up as a resolute, even resentful record of contemporaneous events, and, at the same time, invective filled with disdain, with condemnation for a world and for certain ways of behaving that have degenerated into a shameful paste, rampant with vulgarity and cynicism" (Borelli 1986).

The American reception is much warmer. On July 28, at the Titus Theater in New York, on the occasion of the awarding of a prize by the Directors Guild of America, *Ginger e Fred* is shown in a private screening before many illustrious representatives of the cultural sector and show business, including Elia Kazan, Andy Warhol, Kurt Vonnegut, Peter Yates, Alan Pakula, and Robert Duvall—followed by tremendous applause and demonstrations of esteem and admiration from those present.[1]

"Has Speaking Poorly of Fellini Become Impossible?" The Final Films

Awaiting the release of *Ginger e Fred*, Fellini announces that he has signed an agreement for a new project inspired by the unfinished novel *Amerika*, written by Franz Kafka in 1927. Hence, the film *Intervista* (1987), thought of as a television project for the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Cinecittà, is born. In the end, it becomes a film (or as Fellini himself has called it a "little film") for theaters, with a highly idiosyncratic relation to Kafka.

Intervista is presented as a noncompeting film at Cannes on May 18, 1987, achieving predictable success in front of a warm audience of cinephiles. While the festival betting pool speculates

about the possible winner, dividing the predictions equally between *Oci ciornie* (*Dark Eyes* 1987) by Nikita Mikhalkov and *La famiglia* (*The Family* 1987) by Ettore Scola, Fellini enjoys a triumphal reception. Critics immediately speak of an autobiographical, nostalgic, colloquial work. For Grazzini (1987) *Intervista* "is a characteristic film of a meticulous Fellini; its black humor, that has for some time accompanied the director, and its breathlessness recall thousands of elements, both humorous and painful, of Fellini's mythology and makes fun of them in order to exorcise them, identifying with a Cinecittà that has never before been so completely conjured up as a factory of charlatanism and poetry."

For Kezich (1987), we find ourselves before a Fellini with his "guard down," emotionally at the mercy of a cumbersome past, in constant search of another journey toward nothingness, still aware that, "stronger than any bitterness for fleeting time, stronger than faith in artisanal work as the only therapy against the dissolution of everything, is the biological root of Fellini's poetics: the acceptance of seeing the world from a philosophical perspective that could be summed up as: 'I joke, therefore I am.'"

In general, the reviews are positive: "I have the impression that seen again ten years from now, *Intervista* will appear an illuminating historical document" (Bolzoni 1987). "… *Intervista* is an accomplished work. Moreover, it's a most beautiful film, among the most captivating of Fellini's latest" (Borelli 1987). "…*Intervista* is a magnificent cinema lesson. It is in all respects, because of its masterful use of cinema's expressive means, but also because of what cinema is, in its making and in its projection—akin to a sediment of memory" (Cosulich 1987). We shall close with the words of Alberto Moravia (1987, 23), who, reflecting on the concepts of past and present, memory and remembrance, affirms: "The unique thing about Fellini's art is that he sees its present, all the presents of his films, as pasts to which … he attributes the immediacy of the present."

To celebrate Fellini and his film, the jury at Cannes, presided over by Yves Montand, invents a new procedure—awarding a noncompeting film—while in Moscow the jury, led by Robert De Niro, assigns it the grand prize, as it did for *8½* in 1963. It is a great success in Locarno and Montreal as well and is met with standing ovations by the public. Not bad at all for what Fellini called a "little film."

Fellini's last work is inspired by Ermanno Cavazzoni's novel *Il poema dei lunatici* ("The Lunatics' Poem"), which came out in 1987. *La voce della luna* (*The Voice of the Moon* 1990) speaks once more of the provinces, seen through the eyes of two surreal, somewhat crazy, but poetic characters: the prefect Gonnella, played by a paranoid Paolo Villaggio, and Salvini, played by a spaced-out Roberto Benigni.

The film, which cost 20 billion lire, is released in grand style on February 1, 1990, with 200 copies. Initially the critics seem embarrassed, and their reports reveal a certain caution, spurred by the fear of preemptive judgment: "I would like to see it again very soon. I am sure of very few things after the screening of Fellini's new film, but of this I am" (Kezich 1990). "I confess that I dislike writing about the film without having seen it a second time, as its fragmented construction and disorganized richness would require" (Morandini 1990). "I include myself among those who, confronted with Fellini's film, abdicate, in some way, all critical sense" (Bignardi 1990). Caprara's (1990) biting criticism stands out; in the pages of *Il Mattino* (Naples), he declares: "This concentrate of magic infantilism seems like a Czechoslovakian festival film, like a hodgepodge Jakubisko who got it in his head to imitate Fellini," and he continues "inconsistent, boring, with a backward and vacuous little moral at the end." But Caprara's harsh words are followed by largely positive reviews, so much so that in *Panorama* Finzi (1990, 63) asks, "Has speaking poorly of Fellini become impossible? Have the heroic times of fierce (but vital and regenerative) discussion about *8½*, *Le notti di Cabiria*, or *Prova d'orchestra* been buried for good under a thick blanket of reverential deference?" There is a united response to the question from critics, friends, and

collaborators, as if to strongly and decidedly affirm that even this last work has, and glorifies, Fellini's poetic touch: "Yet Fellini is so very sincere. His latest film, *La voce della luna*, which is perhaps his most beautiful, reveals this in a painful and almost defenseless way. But Fellini's candor is too profound to be simple" (Citati 1990). "*La voce della luna* is a heartrending and most beautiful film. Those who expect a film that makes them laugh will be disappointed, because Fellini no longer wants to make us laugh" (Angelucci 1990). Grazzini (1990, 18) believes the film to be: "made … with an even more accentuated refusal of every conventional structure … with an undiminished and rhapsodic talent for inventing figures, environments, situations, and, even more so, with unparalleled visual quality."

On October 31, 1993, Fellini takes his leave, causing a deep emotional response throughout the world. The director is remembered with gratitude and sincere affection from colleagues and members of the cultural world, but it is the heartfelt and spontaneous tribute of the public that strikes the press most. Italy and the world prepare for the celebration. The front pages of newspapers are filled with memories, in-depth analyses, and interviews all about the seeming void left by one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century, but filled by the priceless cultural legacy that he left to all of us. "Fellini was a man who changed the landscape and our memory. He created a world for himself and for us" (Guerra 1993).

Note

1 A short while earlier, on June 10, 1985, during the production of *Ginger e Fred,* Fellini was celebrated in New York by the Film Society of Lincoln Center with an evening event at Avery Fisher Hall. Along with the director, Anouk Aimée, Marcello Mastroianni, Giulietta Masina, Alberto Sordi, Donald Sutherland, Martin Scorsese, and Woody Allen were in attendance.

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Fellini's Reception in France

Albert Sbragia

In a brief letter sent in September 2004 to the British film journal *Sight & Sound*, Michel Ciment, longtime editor of the French film journal *Positif*, replied to the contention that Federico Fellini had become dismissed in critical circles "as sentimental, overblown, and self-indulgent" with a *not so in France* (100). Noting that Fellini's films still regularly played in Paris to great success, he added that in a 2002 film critics' survey of best directors and movies for *Positif*'s 50th-anniversary issue, involving 87 participants, Fellini was listed as third favorite director behind Kubrick and Bergman, with 10 different films mentioned. *Positif*'s readers were even more enthusiastic, rating Fellini second behind Kubrick. What Ciment's comments do not reveal, however, is that Fellini's critical reception in France during those 50 years was uneven, often contentious, and consistently positive only toward the end of his career and after his death. This essay will chart some of the reasons why this was so.

Critics and Polemics

Fellini had been appreciated in France in the late 1940s and early 1950s as a neorealist screenwriter and assistant director, especially for his work with Roberto Rossellini. His first assessment as a director by those critics in the nascent and rival film journals, the Catholic *Cahiers du cinéma* (founded in 1951) and the leftist–surrealist *Positif* (founded in 1952), was positive, albeit with slight reservations. *I vitelloni* (1953), the director's first film to be screened in France, in April of 1954, was judged by André Martin (1954, 50) in *Cahiers* to be the work of a creative and original storyteller, although its truth is "tarnished" at times by the tricks of Fellini the screenwriter. In *Positif*, Roger Tailleur's and director Bernard Chardère's review (1954) is even more favorable: they find the film so brimming with detailed and participatory realism that "it is impossible not to like it" (68). The discussions of Fellini in France would heat up dramatically after the Paris screening of *La strada* (1954) at the beginning of 1955. The contours of what would become an ongoing debate about the director were conditioned by several factors: the broader Franco-Italian debate on Italian neorealism and its future; the battle between Catholic–humanist and Marxist–

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke,
Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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progressive forces in French film criticism; and, perhaps most significantly, the controversial *politique des auteurs* approach to filmmakers which came to dominate among the younger critics at *Cahiers du cinéma*.

The interventions of André Bazin were crucial for the promotion and defense of Fellini in France (and in Italy) during this period. Bazin was France's most eminent Catholic film critic during the 1950s, and in 1952 he cofounded with Jacques Doniol-Valcroze and Joseph-Marie Lo Duca what would become the most famous of all film journals, the *Cahiers du cinéma*. Bazin sought to adapt Emmanuel Mounier's personalism, with its focus on the existential individual at the core of his philosophy of social activism and ontological transcendence, to his ideal of aesthetic expression in the cinema. Bazin saw Italian neorealism as a revolutionary ontological film practice aimed at capturing the continuity and ambiguity of reality. He also saw neorealism as an evolutionary practice and became a staunch defender of both Rossellini and Fellini against the accusations by Guido Aristarco and other Italian Marxist critics that their cinema was deviating from, or betraying, the essence and social conscience of neorealist filmmaking. Bazin's early essays on neorealism, beginning with the seminal 1948 "Cinematic Realism and the Italian School of the Liberation" ("Le réalisme cinématographique et l'école italienne de la libération"), published in Mounier's liberal Catholic journal *L'Esprit*, were ecumenical in praise (Rossellini, Luchino Visconti, Vittorio De Sica, Augusto Genina, Pietro Germi, and Renato Castellani) and, given the fact that the themes of Nazi-Fascist resistance or social reconstruction dominated in many of these films, they generally avoided political polemic. Things began to change for Bazin with the 1952 releases of De Sica's *Umberto D.* (1952) and Rossellini's *Europa '51* (1952) in Italy. In reviewing these films, which Bazin admired as different manifestations of neorealism's continuing maturation of the ontology of the image, the French critic bemoans the political attacks in Italy against each of them, which especially in the case of De Sica's film (attacked from both the left and the right) negatively affected its reception in France (Bazin 2011, 114–120).

Fellini's *La Strada* was met with even more controversy in Italy. The raucous protests at the 1954 Venice Film Festival when it was awarded a Silver Lion over Visconti's *Senso* (1954) were accompanied by a series of critiques in Italian leftist journals such as *Il Contemporaneo* and Aristarco's *Cinema Nuovo*. Aristarco famously labeled Fellini's film anachronistic and recurring to the "subtlest poisons" of prewar literature (quoted in Bondanella and Gieri 1991, 204–205). Conversely, in his review of "*La strada*" in the May 1955 issue of *L'Esprit*, Bazin sought to establish the film's ontological bonafides. Fellini's great achievement in *La strada* is how effectively he "enables" his viewers to see objects in their fullest reality. The critic then abruptly veers into political territory, taking to task Aristarco, Luigi Chiarini, and *Cinema Nuovo* for seeking to turn neorealism into "their substitution for 'socialist realism,' whose theoretical and practical barrenness unfortunately does not need to be demonstrated" (Bazin 2011, 151). Engaging his differences with Aristarco and Chiarini head on, Bazin squarely places Fellini in the Rossellinian camp, admitting that each director has veered from a filmmaking of "social responsibility" to one "spiritual destiny," but asserting that each nonetheless furthers what is perhaps neorealism's greatest cinematic achievement, the development of a phenomenological "aesthetic that informs the action" (152). Bazin's essay on Fellini serves as a primer for his eloquent "In Defense of Rossellini" ("Difesa di Rossellini") published a few months later (August 1955) in the pages of *Cinema Nuovo*.

Unlike in Italy, in France, *La strada* was received favorably across a broad political spectrum. In November of 1955, Georges Sadoul, France's most respected Marxist film critic, also intervened in *Cinema Nuovo* to express his opinion of Fellini's film. Although his first reaction to the film had been negative, and although he criticizes the decadent aspects of Fellini's lyricism, Sadoul admits that he came to appreciate the film's positive social influence when he heard that women and men both had seen in the film a strong critique of domestic exploitation and violence against

women, concluding that, this being the case, "the film has not served reactionary forces and its positives outweigh the negatives" (quoted in Aristarco 1975, 663). Sadoul and Bazin had clashed over realism in the cinema, and their approaches to *La strada* are diametrically different, but they each argue that *La strada* is not in conflict with the goals of neorealism. French criticism had been good to Fellini, and he was not beyond instrumentalizing it. In one of his forays into the *La strada* debate—an open letter to critic Massimo Mida (Massimo Puccini), probably written with assistance from Brunello Rondi (Pacchioni 2014, 103)—Fellini reminds his Italian leftist detractors that an array of French "Communist" intellectuals and critics (Louis Aragon, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, Jean de Baroncelli, and Sadoul himself) had all effusively praised the film. Fellini even goes so far as to indicate that *La strada* is grounded in Mounier's assertion that all socialism rests ultimately on "private relationships, relationships between man and man" (quoted in Bondanella and Gieri 1987, 211–212).

Perhaps the most curious and enthusiastic reaction on the French left to *La strada* comes in an early review (March–April 1955) by the surrealist Robert Benayoun in the pages of *Positif*. As if trying to snatch Fellini from his Catholic rivals at *Cahiers*, Benayoun (26–28) addresses them directly, asserting that *La strada* is in no way a "Christian film," and that they should renounce their admiration for Rossellini or any other Italian director for "there is no one in all of Italian cinema … who comes close to Fellini." Benayoun was to touch a raw nerve with regard to Fellini at *Cahiers*. The thorniness of Fellini's reception at the journal had to do in part with the institution and promotion during that same period of the *politique des auteurs* by François Truffaut and the other young critics at the magazine who would go on to constitute the *Nouvelle Vague* movement (Éric Rohmer, Jacques Rivette, Claude Chabrol, and Jean-Luc Godard). In a controversial essay, "A Certain Tendency of French Cinema" ("Une certaine tendence du cinéma français" 1954), Truffaut denigrated the traditional French *cinema de qualité* for privileging the screenwriter (*scénariste*) and the literary aspects of a film. He countered this with an "*auteur*'s cinema" (26) in which the director is foremost. The film *auteur* came to signify a director of rare talent who is able consistently to express his unique vision through the cinematic means available to him, *mise-en-scène* in particular. What would become most pernicious for Fellini in the *politique* would be the allegiance of the young *Cahiers* critics *solely* to their few chosen *auteurs* and to *all* of their films, while all other directors were judged to be mere *metteurs en scène*, regardless of the individual merits of any of their films. For Italian cinema, the *auteur* was Rossellini, to the exclusion of everyone else. As Truffaut put it: "I am among those who refuse to believe in the existence of the Italian cinema except for Rossellini" (quoted in de Baecque 1991, 166).

Shortly after *La strada* had screened in Paris, Truffaut underscored the tensions between the old and new guard critics at *Cahiers* by quipping, in the June 1955 issue, that the Parisian film question of the moment was "Êtes-vous stradiste ou anti-stradiste?" (are you for or against *La strada*?), and then proceeding to list on which side each member of the editorial staff of *Cahiers* fell (241). The point of contention was exacerbated by the fact that Rossellini's *Viaggio in Italia* (*Journey to Italy* 1954), much assailed in Italy and by the French left, had also been recently released, and the stakes were high, because the question soon became at *Cahiers* which film best represented the so-called "road" to modern filmmaking. Bazin had from the beginning sought to validate both directors by pairing the two, typically in a relationship of filiation. On the pages of the journal, the pro-Fellinian camp began pushing for a more equal footing for Fellini with respect to Rossellini in what *Cahiers* historian Antoine de Baecque (1991, 241) refers to as a process of "*auteurification*." The April 1955 *Cahiers* cover photo is of *La strada* with the caption that Fellini's film is the great film event of 1955. On the other hand, in the same issue Rivette asserts in his "Letter on Rossellini" ("Lettre sur Rossellini") the vast superiority of Rossellini's art vis-à-vis the "daubings of a Soldati, Wheeler, Fellini" (quoted in Hillier 1985, 199). In May comes Rohmer's

"The Land of the Miracle" ("La Terre du Miracle"), the journal's other key essay on Rossellini, which reasserts Fellini's discipleship with regard to Rossellini and the artistic distance between them. Most important, Rossellini, especially as director of *Viaggio in Italia*—not Fellini—was the model for the aspiring filmmakers at *Cahiers*. It is Rossellini's film, declares Rivette, "in which we can at last recognize what we were vaguely awaiting…. Here is our cinema, those of us who in our turn are preparing to make films" (205).

Fellini's status did not improve with the release of *Il bidone* (*The Swindle* 1955). He had been assaulted once again by Italian critics, and the critical reception among the French was now decidedly mixed and at times outright hostile. Chardère (1956) lights into *Il bidone* for its simplistic schematism and sentimentalizing pathos. Admitting that he was almost alone in France in not liking *La strada*, he hopes that with *Il bidone* he will "see the camp that regards Fellini with mistrust grow" (60). Truffaut, in a short reportage from the Venice Film Festival had this to say: "I find all of Fellini's films irritating: *Lo sceicco bianco* because it is petty, *Agenzia matrimoniale* because of its feigned sensitivity, *I vitelloni* because of its limitations, *La strada* because of its laborious and literary punctiliousness." *Il bidone* was no better for Truffaut except for the fact that Hollywood star Broderick Crawford occupies its visual foreground. "*Il bidone* combines the qualities of these four films to the extent that Fellini's faults, which are always the same—lack of substance, gross symbolism, technical errors—become secondary, are miles away in the depth of field, masked and diluted by the sublime features of Broderick Crawford" (quoted in Fava and Viganò 1985, 89). Bazin, who praises *Il bidone* in a review for *France Observateur* as a further confirmation of the genius manifested in *La strada*, opens that review by sadly acknowledging that his French colleagues had joked, at the Venice screening, about the film itself being a *bidon* or "swindle" (Bazin 2011, 180–183). He now found himself having to defend Fellini on two fronts, the left and his young colleagues at *Cahiers*.

Bazin's championing of otherwise neglected or despised filmmakers, his attention to their evolution as artists, and his advocacy of a personal approach to cinema had certainly contributed to the rise of auteurism at *Cahiers*. But Bazin himself was by no means a militant auteurist. His essay "De la politique des auteurs" (Bazin 1957a) argues for a pluralistic film criticism that focuses on the cinematic works themselves in addition to a reliance on auteurism. Bazin felt the time had come publicly to distance himself from the auteurist excesses of his younger colleagues at *Cahiers*. And yet, only a few months later, he felt the need to apply the term to Fellini in his essay on Fellini's next film, *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957). Bazin's essay "Cabiria: The Voyage to the End of Neorealism" ("*Cabiria* ou le voyage au bout du néo-réalisme" 1957b) was his only study on Fellini to be published in *Cahiers*. It was also his final essay on Italian cinema. It is in the climate of Fellini's failing critical favor that Bazin opens his essay, declaring that he is fearful of further breaches in French support for Fellini's art, specifically regarding "that part of the 'elite' which supports Fellini almost in spite of itself." Constrained to admire *La strada* and under even more constraint from its austerity and outcast status to admire *Il bidone*, Bazin expects these viewers now to criticize *Le notti di Cabiria* for being "'too well made': a film in which practically nothing is left to chance, a film that is clever—artful even." The risk is that the "brilliant perfection" of Fellini's film might be perceived as mere "facility" or even a "betrayal" (Bazin 2011, 195–196). The accusations of betrayal that Bazin anticipates here concern not *Cinema Nuovo*'s criterion of "socialist realism," but phenomenological openness (where the image is one of the things left to chance), cinematic austerity, and outcast status, traits that the young critics at *Cahiers* championed (as did Bazin) in their most beloved Italian *auteur*, Roberto Rossellini. In this context, the assignation of the term *auteur* to Fellini is part of Bazin's defense targeted at his junior colleagues: "I do not intend to repeat what has been written about Fellini's message. It has, anyway, been noticeably the same since *I vitelloni*. This is not to be taken as a sign of sterility. On the contrary,

while variety is the mark of 'metteurs en scène,' it is unity of inspiration that connotes true '*auteurs*'" (199). Bazin invokes the *politique des auteurs* for Fellini as a prescient rebuttal to what would become one of the major complaints about his work across his career, excessive repetition of the same messages, themes, images, and obsessions—precisely that which makes a Fellini film so unmistakably author-marked or "felliniesque."

Bazin's pro-Fellinian view did not convince most of the director's critics. In *Positif*, the attitude toward Fellini was aggressive and hostile (Gili 2009, 6), with Bazin's opinions on the director often contested directly. Truffaut did admire *Le notti di Cabiria*, though, and slowly began to turn toward a lasting admiration of Fellini. Although Chabrol's top 10 films voting at *Cahiers* indicated he was no fan of Fellini during the mid-1950s, his early films, the first of the New Wave proper, demonstrate obvious Fellinian influences that his leftist critics at *Premier Plan* were the first to point out. Raymond Borde accused Chabrol of wanting to be the "French Fellini" with "the ideas of a petty bourgeois of 1930" while "lack[ing] that sense of cinema which the wily Fellini possesses to the highest degree" (Borde, Buache, and Curtelin 1962, 6). Freddy Buache lamented *Le Beau Serge*'s imitation of *Le notti di Cabiria*'s "exaltation of redemptive resignation" when what was needed instead was a more engaged cinema faithful "to the true problems of the contemporary world" (39). The other young Turks at *Cahiers* retained their hostility to Fellini. In the June 1958 issue, Rivette would praise Rossellini's austere style while condemning Fellini's "exhibitionism" with "the most commonplace elements of neorealism, paraded as if on a fan" (quoted in de Baecque 1991, 244). One month later in the July issue, at the height of *Cahiers*' embrace of Ingmar Bergman, Godard (1986, 78) would undercut the closing argument of Bazin's *Cabiria* essay—that the film's final shot constitutes "the boldest and most powerful shot in the whole of Fellini's work"—by noting that the technique had already been used, "but with a thousand times more force and poetry," by Bergman in *Summer with Monika*.

The death of Bazin in November 1958, and Fellini's turn toward a more "spectacular" and "suspect" (read non-Rossellinian) filmmaking with *La dolce vita* (1960), resulted in his further decline from grace and eventually from interest in the pages of *Cahiers*. *La dolce vita* won the *Palme d'Or* at Cannes in 1960 in the midst of the most vociferous opposition and only thanks to the dogged support of jury chairman Georges Simenon and judge Henry Miller.[1] It was all but ignored in the pages of *Cahiers*. Most ominously, if the Fellini of the 1950s had existed in Rossellini's shadow at the journal, the Fellini of the 1960s would exist in Antonioni's. Although the love of Antonioni was not unanimous at *Cahiers*, the mantle of modernity for Italian cinema at the journal, "the new cinema" as Doniol-Valcroze (1960) termed it with regard to *L'avventura* (1960), was shifting from Rossellini to Antonioni, bypassing Fellini. In the May 1962 issue, dedicated to Italian cinema, the *politique* delivered its final blow to the depleted Fellini-*auteur* camp. A survey of "Fifty-four Italian Filmmakers" (*Cahiers du cinéma* 1962) lists only "three greats … Antonioni, Rossellini, and Visconti." In the second category are placed "pêle-mêle," other directors of greater or lesser worth who constitute the overall look of Italian cinema, among whom are "some unique talents, but whose genius has not affirmed itself to the point of being considered to be essential (Fellini, for example)" (52). The brief assessment of Fellini's career speaks of *Cahiers*' ever-growing mistrust: "A past master in wielding moral ideas, nurturing the motifs dearest to him to the point of saturation, Fellini now chases the dream of a gaudy and baroque spectacle meant to leave us transfixed with amazement. No matter: to such a genius of the blockbuster we are free to prefer the screenwriter of a simple world, discovered by Rossellini" (58). The essay ends with the ultimate of auteurist jabs: Fellini was at his best not as a director but as a screenwriter, not an *auteur* but a "*scénariste*."

The final throes of engaged Fellini support at *Cahiers* during this period are to a large extent the work of odd-man-out Pierre Kast. There was his glowing review of *8½* in the July 1963 issue,

and a Fellini dossier with a fawning interview, "The Capacity for Wonder" ("La capacité d'émerveillement"), conducted on the bustling set of *Giulietta degli spiriti*, appeared in the March 1965 issue (*Cahiers*, 164; translated and reprinted in Sarris 1967). Kast's interview is an important French document in the construction of what would come to be known as Fellinian auteurism: the filmmaker as the magmatic creative genius of unfettered imagination transcending all tethers of critical or political dicta, "not *against* conventions, but *beyond* conventions," as Kast puts it (Sarris 1967, 147). Asked by Kast about his viewing habits (Resnais, Godard?), Fellini, as usual, claimed that he did not watch much cinema, ascribing this fact to "laziness." Kast transforms this reply into what he calls the self-sufficiency of Fellini's cinematic world: "it seeks its own laws, and has no need of knowing how other things evolve" (148). At the center of the interview is Fellini's own credo of the free creativity of a cinema of the unfettered imagination: "I have no vocation for theories.... I see no line between the imaginary and the real. I see much reality in the imaginary. I do not feel myself responsible for setting all that in order, on a national level.... I am indefinitely capable of wonder, and I do not see why I should set a pseudo-rational screen in front of this wonder" (152).

Theory

If Fellini had little vocation for theories, it can be said that French theory had little vocation for Fellini during the late 1960s and 1970s. The Marxist–Althusserian turn *Cahiers* took following May 1968 marginalized Fellini in its wake. The denunciation of bourgeois ideology operating in American and "classical" European cinema was bolstered by Lacanian and Derridean poststructuralist readings; by the replacement of a Bazinian "reality of appearances" with the revolutionary implications of Eisensteinian montage; by Kristevan intertextuality; by the promotion of politically progressive, revolutionary, and Third World cinemas. There was little space to or for Fellini.[2] Even when Serge Daney and Jean-Pierre Oudart deconstructed the role of the authorial signature in the classical European cinema in their 1971–1972 *Cahiers* essay "Le Nom-de-l'Auteur," the director they chose was not Fellini but Visconti. It is not that Fellini completely disappeared from the pages of *Cahiers*. His films released during this period are reviewed, most of them very briefly, and often with cursory applications of the current critical dogmas: the "evacuation of the political" for ritual and sex in Pierre Baudry's 1970 review of *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969), for example, and the role of Fellini as "one of the most representative filmmaking ideologues of the liberal bourgeoisie" in Dominique Païni's 1971 "Lettre sur 'Les Clowns.'" Regarding Italian cinema, the big three, Rossellini, Antonioni, and Visconti, continued to receive more attention than did Fellini in *Cahiers*, as did new directors of interest, such as Luigi Comencini, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Bernardo Bertolucci, and Marco Ferreri (who did much of his work in France). Fellini fared only slightly better at *Positif*. For his part, the director occasionally satirized in response. If Fellini mocked a generic strain of French critical nihilism in the unforgettable Daumier of *8½*, he takes briefer but more specific aim in "Toby Dammit" (episode of *Histoires extraordinaires/Tre passi nel delirio/Spirits of the Dead* 1968).[3] The producer-priest's description of the Catholic western that Toby is to star in reads like a parody of *Cahiers*' commonplaces of the Catholic then and the militant now: a new manifestation of Christ on earth in an intertextual, auteurist pastiche (Dreyer and Pasolini with a pinch of John Ford, Piero della Francesca, and Fred Zinnemann) engaged in a Lukácsian critique of the capitalist system. The padre concludes that all of this will be grounded in a "structuralist cinema" that is "syntagmatic," as his friend Roland Barthes would say.[4]

Of the structural semioticians who orbited around *Cahiers* during this period, Christian Metz was the one who had something to say about Fellini in his 1966 essay "La construction 'en abyme' dans *Huit et Demi* de Fellini," originally published in the *Revue d'Esthétique* and later gathered into his important first book on cinema, the 1968 *Essais sur la signification au cinéma*. When Metz's book was translated into English in 1974, the translator retitled the essay "Mirror Construction in Fellini's *8½*." Metz focuses his analysis of Fellini's film on what he finds to be its uniquely modern and innovative feature, the fact that the director is the first to have ordered an *entire* film and *all* of its elements in accordance with a "mise en abyme" or mirror structure. The denouement of this doubling structure occurs at the end of the film when Guido enters into the magic circle to become a character himself so that "*the place of the director, which is now empty*, can only be occupied by a character external to the action of the film: by Fellini himself" (Metz 1974, 234). Metz provides a structural account of Fellinian auteurism and the self-reflexive nature of his filmmaking.

Internationally recognized theoretical or philosophical engagement in France with Fellini's work would be scarce in the ensuing period up until Gilles Deleuze's 1985 *Cinéma 2, L'Image-temps*. Deleuze's encounter with cinema in the context of his larger philosophical enterprise, his auteurist view of the canonical directors, his vision of Italian neorealism as a decisive breaking point in the constitution of the cinematic image, and his adherence to an ontological interpretation of that image are all part of his open debt to André Bazin. These characteristics allow Deleuze to evaluate Fellini's cinema, as did Bazin, as one grounded in an ontological project. It is to this Bazinian filiation that we now turn, one which was mediated by the work on Fellini during the intervening years by another important French critic, Barthélemy Amengual.

Fellini became for Bazin the final director through whom he argued for the modernity of Italian neorealism as the exploration of the existential individual within an ontological cinematic aesthetic. The world and its inhabitants are filmed in their ambiguity and open-endedness, thereby creating a gap, or interstice, in which inner or hidden meanings are unveiled. This thesis had been first charted with regard to Rossellini, and then with regard to Rossellini and Fellini together. But there was a pause in Rossellini's filmmaking beginning in 1954 and not ending until after Bazin died in 1958. These are the years when Bazin wrote instead on Fellini. For Bazin, the ontological interstice is achieved in Fellini's films through the creation and foregrounding of breaches within narrative causality, the "long descriptive scenes, apparently without consequence," by means of which a deeper appearance of reality is revealed as the "encounter with an unsuspected universe" (Bazin 1962, 140, 123). Whence Bazin's pronouncement that in Fellini's world the crucial moments and events do not "arrive" along a train of horizontal causality, but "befall" or "arise" along a plane of "vertical gravitation" (135). Similarly, in these early Fellini films, the conventions of what Bazin refers to as psychological realism are short-circuited by the director for the more happenstance revelations of a deeper interiority, what Bazin calls a "phenomenology of the soul" (127–128). The peculiarly religious character of these early Fellini films—especially *La strada*, *Il bidone*, and *Le notti di Cabiria*—with their stories of damnation and grace, mystery-play narratives, and simple and quasi-allegorical protagonists—facilitates Bazin's analysis of the phenomenological interstice, although he apologized at times for the Christian paradigm, which he saw as unavoidable, since it was the one that best conveyed the "order of realities" of those films (131). Bazin's boldest argument for Fellini—that he is "the director who goes farthest to date in the neorealist aesthetic, so far that he crosses through it and finds himself on the other side" (138)—raises similar problems of terminology and perspective. For on the other side of that neorealist aesthetic lies, for Bazin, "the hidden accord, maintained by things with an invisible counterpart of which they are, so to speak, merely the adumbration." Fellini's and Bazin's own Catholicism leads the critic to characterize this process as a type of spiritual

transcendence, an "identification with the supernatural," a "supernaturalization" (which he exemplifies through the appearance of the angelic in these films), but his ecumenism has him "regret this equivocal word" and invite his reader to replace it "with 'poetry' or 'surrealism' or 'magic'" or any other term" (139–140), a flexibility that perhaps would have served Bazin well were he to have survived to witness Fellini's evolution to *La dolce vita* and beyond.

Bazin's comments on Fellini reveal the historical and ideological limits to his ontology of the cinematic image, but they were in keeping with the phenomenological approach he shared with other prominent French critics, such as Amédée Ayfre and Henri Agel. As was the case with Bazin, their criticism focused on the ontological aesthetics of Italian neorealism within a spiritualist or Catholic framework. Of the two, Ayfre was the closest to Bazin in his opinion of Fellini. He and Bazin engaged in friendly discussions on the director (Roger 2014), and Ayfre shared Bazin's notion of the revelation of what he called the "marvelousness" of everyday reality in a film such as *La strada* (Ayfre 1969, 53). Henri Agel's position was much more critical. In an essay on Fellini's early films published in the Jesuit journal *Études*, Agel (1960, 120–126) argued that Fellini did not display the same phenomenological openness to reality that Rossellini and De Sica did, and he qualified Fellini's cinema as "baroque," "irréaliste," and subject to the director's "personal obsessions." Fellini's spiritual message for Agel was repetitive and ultimately negative. The crushing of innocence in *La strada*'s Gelsomina or in *Il bidone's* paralytic girl was the precondition for touching the souls of the damned. Agel's discussion of the spirituality, repeated symbolism, and "baroque" qualities of Fellini's style (a term Bazin never uses) are the same categories his wife Geneviève Agel employed in her *Les Chemins de Fellini*, the first monograph on Fellini to appear in France (1956), published by the Catholic Éditions du Cerf. Her analysis of their presence in Fellini is much more generous and positive, however, as befits a celebratory monograph.[5]

French Catholic criticism would continue to weigh in on Fellini's work throughout the 1960s, but Fellini's changing interests and the objections of a prominent Catholic phenomenologist such as Henri Agel demonstrated the difficulty of maintaining a fruitful Bazinian perspective. This is where the role of a critic such as Barthélemy Amengual is important. Amengual had a distinctly different political profile from that of either Bazin or Agel. Born and raised in Algeria, he collaborated with the Algerian Communist Party, directed for many years the Ciné-club d'Algiers (frequented by a new generation of leftist film critics, such as Jean-Louis Comolli), and maintained close ties to Italian leftist critics including Guido Aristarco. He took a deep scholarly interest in Italian cinema, writing important essays on neorealism and on the first and second generations of Italian auteurs. At the same time, Amengual (1997, 26) acknowledged being a disciple of Bazin, able to advocate his concepts on the ontological realism of the cinematic image while rejecting Bazin's and Agel's Christian precepts. Amengual's most important contribution to Fellini scholarship, which will be absorbed by Deleuze, was the application of a Bazinian-oriented phenomenological perspective even after the director's move to a more spectacular and then oneiric cinema in the 1960s and beyond. Agel (1960, 126–127), already suspicious of Fellini's trilogy of grace (*La strada*, *Il bidone*, *Le notti di Cabiria*), was truly appalled by Fellini's *La dolce vita*, critiquing both the moral (Christian) vacuity of the film and the degeneration of Fellini's baroque style into a spiritually void and formally sterile exhibition of the spectacular—the same criticisms that filtered into the pages of *Cahiers*. Amengual offered a very different view in his essay "Fellini's Way: from the Spectacle to the Spectacular" ("Itinéraire de Fellini: du spectacle au spectaculaire"), which opened a special 1963 volume of *Études cinématographiques* dedicated to Fellini's *8½*. Applying a Bazinian analysis to the spectacular in Fellini, Amengual (1997, 381) argues that from the beginning Fellini explored the ontological reality of the everyday precisely in its constitution as spectacle: "[t]he real becomes spectacle or spectacular

and fascinates *as the real*." This reaches its apex in *8½* where reality as spectacle invests the film at all of its levels (385). Years later, Amengual (1981) would return to the issue in "End of the Way: from Lumière to Méliès" ("Fin d'itinéraire: du 'côté de chez Lumière' au 'côté de Méliès"), arguing that in his later works Fellini inverted direction, describing a universe immersed in memory, the oneiric, and the imaginary, in which reality promoted to spectacle has been replaced by an investigation into the "phantasmagoria" and "machinery" of the spectacle itself (402). Amengual's analysis, as will later Deleuze's, fails to address Fellini's engagement with the society of the spectacle. But Amengual's work does keep Fellini within a Bazinian critical framework on which Deleuze will build.

In his preface to the first of his two-volume theorizations of the movement-image and the time-image (1986, xiv), Deleuze reveals his unabashed auteurist orientation: "The great directors of the cinema may be compared in our view, not merely with painters, architects and musicians, but also with thinkers. They think with movement-images and time-images instead of concepts." He opens the second (1989, 1) asserting his admiration for Bazin: "Against those who defined Italian neorealism by its social content, Bazin put forward the fundamental requirement of formal aesthetic criteria. According to him, it was a matter of a new form of reality, said to be dispersive, elliptical, errant or wavering, working in blocs, with deliberately weak connections and floating events."[6]

In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze explores the vision and style of individual director-*auteurs* in terms of their unique elaborations of the time-image.[7] Postwar Italian neorealism holds pride of place in comprising the first group of filmmakers to consistently develop the time-image in the postwar period. Deleuze (1989, 4) adopts Bazin's broad aesthetic criteria by which "Visconti, Antonioni, and Fellini are definitely a part of neorealism, in spite of all their differences."[8] As in Bazin, the emphasis in Deleuze is on the interstitial, the breach in the movement-image that makes possible the appearance or revelation of time as its own reality in the cinema. Fellini is discussed by Deleuze in two ways: (1) his contribution to the loosening of the cause and effect action-image of the classic cinema necessary for the rise of time-image cinema, and (2) his faceting of past and present, the virtual and the actual, in crystal images of time. Regarding the former, Deleuze recurs to Amengual's discussion of the reorganization of the everyday into spectacle in Fellini, which, Deleuze argues, weakens the "sensory-motor linkages" of the action-image in favor of the organization of the real as "a succession of *varieties* subject to their own law of passage" (5). In discussing the crystal image of time in postwar European cinema, Deleuze delineates four types: Ophüls's is the perfect, completed crystal; Renoir's the cracked crystal from which something escapes; Visconti's the crystal in decomposition or decay; Fellini's "the crystal caught in its formation and growth, related to the 'seeds' which make it up" (88). Here, too, Deleuze leans on Amengual, drawing a distinction between Fellini's earlier and later films, only now between an early cinema of escape (what comes out of the crystal) and a mature cinema of obsession with how to enter the crystal. He cites Amengual's description of Fellini's later organization of the spectacle as a type of all-encompassing fair grounds or Luna Park with multiple portals and entrances and an endless array of cubicles of present/past, actual/virtual, time experiences (88–90). It is here in both imagery and Nino Rota's scoring that the Bazinian interstitial opening occurs for Deleuze. The movement of the horizontal "tracking shot," the "parade," the "gallop," or the *danse macabre* of presents moving not toward the future but toward the tomb is countered by the "vertical line," the "fixed shot," or "ritornello," all of which unite the individual's present with his or her own past and with all other pasts in a sort of "pure recollection" (91–94). Worlds and individuals are happened upon and caught in their moment of simultaneous ectropy/entropy, time caught in its perennial divisions.

Eulogy

By the time Deleuze was writing on Fellini in the mid-1980s, the Italian director was undergoing a widespread process of rehabilitation and celebration in French film criticism. The controversies of the earlier years were fading into what *Positif* editor Jean Gili (2009, 6) has labeled "an admiration without reserve." The attention Fellini was receiving in the pages of *Positif*, often through essays by Franco-Italian or Italian contributors such as Ornella Volta and Lorenzo Codelli, began to be matched in *Cahiers* with two or more contributions on each new Fellini film. Since Fellini's death in 1993, various tributes and retrospectives have taken place in France. *Positif* published lengthy dossiers on the director in July–August 1995 (organized by Michel Ciment with a lead essay by Amengual), and then again in May 2003 (organized by Gili and again with a lead essay by Amengual) in conjunction with the celebration of the director at the Cannes Film Festival on the 10th anniversary of his death. In 2009, Gili edited a collection of the articles, general studies, and interviews with Fellini and his collaborators published in the magazine over the decades. *Cahiers* published a first dossier on Fellini a couple of months after his death in December 1993 and then again in October of 2009 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the release of *La dolce vita*. 2009 was also the year of the most important Fellini retrospective to date in France, a three-month celebration of the director in Paris during the fall of that year entitled "Fellini. La grande parade." Under the direction of Sam Stourdzé, an exhibit was hosted at the Jeu de Paume museum, bringing together over 400 drawings, photographs, and other works, more than 30 projections from films, film set documentaries, and televised news features, and a 220-page catalog. The exhibit was part of a larger event entitled "Tutto Fellini," which included a film retrospective at the Cinémathèque française and panels and lectures at the Italian Cultural Institute of Paris. The exhibit later traveled to Spain, Bologna, and Montpellier.

Since Fellini's death, various scholarly books on the author have appeared in France, perhaps the most substantial of which has been *Federico Fellini. Romance* by writer, critic, and translator Jean-Paul Manganaro (2009), a revisiting of Fellini's entire work under the aegis, as the title indicates, of a nostalgic affection. Prompted by his reading of Manganaro's text, Jean-Louis Comolli teamed up with the author in 2013 to film a television documentary *À Federico Fellini, romance d'un spectateur amoureux* ("To Federico Fellini, a Viewer's Love Affair"). As the critic and Comolli shuffle through photos and scroll through tablet still frames from *La dolce vita* and *8½*, the chiaroscuro shadows, mirror reflections, clutter of unusual objects, and projection of the stills onto the arabesque shapes of Manganaro's elaborately decorated, baroque apartment, create a sort of intimate *wunderkammer*. One of the most compelling aspects of the documentary is simply to see Comolli, chief editor of *Cahiers du cinéma* during its radically militant years, engaged in this Fellinian remembrance.

Shortly after Fellini's death, French poet, Italian scholar, and Fellini friend Jacqueline Risset published the first postmortem tribute to the director in 1994, *L'incantatore. Scritti su Fellini*. In addition to an essay on *Lo sceicco bianco* published a few years earlier in France, the volume contains an interview, remembrances, and even a poem which serve as testimonials to the author's experiences with Fellini. Playing on the Fellini-*auteur* mystique, Risset (1994, 7) notes that "Fellini's masterpiece was Fellini himself" and argues that there begins now, with the director's death, "a duty to bear witness" to the man on the part of all those who knew him, since his films represent only "the visible part of the iceberg" (75). Of the French language testimonials that have issued forth since, two merit special mention: Dominique Delouche's *Mes felliniennes années* (2007) and the gathered letters between Fellini and Belgian writer Georges Simenon, *Carissimo Simenon. Mon cher Fellini* (1998). In *Mes felliniennes années*, Delouche, one of the first to chronicle

the behind-the-camera world of Fellini's filmmaking in his *Journal d'un bidoniste*, provides a narrative, composed of notebook entries, letters, memories, and anecdotes, of his apprenticeship with the maestro from *Il bidone* to *La dolce vita*. These provide fascinating reading concerning Fellini's relationship with actors, producers, celebrities, and critics. (Delouche arranged meetings for the director in Paris and handheld Fellini's French actors in Rome.) Then, during the filming of *La dolce vita*, misunderstanding, a mutual sense of betrayal, *amertume*, harsh words, and tears. Delouche and Fellini will be in touch just a few times in the following 30 years, with a broader rapprochement only as Fellini nears death.

The friendship between Fellini and Simenon was occasioned by Simenon's championing of *La dolce vita* as head of the jury at 1960 Cannes Film Festival, but their correspondence is sustained from 1969 to Simenon's death in 1989. The guiding thread is artistic creativity, beginning when Simenon writes to Fellini to tell him how he identified with what Fellini had to say about creation in art in an interview in *L'Express* (Fellini 1969), and then was surprised when he turned the page to see that Fellini used Simenon as his example of the creative artist who functions as a medium of the imagination. For Fellini, creation in Simenon lies in his unlimited talent and his creative fertility. He is the older, healthier brother who paves the way and whose example fortifies the director in his moments of despair; so much so that, when struggling with *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976), Fellini dreams of Simenon as a source of inspiration to complete the film. Simenon quickly adopts this role of mentor and at times physician. He sustains Fellini in his moments of depression and discouragement (the correspondence is thickest when Fellini is embarking on or has just finished a new project), defining the director's creativity (and his own) as infantile, impulsive, and free; true to itself and untethered to constraints, taboos, or rules; possessed of a secret alchemy or magic beyond all intellectualism. Simenon adulates Fellini, writing to him that he is the unique genius of contemporary cinema, a force of nature, and prototype of creativity without equals. In 1977, Simenon would interview Fellini for *L'Express* in a "dialogue on the mystery of artistic creation," and Fellini would once again define artistic creativity in relationship to both men's work, this time as the triumph over adversity: "I think art is that, the possibility of turning defeat into victory, sadness into happiness. Art is miraculous…" (Fellini and Simenon 1998, 96). It was Fellini's tenacious affirmation of the creative artist, ever-defying intellectual categorizations and exegesis, that complicated his relationship with French film criticism—at times rigidly categorical but also, especially in recent years, highly appreciative of Fellini's artistic achievements.

Notes

1 Fellini would screen his subsequent films at Cannes and other festivals out of competition.

2 For an overview of these changes at *Cahiers*, see Browne 1989, 1–20.

3 The other episodes of the film were directed by Roger Vadim and Louis Malle.

4 Barthes was the first of the contemporary cultural icons to be featured and interviewed by *Cahiers* during this period. Years later Barthes (1981) did mention Fellini in his essay on photography *La Chambre claire* (*Camera lucida*). He recounts (115–117) that, saddened by looking at photographs of his dead mother, he found himself exasperated while watching Fellini's *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* with friends, but that he suddenly experienced an overwhelming emotion of pity as he watched the dancing female automaton, similar to the pity evoked by viewing a loved object in a photographic image.

5 Other early French publications on Fellini include Dominique Delouche's 1956 *Journal d'un bidoniste*, in an appendix to Geneviève Agel's (1956) *Les chemins de Fellini* (the young Delouche was a friend of Agel's and had been a student of her husband Henri); Patrice Hovard's chapter on Fellini in his 1959

Le néoréalisme italien et ses créatures (Hovard's critical points of reference are Bazin and both Agels); and Gilbert Salachas's 1963 *Federico Fellini*, which was translated into English in 1969 with a critical anthology that exposed English-language readers to a sampling of early French approaches to Fellini.

6 In a 2002 interview with *Cahiers*, France's other prominent cinephile-philosopher Jacques Rancière (2002, 59) noted the rehabilitation of Bazin's thought during this period in France: "the phenomenological miracle of presence for Bazin, the emphatic celebration of the event [is] once again very much in fashion in the '80s–'90s." Rancière investigated the ontology of the cinematic image in Rossellini but not Fellini.

7 For an analysis of Deleuze's time-image and its relationship to Italian cinema, see Restivo 2017.

8 For a useful critique of Bazin's and Deleuze's criteria in approaching Italian neorealism, see Ricciardi 2006.

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31

The Fellini Brand: Marketing Appropriations of the Fellini Name

Rebecca Bauman

"Made in Italy by Fellini could be a marketing slogan." (Moscati 2010, 148)[1]

A Kosovar food packaging company, a Brazilian tourism agency, a Maltese wine bar, an Australian event space, and handcrafted Texan billiard cue cases—at first glance these establishments, products, and services have little in common. Yet they all bear the name of Fellini; a relatively uncommon Italian surname that has nevertheless become a recognizable label all over the world. This multiplicity of uses points to a common origin: film director Federico Fellini and his corpus. The frequency and heterogeneity of marketing applications of the Fellini moniker suggest that his name has become more significant than either the man or his films. In fact, the Fellini name has been applied to a diverse range of products such as air conditioners and auto dealerships that bear little or no relation to filmmaking, Italy, or the director himself, suggesting that Fellini is now an almost universal cultural reference for consumers of all kinds. This article seeks to explicate why the name of Federico Fellini in particular, perhaps more than that of any other modern Italian cultural figure, has been adopted for the marketing of so many products and services around the world.

Advertising, Marketing, and Fellini

Despite his stature as a nonconformist art-house filmmaker, there has always been a strong connection between Fellini, his work, and the world of advertising and marketing (Fabbri 2002). This became apparent when Fellini made his first commercial in 1984, even though the initial reaction was dismay over how a bona fide auteur who had criticized and satirized television advertising could find inspiration within that medium. Recently however critics and audiences have begun to reconsider the relationship between his art and commerce, reading within his films the latent imprint of advertising modalities and identifying Fellini's critical reappropriation of the commercial format as a means of self-reflection and postmodern critique (Gieri 1999; Fabbri 2002; Burke 2011).

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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The world of marketing and advertising has always found Fellini's works a rich source for imitation and quotation. Print advertising has replicated either stills from his films or imitations thereof as a visual distillation of Italian sexiness and style. But it is the multimedia capabilities of television commercials that capture Fellini's motifs on a variety of levels. Capitalizing on his identifiable visual style, they employ recognizable Fellinian tropes such as the circus, the voluptuous female form, and the grotesque, while also emulating the memorable motifs of Nino Rota's scores. In some cases, Fellini-influenced spots are oblique references to the director's oeuvre. A case in point is the 1993 Martini spirits campaign shot in black and white and featuring an Anita Ekbergesque diva figure portrayed by Charlize Theron. Other commercials are outright imitations, such as the Peroni beer remake of *La dolce vita* (1960), which premiered during the transmission of the Academy Awards in 2006. Spots such as these have a clearly cinephilic bent and use their homage to Fellini as a means of elevating their medium. This element emerges most forcefully in commercials directed by successful filmmakers such as Francis Ford Coppola, whose illycaffè commercial from 1999 is a tribute to *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952).

While such advertisements strain to flesh out their homage within the time limits of the average television commercial, the expanded opportunities afforded by web-based campaigns to create interactive media and short films as promotional materials have further blurred the distinction between filmmaking and marketing. Commercials can reposition themselves as miniature works of art by utilizing the Fellini imprint: for example, the Castello Cavalcanti spot produced for Prada by Roman Coppola, directed by Wes Anderson and starring Jason Schwartzman, Coppola's cousin and one of Anderson's frequent collaborators. The short subject, which premiered at the Rome Film Festival in 2013, epitomizes Anderson's idiosyncratic visual style, such as his penchant for symmetrical framing and lurid color, but also synthesizes his techniques with Felliniesque motifs and employs overt sonic and visual references to such films as *Amarcord* (1973) and *La dolce vita*. Fittingly, even though the featurette is set almost entirely outdoors, Anderson eschewed location filming and shot the spot on a soundstage at Cinecittà, a nod to the Italian director's own stomping grounds and an evocation of Fellini's sets as a fantastic simulacrum of the real world.

These examples suggest how rich a field exists for scholars seeking to comprehend the complex cultural imprint of Federico Fellini by extending their gaze beyond the cinema and toward marketing and consumption. Yet there is an even more direct form of marketing that further demonstrates the extent of the director's reach: the application of Fellini's name to goods and services in a manner that may be synonymous with, tangential to, or completely divorced from the director's body of work. The development of the Fellini name as a valuable branding tool is all the more exceptional in that, while this phenomenon was already visible by the 1980s, the name has remained remarkably recognizable more than two decades after the director's passing and is applied to a variety of marketing strategies around the globe. The sheer repetition of this name in businesses and products indicates that the name Fellini has accreted symbolic significance that might have less to do with Italian film history than it does with processes of cultural reification.

What's in a (Brand) Name?

By now, marketing theory has amply demonstrated how one of the primary strengths of a brand lies in its name (Hart 1998; Aaker 2000). "Good brand names can enhance memorability, create favorable images, increase preference for the products, and are an important component in building brand equity" (Shrum et al. 2012, 3). When I argue that Fellini has become a brand, I am

deviating from the orthodox definition of the term, which implies something unique and protectable (Aaker 1996). Instead, as the previously cited examples demonstrate, the name has been applied not only to different products but to products and services in the same category (particularly in the case of restaurants, as I will describe at length later). However, I use the term "brand" quite deliberately because it expresses both the durability and flexibility of the name Fellini and its widespread recognition and positive associations. Indeed, the countless instances of the name's use for products and services suggest that over time the Fellini name has proved itself to be a successful strategy for promotion in a variety of different markets and to a wide swath of consumers.

Susannah Hart (1998, 43) delineates three primary qualities in selecting a name for a product: freestanding, associative, and descriptive. Whereas freestanding has nothing to do with the product, and descriptive indicates what the product can do, the associative might provoke in consumers a memory or unconscious association that will make them think favorably about the product, resulting in "powerful, attractive, and protectable brand names" (43). In brand naming, Hart tells us, the most reliably successful strategy lies with associative names, ones that are not specifically related to the product itself but whose semiotics suggest positive qualities and express aspirations to potential customers. The Fellini name is perhaps an exemplar of the associative model of branding because, as we will see, it holds a rich trove of possible associations for consumers, including craftsmanship, creativity, *italianità*, hedonism, and fun.

Another contributing factor to the Fellini brand's pervasiveness might be the sonic property of the name itself. Numerous studies of sound symbolism have established the effectiveness that vowel positioning can have across a wide variety of language groups (Klink 2000; Yorkston and Menon 2004). The name "Fellini" benefits from a repetition of "front vowels," which marketing studies have shown to be associated with attributes, such as smallness, lightness, mildness, thinness, fastness, and prettiness (Klink 2000). These semantic implications could explain why there is a Fellini air conditioner (made by Sunrise Tradex Corp) and Fellini ceiling fan (produced by the Casablanca Fan Company), but also why it is unlikely to find the name Fellini attached to an SUV or hiking boots. The suffix "-ini" is also recognizable as a diminutive to many Western consumers. This holds advantages for products related to fashion, a category in which the Fellini name recurs most frequently, that benefit from perceptions of weightlessness or beauty. When these products are Italian-made, or meant to suggest an Italian origin, the congruity is all the more appealing to consumers. As researchers Yorkston and Menon (2004, 50) explain, "Creating a successful brand name depends not only upon the creation of a name that is congruent with the product category, but one that phonetically fits the positioning of the brand within that product category." Therefore, Fellini is a natural choice when marketing Italian products, especially when the name sound is in alignment with the country of origin of the product. Moreover, being relatively easy to pronounce, the director's name is less complicated than other recognizable Italian names, such as Mastroianni or Antonioni. The combination of a clear national association and the simplicity of the name thus contributes to its emergence as marketing shorthand for a populist conception of pleasure, Italian-style.

The Man as Brand: The Fellini Mystique

Becoming more attuned to the global reach of the Fellini brand, one becomes aware that this phenomenon is sui generis. In other words, despite the continued reliance upon auteurist distinctions in film studies and film marketing (festivals, publications, DVD and Blu-ray distribution,

categorization in streaming services, etc.), the appropriation of famous filmmakers' names for goods and services is rare. There may be myriad reasons for this. One is that Fellini's films, despite their heterogeneity and moral complexity, apparently don't have the same discomfiting associations as the work of other well-known directors. It may be understandable why a Hitchcock Beauty Salon or a Hotel Kubrick might not hold an inherent appeal for consumers, yet hypothetical branding strategies with more congruous associations between product and name, say a Minnelli Home Furnishings or a Hawks Airlines, are still virtually nonexistent. All this is to suggest that despite the confirmed status of such directors' celebrity, their names do not conjure up the aspirational qualities embodied by both the Fellini name and the collective, selective memory of his films.[2]

Before Fellini became a brand name, "Fellini" had been recognized as an important tool for the marketing and promotion of his films in a way that exceeded simply the name-above-the-title phenomenon of other auteurist works. One of the first directors to become a star in his own right, Fellini not only received top billing, but his name itself would become integrated into the titles of his films, particularly when they were promoted in foreign markets. In 1969, United Artists used his name for the title *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969) and would do the same for the US distribution of *Roma* (1972). By the time of *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976), Dino De Laurentiis (Super-Auteurism 1972, 1) would explain the decision to foreground the director's name in the title: "Fellini is the star, not Casanova." That same year a *Sight & Sound* (McBride 1972, 78) article would refer to the director as "superstar," acknowledging his supremacy as a cultural celebrity even while the author lambasted the director's latest films.

Over time this fame would not diminish but would become further cemented in conceptions of Italian national cinema. As Millicent Marcus proclaims, "Fellini stood for the entire age of brilliant signature filmmaking that gave Italian directors a disproportionate place in the international pantheon" (Marcus 2002, 3), an assessment also suggesting that Fellini's name eclipsed those of other Italian filmmakers whose body of work he came to represent. Andrea Minuz extends this observation, finding that the name Fellini has become shorthand for the nation and a symbol of Italian identity. Fellini's films are full of "archetypes of Italianness … [A] kaleidoscope of symbols of the *Bel paese* that soon enough equates Fellini with his own legend" (Minuz 2012, 63). Fellini's work becomes a repository for a cultural imaginary of Italy, a shared lexicon for viewers. His name comes to embody Italianness through the accreted memory of his various works.

While this process may be at work with those familiar with his films, it does not sufficiently explain the diversity of uses of Fellini's name for products and services intended for those who may have no familiarity with him. Yet the notion that consumers are attracted to a name that holds only subliminal significance is a fundamental tenet of branding. The process of star-making that began with film distributors but has been implemented by critics, scholars, and various forms of film programming helps reinforce a shared cultural assumption of the director's historic and cultural importance. Just as for centuries Dante has been an emblem of Italian literary excellence recognizable to those who have never read the *Divine Comedy*, those ignorant of Italian cinema can understand that Fellini is a name symbolic of something highly prized in Italian culture.

Fellini as a metonym for modern Italy is significant in an era in which not only are Italian products highly regarded, in particular in the fashion and food industries, but where a cultural imaginary (in no small way shaped by cinema) has positioned Italian origin as a marketable signifier. Fellini's career, which spanned the postwar period through the 1980s, mirrors the trajectory of the "Made-in-Italy" phenomenon, the successful exportation of Italian goods abroad that prompted a surge in the perception of Italy as representative of taste, style, and a pleasure-seeking approach in tune with increasing consumerism and self-gratification within the industrialized

world. Moreover, the director's lifelong association with Rome, center of the Italian film industry, helped identify him with the jet-set lifestyle depicted in *La dolce vita* (even though, ironically, he seldom traveled far afield of the Eternal City). As Stephen Gundle (2002, 96) notes, the glamorous images from that film would be directly linked to consumption, for, after all, "[g]lamour … is the language of allure and desirability in capitalist society." As Gundle goes on to explain, Fellini's signature film gave rise to an international perception of Italy as a commodity easily accessible to everyone: "Italy became an image to be consumed, to be bought into, and to be savored in small doses, by means of a film, a vacation, a meal in a restaurant, an item of clothing, or a domestic appliance" (113). With this marriage of consumer aspiration and cinematic memory, it is no small wonder that today one can find everything from travel agencies to household products named Fellini.

Case Studies: Global Applications of the Fellini Brand

While the Fellini name is predicated on a global perception of Italianness, there are also numerous examples of the Fellini name being used within Italy, often as an expression of national or regional pride in the director; such is the case of the Federico Fellini International Airport in Rimini. Mostly, however, the name is applied to fashion apparel, hotels, bars, night clubs, and restaurants, all of which are either businesses that cater to tourists or products intended for international export. There are also examples of businesses with no relation to Italian products. One example would be Fellini Jewellery & Gifts in Queensland, Australia, which prides itself on being a third-generation Jewish family business that specializes in accessories made in Australia from indigenous materials, such as kangaroo, ostrich, and opal. In this case, rather than suggesting any Italian qualities to the company, the Fellini name may just be a way to associate the luxury and opulence of their merchandise with the type of extroverted, high-society women who appear in films such as *La dolce vita* and *8½* (1963).

There are also cases in which the proprietor's name is Fellini, and their businesses leverage the connection to take advantage of the last name's rich associative value for consumers. Fellini Designs is a French-Canadian contemporary interior design firm run by a brother and sister, Luca and Sofia Fellini. Even more instructive is the case of the Fellini Pelletteria in Rome, a leather store established by Maria Rita Fellini, daughter of Federico Fellini's brother Riccardo. This family-owned business is an example of how trademark issues would surround the use of the Fellini name. When the Fellini Pelletteria was established in 1976 on the Via del Corso in Rome, it specialized in handbags and other leather goods under a registered trademark. However, a competing clothing store named Fellini, coincidentally also located on the Via del Corso, had already licensed the name for the sale of clothing and accessories. That Fellini company threatened to sue Rita Fellini and her business partner and husband, Fabio Panconesi, over the use of the name. In an indication of the value of the brand, Fellini and her husband refused to abandon the use of her last name but instead avoided litigation by eliminating the sale of handbags and limiting the business to belts. In an interview with the author, Panconesi (telephone interview with the author, February 2018) explained his and his wife's determination to retain the Fellini name on their store (which closed in 2015): "The name brought a lot of business; people remembered it, and it was important. People from Australia or Brazil would come in, as so much of our business catered to tourists, and they knew the name because they had seen one or two of his films" (see Figure 31.1).

Panconesi's comments not only reflect the international relevance of the brand, they suggest a return to the origin of that relevance in cinema. In fact, even though the Fellini name is adopted

Figure 31.1 The brochure, with company logo, for the Fellini Pelliteria, established in 1976 by Maria Rita Fellini, daughter of Federico's brother Riccardo. Photo courtesy of Fabio Panconesi.

for all manner of products without reference to the filmmaker's work, this does not preclude the fact that the Fellini name can also be intended to appeal specifically to film lovers. For example, the Delta pen company of Italy issued a limited-edition luxury Fellini pen featuring a film-strip motif on the cap and miniature replicas of three Fellini film posters; the pen is even fabricated from rare celluloid to solidify connections among the product, Fellini, and the origins of cinema. The Cine Café Fellini in São Paulo, Brazil proclaims its cinephilic origin through its name and is decorated with posters of Fellini films as well as the director's sketches. The walls of the Restaurant Fellini in Erfurt, Germany are covered with murals depicting the director shooting various scenes from his films, and its website, which incorporates a film-strip motif, has a full page dedicated to the director's complete filmography, and even includes a link to the German-language webpage of the (now defunct) Fondazione Federico Fellini in Rimini. Even smaller details from his films may become part of a brand as a knowing wink to educated consumers. For example, Gradisca Ristorante in New York City (see Figure 31.2) adopted the name of a character who would be familiar only to people who have seen *Amarcord*. For the uninitiated, the restaurant has clarified its name on the website by explaining it is "named after the vivacious beauty in

Figure 31.2 The Gradisca Ristorante in New York City. Photos by Rebecca Bauman.

Federico Fellini's *Amarcord*" and "is faithful to its namesake in every way."[3] Interestingly, the restaurant does not bother to mention that the name means "enjoy!" in English, despite the fact that it is gastronomically relevant for prospective diners, preferring instead to concentrate on the establishment's allegiance with the Fellini brand.

Fellini and Hedonism

In Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* (1973), the protagonist is standing in line at a movie theater when an obnoxious filmgoer behind him regales his date with a critique of a Fellini film: "I found it incredibly indulgent, you know he really is, he's one of the most indulgent filmmakers!" While this attitude came to characterize a critical perspective that accompanied the director's work after his successes of the 1960s, these details may also have seemed a relief to audiences frustrated with the arid or alienating effects of other art-house film directors. As Frank Burke explains, "Fellini's cinema was often a critique of intellectualism and *always a celebration of pleasure*" (Burke 1996, 313; emphasis mine).

While terms such as "excessive" and "immoderate" have generally been invectives on the part of film critics, they aren't necessarily pejorative in the world of marketing. The emphasis on pleasure is a significant resource for any branding strategy and is in line with what marketing experts note are the inherent "hedonistic" associations that consumers attribute to products with foreign names (Leclerc, Schmitt, and Dubé 1994). Fellini is associated with pleasure through the reception of his films and through the films' hallmark motifs: the return to childhood suggested by the circus in *8½* and *I clowns* (1970); the prolonged adolescence enacted in *I vitelloni* (1953) and *Amarcord*; the pageantry of gluttony and sexual abandon in films such as *Fellini - Satyricon* and *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*; the extensive interplay with oneiric and fantasy sequences in films such as *8½* and *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965); the surrealistically colorful costumes in the latter; and the abandonment of verisimilitude in set design in films such as *E la nave va* (*And the Ship Sails On* 1983). While scholars have for decades been at pains to rescue Fellini's oeuvre from a simplistic summation of these motifs as the defining aspect of his films, the Felliniesque

remains a household word precisely because these themes and motifs are so evocative and memorable.

Therefore, whereas film critics look askance at certain qualities in Fellini's films, in the marketplace such qualities can have great cachet. This is particularly the case when it comes to selling entertainment—and to selling luxury or vanity products associated more with pleasure than utility (Leclerc, Schmitt, and Dubé 1994, 264). Many luxury brands offer models named after Fellini. The Lafont eyewear company of France has a style of men's glasses named Fellini that retails at $590. The Sogni di cristallo purveyor of Murano glass offers a Fellini chandelier for €2340. Vilhelm Parfumerie makes an Eau de Parfum entitled Basilico & Fellini that claims to be inspired by the director's professed love of basil; a 100 mL bottle of the fragrance retails in New York, as of this writing, for $245. The name has also found its way to luxury textiles; a noorsaab silk scarf named Fellini, stamped with the company's signature logo, sells for £468 (a less dear cotton version is available for £358). The abovementioned Delta Pens, which have been made in Italy since the 1980s, include a Dolcevita collection with prices ranging from $380 for a ballpoint to $680 for a fountain pen.

The interrelationships of hedonism, Fellini, and consumer products is most visibly encapsulated in the lifestyles depicted in *La dolce vita*, the most critically and commercially successful of the director's films and in many ways a capstone of his global fame. The myriad interpretations of the film's title, as either an ironic commentary on a superficial society or as a bittersweet depiction of the search for intimacy, are pushed aside in the separate life the title has assumed in the global lexicon. The phrase "la dolce vita" is now shorthand for an ideal sense of italianità, an updated version of the nineteenth-century picturesque notions of Italy as the land of "dolce far niente" ("sweet do-nothing"). Characteristics such as a more relaxed pace of life, a careful attention to fashion and style, a delight in the consumption of food and wine, as well as an openness to casual sex were on display throughout the film, which then became perceived as a documentary on Italian mores and habits. Those attuned to marketing and eager to reference such values have appropriated the film title to such an extent that it has grown larger than the Fellini name itself. We have, among many other examples, Dolce Vita Chocolates of Jerusalem, Israel; the upscale Dolce Vita Hotel in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; the La Dolce Vita Disco in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. In New York City, one can locate a hair salon, restaurant, lingerie company, and handbag store that bear the name Dolce Vita, attesting to the term's utility as a catch-all for smart looks and pleasurable dining.

Dining da Federico

But of all the entities that bear the name of Fellini, restaurants hold precedence by far. A cursory web search reveals hundreds named Fellini in all corners of the globe, including Uruguay, Chile, Mexico, Turkey, the Philippines, Kazakhstan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Iran, India, Thailand, and so on; the frequency is even higher within Western Europe and the US. This is hardly surprising. In the American market, for example, Italian food is one of the most popular of all the ethnic cuisines, as it is in other Western countries. If Fellini is a synonym for Italianicity, then it would be an obvious name choice for a restaurant, café, or pizzeria that wants to foreground its alignment with Italian food.

The choice of Fellini may perhaps also reside in the notion of Italian dining as accessible and familiar. The communicative properties of Italian restaurants often rely upon a stereotypes and tropes of Italian identity, including warmth, rusticity, tribalism, as well as romance (Girardelli

2004; Parasecoli 2014). Unlike the longstanding association of French dining with a more forbidding haute cuisine that presumed a certain level of sophistication and economic status on the part of the consumer, Italian dining has typically been associated with affordability and consumer ease.[4] To emphasize this concept of familiarity, establishments have long relied on using surnames, resulting in successful chain restaurants called Fazoli's, Bertucci's, and Biaggi's (at times invented rather than belonging to a proprietor). There are tens of thousands of independent pizzerias and sit-down restaurants that adopt an Italian name in order to communicate a familiar, pseudoauthentic Italian ambience to consumers. The Fellini name matches the trisyllabic pattern of so many Italian eating establishments. Also favoring the frequency of Fellini-named eateries is that, unlike the trademark issues for products intended for wide distribution, nonchain restaurants are confined to a specific location. The Fellini name can be adopted an enormous number of times for the same type of business, as long as the "adoptees" are situated in sufficiently diverse markets.

Today, the preponderance of Fellini-named restaurants is also a result of the more recent trend of Italian haute cuisine, which is aimed at the sophisticated consumer who appreciates menus with original Italian terminology and extensive regional wine lists. Hence, Fellini's name, or those of his films, is now commonly found in upscale establishments such as the Ristorante Fellini at Marina Mirage on the Gold Coast of Australia. The name choice here is meant to convey sophistication and craft, in addition to Italian authenticity. (Presumably customers are willing to overlook any regional incongruities in attaching a Riminese director's name to a restaurant that features Southern Italian specialties and boasts Neapolitan chefs.) As Italian gastronomy has solidified its place among the most well-regarded as well as the most expensive restaurants, the name Fellini establishes parallels between the art of cooking and the art of cinema. The website of a high-end Hong Kong restaurant, with the rather clunky name, 8½ Otto e mezzo Bombana (2017), references Federico Fellini to promote this creative association, claiming that "Like the film director, Bombana [the chef] is a maestro of his art."

The retail food industry has also incorporated the Fellini brand as a means of marketing Italian products. The renowned food emporium Eataly, a proponent of the Slow Food Movement and a master of the boutique-approach to marketing Italian cuisine, has turned to the filmmaker to forge links between Italian quality and cuisine. Their stores feature a variety of food-related mottos writ large on their walls, including one familiar quote from Fellini, "Life is a combination of magic and pasta."[5] The company also publishes an online magazine, which in 2017 celebrated the director's birthday with a brief article entitled "Food & Fellini." In solidifying the connection between the director's image and Eataly's exaltation of fine Italian foodstuffs, the article cites the importance of food in films such as *Amarcord* and *Fellini - Satyricon*, noting that: "Fellini's films employ the human act of eating and drinking to pull the storyline—occasionally surreal and always bizarre—back down to earth. Food becomes an art at once visceral, sensory, and alive" (Eataly 2017). The article also mentions the director's detailed attention to catering on the set and his insistence on having good food available to his cast. Rather than just aligning their brand with Fellini, Eataly aligns Fellini with their brand, arguing for a reinterpretation of the director's work as an extension of fine cooking, an act of equal artistic and creative value.

Conclusion

Up the Hudson River, about 60 miles north of New York City, lies the historic city of Beacon. Once a bustling river town, it is now an artsy destination popular with weekenders eager to soak in some upstate charm while enjoying the galleries and artisan boutiques that line the

city's main street. At the far end of that street is Café Amarcord, an upscale restaurant well-regarded by locals and visitors. The name is the first signal that the restaurant is a homage to Fellini, but fans would also recognize the film's telltale font that is used in the restaurant's signage and all of its marketing materials. The interior is what one would expect for contemporary fine dining in the Hudson Valley: dim lighting, an extended bar boasting craft cocktails, and an Italian-themed menu with New American influences and locally sourced ingredients. Appropriately, the walls are decorated with framed posters from *Amarcord* that tastefully reference the film. Café Amarcord (see Figure 31.3) is a smart, sophisticated appropriation of a Fellini film that suggests to its diners that they are film *cognoscenti*, appreciative, and aware of the name's reference and the values it suggests: a casually elegant European style, an authentic Italian pedigree, and a dedication to artisanship and quality. It epitomizes what the Fellini brand has become in the 21st century: no longer just simple shorthand for Italian but a symbol of quality and cosmopolitan cultural capital that flatters consumers by implying they are in the know.

At the same time, the Fellini name continues to be used for pizzerias and cafés as well as prosaic products, such as men's cotton underwear and herbal tea. Perhaps the real value in the Fellini brand is that it can appeal to such a large client base. The secret to this success can be traced to perceptions about the director himself: a figure credited as a master of art cinema with a solid intellectual cachet for worldly consumers, yet whose use of humor, glamour, and cartoonish aesthetics has made his work widely accessible. This finds its synthesis in the type of reception the films have received. As Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (1993, 14) explains, Fellini's cinema is one that straddles low and high so well that his films "have a serious look to them, but they hold no terror.... On the contrary, they are reassuring." This reassurance, moreover, resides in a combination of aesthetic beauty and nostalgia: "images drawn from all those good things that the ordinary world used to be full of but which are fast disappearing from our culture" (14).

This assessment I believe highlights the ubiquity of the Fellini brand while also explaining its durability long after the director's death and even farther from the era of his most well-known cinematic creations. The adoption of a Fellini moniker not only indicates craft, genius, and

Figure 31.3 The Café Amarcord in Beacon, New York. Photos by Rebecca Bauman.

refined aesthetics but also recuperation of pleasures associated with the "old world" values of stereotypical Italian identity: rusticity, artisanship, family bonds, connection to the natural world, and so on. This in part explains why the naming of products and establishments after Fellini following the director's death has only multiplied and no doubt will continue. The farther we get from the Fellini era, the deeper the nostalgia for the historical and cultural trappings of the time periods he represented. It is not coincidental that this nostalgia corresponds to the retro trend in contemporary advertising, which fed on the heritage boom that began in the 1990s and continues through the 21st century, whereby brands, cultural imagery, and music from prior generations are repurposed as a way of investing products or services with an aura of authenticity and meaning (Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry 2003, 21). The Fellini brand is ultimately successful because of decades of accreted meaning within a variety of markets, making it an apt demonstration of the hermeneutics of branding. After all, "a brand's contemporary significance [results] from collective interpretations by multiple stakeholders over numerous but particular historical moments" (Hatch and Rubin 2006, 41).

This process is not always appreciated. Manuela Gieri (1999, 169) worries that Fellini's work "has been repeatedly appropriated and repurposed as an icon or a myth of Western culture; then it has been progressively emptied and incessantly replicated as an unrestrained and exciting *simulacrum* of itself and of that very culture." This harkens back to the warnings given by Walter Benjamin (1968) in his description of how the aura of art is inherently threatened by the process of reproduction and redistribution. In this case, one could say that the processes of marketing and branding distance the consumer ever farther from the original artwork. The more "fellinismo" that saturates the marketplace, the greater the risk that the brand will become diluted and that it will eventually be set adrift completely from its referent. The name Fellini will thus be reduced to a mere font of eminently imitable imagery, rather than symbolizing a body of work with substance and meaning in and of itself.

Notes

1 The author wishes to thank Martha Feldman and Fabio Panconesi for their generosity in sharing information regarding the Fellini Pelletteria in Rome.

2 This is not to say that companies do not use other Italian directors' names to signify craftsmanship, artistry, and quality. For example, Hugo Boss has a suit model named Pasolini. The Provenza Studio Company in California, which specializes in hardwood flooring, has a series entitled "Studio Moderno" that features a color named "Rossellini," in addition to one named "Fellini." The use of the Visconti name for luxury articles such as fine watches and oriental rugs is also visible, though arguably that name (within the Italian market at least) holds deeply embedded associations with nobility and wealth that predate the director Luchino Visconti.

3 Gradisca Ristorante includes in its promotional materials a sketch of a full-figured woman who is a clear evocation of Fellini's voluptuous female characters. The fact that she more closely resembles the character of Saraghina in *8½* rather than Gradisca may show the extent to which cinematic memory is malleable for marketing purposes.

4 Fellini would perpetuate this view in the well-known commercial he filmed for Barilla pasta in 1986, which sends up the snobbery of French dining in favor of the more genuine and satisfying properties of Italian pasta.

5 This quotation has by now become a highly merchandisable mantra and can be found on a range of posters, t-shirts, and other products for sale on the e-commerce website Etsy. Notably the attribution to Fellini is often included, suggesting that the name adds significant value to the sentiment expressed.

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32

Fellini Remixed: Anglo-American Film and Television Appropriations

Frank Burke

The 2020 centenary of Fellini's birth offers a timely opportunity to reconsider the abiding presence the Italian director has enjoyed in Anglo-American audiovisual culture. The origins of that presence lie in an extraordinary filmmaking career that earned Fellini Best Foreign Film Academy Awards for four movies, *La strada* (1954), *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957), *8½* (1963), and *Amarcord* (1974), as well as a lifetime achievement Oscar in 1993—and countless other major international awards. On a mundane level, Fellini's lingering importance makes itself manifest in the Fellini "brand": the use of the director's name or film titles to designate bars, restaurants, fashion, clothing, and other consumer items throughout the world—a phenomenon wittily detailed by Rebecca Bauman in this volume. Less mundane are the myriad appropriations of Fellini in British and American film and television, demonstrating both Fellini's cultural and artistic influence and the way that influence has been interpreted as Anglo-American culture talks back to Fellini, *italianità*, and the Felliniesque.

Fellini's staying power has both a high-culture and a popular-culture dimension to it. The former derived from Fellini's status as one of the deities of the European art film of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, a development that, along with auteur theory in general, seemed to elevate cinema to the level of "high" art. Fellini's status as a popular culture icon, reflected in the Fellini brand's persistence in the postmodern consumer landscape, emerged to some extent in conjunction with a Fellini persona or public image that made him a household name and helped promote appropriation and, often, parody. The persona, not unrelated to the Fellini brand, was a significant factor in Fellini's perceived marketability.[1] Fellini employed it at times in self-parody, appropriate for a figure who began his career as a comics artist and variety-theater caricaturist and often drew himself as a cartoon figure.

A full examination of Fellini's dispersion in Anglo-American film and television culture lies beyond the scope of a single essay. Here I will roughly sketch the extensiveness of that dispersion and speculate upon the range of motivations, from self-interest to kindredness of spirit, behind appropriations of Fellini's work. I will then address four television examples: the music video for the popular R.E.M. song from the 1990s "Everybody Hurts" (R.E.M. 1993/2000); the Fellini parody, "Franco e Sandro" (*French & Saunders* 1996) by the British comedy team Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders; and Fellinian episodes from *Northern Exposure* (1992) and *3rd Rock from the Sun* (1997).

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke,
Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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These texts foreground Fellini not just as a common denominator but also as the inspiration for culturally incisive resignifications.

Fellini and Film Citation and Adaptation

In "8 Things That (Probably) Wouldn't Exist Without Fellini's *8½*," Bilge Ebiri (2013) identifies several of the films that owe something (and in some cases a great deal) to that film alone: Jim McBride's *David Holzman's Diary* (1967), Bob Fosse's *All That Jazz* (1979), Woody Allen's *Stardust Memories* (1980), Joel Schumacher's *Falling Down* (1993), Roman Coppola's *CQ* (2001), Tim Burton's *Big Fish* (2003), Todd Haynes's *I'm Not There* (2007), and Rob Marshall's *Nine* (2009). Strangely, he omits Paul Mazursky's *Alex in Wonderland* (1970) and Peter Greenaway's *8½ Women* (1993).[2] And he might also have given a nod to Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994), whose dance scene with John Travolta and Uma Thurman is notoriously based on the nightclub/spa scene in Fellini's film.

Ebiri also identifies a general influence of the film on filmmakers such as Terry Gilliam, who introduces the Criterion Collection edition of *8½*; David Lynch; and Charlie Kaufman—screenwriter for *Being John Malkovich* (Spike Jonze 1999) and *Adaptation* (Spike Jonze 2002), and director of *Synecdoche, New York* (2008).

Terrence Rafferty (2004) notes that there is another Fellini film that almost rivals *8½* in Anglo-American significance:

> There was a time when it seemed as if half the good movies made in America had been inspired, or at least enabled, by … "I Vitelloni." [The film] managed, by the beginning of the 70s, to work its way deep into the consciousness of several of the best young American filmmakers. You can hear this movie's voice whispering in the ear of Peter Bogdanovich in "The Last Picture Show" (1971), of George Lucas in "American Graffiti" (1973), of Martin Scorsese in "Mean Streets" (1973), of Philip Kaufman in "The Wanderers" (1979), of Barry Levinson in "Diner" (1982).

Moving closer to the present, we can add Guy Maddin's *My Winnipeg* (2007) to Rafferty's list. (See Kilbourn in this volume.)

Other Anglo-American films that manifest a clear Fellinian influence include Vincente Minnelli's *Two Weeks in Another Town* (1962), Bob Fosse's *Sweet Charity* (1969), Robert Altman's *Brewster McCloud* (1970), Gene Wilder's *The World's Greatest Lover* (1977), Peter Yate's *Breaking Away* (1979), Woody Allen's *Celebrity* (1998), Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation* (2003) and *Somewhere* (2010), and Christopher Nolan's *Inception* (2010).[3] In terms of directors, Fellini has had a major influence on Scorsese, Altman, and all three filmmaking Coppolas—and one could argue as well for John Waters, Tim Burton, and Wes Anderson.[4] A Google search will turn up numerous other major American directors, including Steven Spielberg, who have expressed great respect for Fellini's work.

While Fellini was becoming an object of fascination within the Anglo-American cinematic imaginary, his persona or mystique began to take on a life of its own beyond that sphere. His 1960s films such as "The Temptation of Dr. Antonio" (episode of *Boccaccio '70* 1962), *La dolce vita* (1960), *8½*, and *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965) gave rise to an adjective, "Felliniesque," whose users have far exceeded in number the viewers of his films. Certainly, the adjective was, in the first instance, the result of the films themselves. Fellini radically revised film language, employing camera, editing, and mise-en-scène to dynamize the visual field and give free play to

the unexpected and extraordinary. (See Vanelli in this volume.) His stories were propelled by fierce oneiric energy deriving from his and his characters' unconscious. And the worlds he depicted were replete with costuming and décor that have influenced the fashion industry to this day. (See Lo Vetro in this volume.) Moreover, Fellini underwent at least four major shifts in style: from *La dolce vita* to *8½*, then to *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969), then to *Roma* (1972)—a 12-year trajectory of artistic experimentation unparalleled in the work of any other feature-film director in the history of cinema. The "Felliniesque" was also the result of the music of Nina Rota, which had so much to do with the humor, dynamism, and sophistication of Fellini's work from *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952) through *Prova d'orchestra* (*Orchestra Rehearsal* 1978).[5]

The mythology that grew alongside and beyond Fellini's work in the 1960s was reflected in the language of publications about the director:

- *"I, Fellini,"* the title of a 1995 book-length interview with Charlotte Chandler that hyperbolically invokes the Robert Graves novel-cum-franchise, *I, Claudius*
- "Fellinissimo," a hagiographic 1980 interview with Germaine Greer
- "The Director as Superstar," a 1972 article—though not a flattering one—by Joseph McBride (1972)
- "…Mondo Fellini," a 1994 commemoration by Clive James
- "…An Unknown Planet for Me to Populate," a 1970 interview with Tom Burke on the release of *Fellini – Satyricon*.

I have violated chronological order for rhetorical reasons: the final two expand the creative reach of the Italian filmmaker to the global, then to the galactic. The fact that the last title quotes Fellini suggests the director's more than occasional complicity in the hyperbole.

Fellini's 1966 *Playboy* interview (Fellini 1996) functions as both a reflection of, and contribution to, the mystique. The magazine was a symbol of faux sophistication and pseudo alternative self-expression, typified by its feature interviews with trendy figures in the arts. It was also a bastion of heterosexual, but really only male, liberation, that melded quite nicely with the testosterone-skewed sexual revolution of the 1960s and of much European art film. The language used to describe Fellini in the introduction to the interview helped consolidate his 1960s image as an imaginative pioneer. He is (Fellini 1966, 55–57) "the protean creator of … trail-blazing cinematic allegories," he is possessed of "prodigious originality as a filmmaker." He is the "protean [there's that word again] poet of cinema." He is "flamboyantly inventive," "irrepressibly, inimitably, eternally himself." In the end, *Playboy* moves beyond the global and merely galactic, for it effectively portrays Fellini as god, creator of all things: "on the set … every detail … is decreed by Fellini himself and no one else. The complete filmmaker … must be not only the creator of his own heaven and earth and all beasts thereof, but also the benevolent despot of all he surveys … with final and absolute authority over everything and everyone [… in his] omnipotent role as god-king…."[6] The image of Fellini as god is abetted by *Playboy*'s suggestion that Fellini's films were invented virtually ex nihilo, without props such as screenplays—something Fellini contests during the interview.

Equally important was the image presented in *Playboy* of Fellini as a pioneer in matters sexual. His own words were crucial here: "Marriage as an institution needs re-examining. Modern man needs richer relationships. He is not a monogamous animal. Marriage is tyranny, a violation of his natural instincts" (55).[7] Linked to Fellini's sexual revolution is a personalist political revolution based on discovering oneself and jettisoning the crippling conventions of tradition and the past: "self-acceptance can occur only when you've grasped one fundamental fact of life: that the only thing which exists is yourself, your true individual self in depth, which wants to grow spontaneously, but

which is fettered by inoperable lies, myths and fantasies proposing an unattainable morality or sanctity or perfection—all of it is brainwashed into us during our defenseless childhood" (59).

Fellini was an ideal poster boy for other aspects of the 1960s as well. His films of the period, starting with "The Temptation of Dr. Antonio," were "head trips," featuring hallucination, dream, memory, visions, and drugs in "Toby Dammit" (episode of *Histoires extraordinaires / Tre passi nel delirio / Spirits of the Dead* 1968) and *Fellini - Satyricon*.[8] (See Cristina Villa on *Fellini - Satyricon* and the counter culture in this volume.) Fellini's version of the 1960s, with its strong insistence on individuality, was particularly appealing in the American context, where, despite the temporary influence of Marxist and Maoist political theories, rampant individualism (less rugged but no less dominant in consumer society than in its frontier incarnation) never lost its hold. And, of course, he was a filmmaker, and the dramatic transformation of cinema in the 1950s and 1960s made it the premier art form of the moment, with huge appeal for the contemporary transgressive intelligentsia.

In sum, over the course of the 1960s, Fellini acquired enormous cultural capital because of his work, the historical moment, and the way in which the two made possible the emergence of a strong mythology around *il maestro* as he was called, not only in Italy but also in the Anglo-American world. Within that context, one can posit several different (and not by any means mutually exclusive) motivations for filmic appropriations of Fellini.

First of all, there is the potential for building authorial identity through association with Fellini. In this category, we might place young directors such as Paul Mazursky and Jim McBride, seeking to consolidate their identities as auteurs by keeping Fellini's artistic company, as well as directors seeking to make a leap: Bob Fosse from the then underappreciated world of musical theater to that of the art film. Woody Allen from stand-up comedy and lightweight early films to, again, art cinema. In terms of strengthening already established auteur status, we might cite Todd Haynes (*I'm Not There*) and Christopher Nolan (*Inception*)—and perhaps even the early Robert Altman of *Brewster McCloud*.

An interesting example of "elevation by association" is provided by Schumacher's *Falling Down*. The only significant citation of Fellini in the film is the introductory sequence: a reworking of the traffic jam / nightmare of *8½*. Prior to *Falling Down*, Schumacher was best known as the bankable Hollywood "brat pack" director of *St. Elmo's Fire* (1985) and *The Lost Boys* (1987). However, teamed with Michael Douglas, who inherited from his father Kirk a penchant for mixing filmmaking and political commitment, Schumacher seems intent on making a strong statement about alienation and disintegration within American society. The opening announces, in effect, that we are about to see a serious work, unlike—or at least more so than—the director's prior films.

A second, and at times related, motivation in Fellinian appropriation is fascination with self-reflexivity, with film about film or film about art (Mazursky, McBride, Fosse, Allen, C. Kaufman, and Greenaway). For Fellini, self-reflexivity often involved exploring the creative process itself, as in *8½*; the Fellini derivatives tend, instead, to be more about the male directorial ego, logistical problems, and fraught relationships during attempts to bring a film or play to fruition (e.g., *All That Jazz*). Self-reflexivity often bespeaks (Allen, Greenaway) a desire to be or appear conceptually complex and profound.

A third motivating factor has been the marketability of the Fellini brand. *Sweet Charity* and *All That Jazz* were, in part, attempts to capitalize on the Oscar-winning *Le notti di Cabiria* and *8½*. The movie version of *Nine* (loosely based on *8½*) is the most recent and perhaps the most opportunistic example of attempted commercial exploitation. Released in 2009, it not only adapts the highly successful Broadway adaptation of *8½*, but seeks to capitalize on the successes of the filmed version of *Chicago* (2002), also directed by Rob Marshall, and other filmed musicals that immediately preceded it: *Dreamgirls* (2006), *Hairspray* and *Sweeney Todd* (2007), and *Mamma Mia* (2008).

There are also more positive reasons for Fellinian appropriation. Cultural connection with Italy is one. Italian–American director Martin Scorsese offers the most obvious example, but the three Coppolas are also exemplary. Cultural connection can be linked to the most inspirational cause of appropriation: creative affinity that in turn may involve a love of spectacle, an attraction to the bizarre and excessive, a strong psychological/imaginative/oneiric bent, and, at times, a propensity for comic-book caricature. Within this rather broad "category" of kindred spirits, we could locate cineastes, such as Ken Russell, Gilliam, Altman, Greenaway, Lynch, Waters, Burton, Sofia Coppola, Anderson, and Kaufman.

Leaving aside the spectacular, "baroque," psychological, and cartoonish, creative affinity can also mean a critical sensibility that sees in Fellini's work a kindred capacity for social observation. *I vitelloni*'s influence provides a clear example.

Fellini and the Anglo-American Small Screen

In 1990s British and U.S. television, Fellini is generally emblematic of progressive, alternative, in-the-know popular culture, and, as such, he continues to confer elevation by association. The R.E.M. music video "Everybody Hurts" is consistent with the group's image as edgy and alternative, reflected in reverential articles, such as "How R.E.M. invented alternative music" (Zaleskie 2011) and "REM: the band that taught alternative rock how to grow old with dignity" (Lynskey 2014). The British comedy show *French & Saunders* embodies the generally high aspirations of British television for much of the latter half of the twentieth century—and of Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders as culturally astute media personalities. American sitcoms such as *Northern Exposure* and *3rd Rock from the Sun* exemplify "niche elevation" in American television programming, linked to the crowding out of original film work by the blockbuster mentality of Hollywood and the emergence on cable television of original shows and series. A significant amount of creative work seemed to shift from film to television in the 1980s and 1990s, culminating in the production of high-budget, aesthetically ambitious productions by networks such as HBO. This shift is reflected in Joan Tewkesbury's direction of the episode of *Northern Exposure* that I will be addressing. Tewkesbury is noted for her association with Robert Altman and, in particular, scripts for *Thieves Like Us* (1974) and *Nashville* (1976). "Quality television," as it came to be called, was also the result of market segmentation that targeted, among many other groups, well-educated and arts-inclined, mostly middle class, folk with cultural capital and a degree of social conscience who were faced with a radical decline in film culture while constrained to stay home by the fact that they were now raising children.

At least three of these television appropriations reflect significant creative affinity with Fellini. The comic spirit of French and Saunders seems closest to that of the Italian director, while the episodes of *Northern Exposure* and *3rd Rock from the Sun* combine some degree of Felliniesque comedy with the capacity for social critique fundamental to Fellini's work.

8½ Become Public Service Announcement

Everybody Hurts is the one instance of the four under discussion that references a serious Fellini. The song is an antisuicide message for (principally) teens. The video combines the opening traffic-jam nightmare of *8½* with Guido's brief circus-arena vision of communal integration near the

film's end, presenting a movement from isolated suffering (people alone in cars lost in subtitled thoughts) to liberation effected by characters "joining the song," escaping from their vehicles, and becoming part of the social—implied in the "everybody" of the song's title. As Guido is the principal origin and catalyst of change in *8½*,[9] lead singer Michael Stipe is the catalyzing protagonist of the video, evolving from self-protective angst and isolation to connection with the music and his environment. His joining his own song might be equated with Guido's seeking to align himself with his own creative impulses and consciousness. The camera work offers another parallel between the video and Fellini's film. While characters are isolated and stuck at the start, the camera is everywhere, able to connect with everyone, a "creative spirit," and arguably the motive force behind the process of liberation that occurs. In the video, joining the song or the music is a metaphor for connecting with the creative harmony of life, a metaphor consistent with Fellini's articulations of a holistic world beginning with *Le notti di Cabiria* and extending through *Giulietta degli spiriti* (see Burke 1996, Chapters 3 and 5). As an added Fellini/liberationist touch, by video's end, people have escaped the entrapment of any institutional audiovisual field: they are nowhere to be seen during the closing voiceover in which a female announcer remarks on the miraculous event that has just taken place while television cameras reveal only the abandoned cars. The miraculousness to which she attests is, of course, pure Felliniana.

Despite the Felliniesque aesthetics of the video, one can question its practical implications: how do the dispersion and exodus signify or provoke a condition of empowerment that would lead to the conquest of depression? Aren't they just further manifestations of alienation? Moreover, the invocation of Fellini would have had extremely limited social service value for teenagers in the 1990s. More than addressing a real social problem, the video seems to satisfy a desire on the part of the director, Jake Scott—son of Ridley—and the group to confirm their status as cultural mavericks in the world of rock video. For the younger Scott, the project seems to fall into the authorial-advancement category, accomplishing its purpose in no uncertain terms by gaining Scott entry into the Music Video Production Association Hall of Fame. He is also more recently known for supervising Apple's 30th anniversary promotional video, shot worldwide and entirely on iPhones, implicitly hearkening back 30 years to the famous Apple "1984" Superbowl commercial that announced the arrival of Macintosh computers and was directed by his father.

Affectionate Payback

French & Saunders' "Franco e Sandro," which aired on 18 January 1996, is part of a series of parodies that the comedy team brought to the BBC. The DVD collection on which it appears, *Living in a Material World* (2003), includes spoofs of Madonna, Batman, *Braveheart, Baywatch,* Björk, and Ingmar Bergman, indicating that *French & Saunders'* stock-in-trade was chic pop culture and its send-up. While I situate the R.E.M. video in the realm of promotional/elevational appropriation, I see "Franco e Sandro" more as an instance of creative and comic affinity, incorporating the Felliniesque into a French-and-Saundersesque comic universe while remaining faithful to the spirit of a filmmaker who began his career as a caricaturist and never fully abandoned that mode of comedic critique. There is enormous respect and fondness for Fellini, reflected in the care that went into the segment. Dawn French (nd) has said, "I've got particular affection for the Fellini parody, because of all the research we did. It's probably more accurate than it is funny." The range of reference is impressive: *La strada, La dolce vita, 8½, Giulietta degli spiriti, I clowns* (1970), *Amarcord* (1974), *Roma* (1972), and *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980). Despite what French

says, the episode is quite funny because the women are able to capture the ludic nature of Fellini's work, turning Fellinian angst (Maddalena from *La dolce vita*, Giulietta's at times terrifying visions) into comedy, and humorously contemporizing Fellinian themes (e.g., the loss of religious meaning becomes a quest for "Madonna"—the pop star rather than the Mother of God).

"Franco e Sandro" works so well in relation to Fellini because it combines intimate understanding of the object parodied and a strongly independent voice on the part of the parodists. There is perfect equilibrium among the three creative spirits involved, while the special connection French and Saunders have with their "source" allows them, paradoxically, to be more Felliniesque the more they are themselves. Their reconfiguration of Fellini's representation of women is healthily feminist and a welcome antidote to the blinkered and puritanical critique—or avoidance—of Fellini on the part of much English-language feminist film theory and criticism.[10]

The title of the episode reflects the comediennes' strategy. By calling it "Franco e Sandro" instead of "Franca e Sandra," they suggest its male origins—and acknowledge that Fellini's representation of women was much more about his self-critical and self-parodied masculinity than about women or the feminine. At the same time, crucially, French and Saunders undercut masculinity in the films they parody and, conversely, confirm the centrality of women to those films. The statue of Christ from *La dolce vita* is replaced by one of Madonna, whisked through the skies by helicopter to Trocadero (an entertainment venue) instead of St. Peter's (Fellini performs the identical operation of replacing St. Peter's with entertainment in his abrupt cut from the Basilica to a nightclub for the second sequence of *La dolce vita*.) (Figure 32.1). The males in the video are subservient to women: a priest blesses himself at the sight of Madonna, manservants set up Sandro / Susy's beach regalia (à la *Giulietta degli spiriti*), boys run after the silhouette of Madonna and watch Franco / Saraghina perform (recalling *8½*), paparazzi chase first after Franco / Sylvia and then after Sandro / Maddalena (based on *La dolce vita*).

Figure 32.1 Four women on a rooftop in *La dolce vita* are replaced by French and Saunders, gazing up as a statue of the "Madonna" is whisked by helicopter to the "Trocadero." "Franco e Sandro." *Living in a Material World*. BBC. Screen grab captured by Frank Burke from 2002 DVD version.

French and Saunders are never lost in the Fellini characters they parody; their own comedic and charismatic identities remain foremost. This is nowhere clearer than in the Franco / Saraghina performance, which is pure Dawn French, stripping Saraghina of any frighteningly sexual or numinous power—so much so that the boys are more confused and bored than captivated. But perhaps most important, the video is insistently about women relating to women: Franco / Giulietta and Sandro / Susy at the beach in color (*Giulietta degli spiriti*); Franco / Saraghina and Sandro / Maddalena on the beach in black and white (*La dolce vita* and *8½*); Franco / Sylvia and Sandro / Maddalena in and near the "Trevi Fountain" (*La dolce vita*); and, in the final sequence, Sandro / Susy and a Franco who ends up embodying both Giulietta and Gelsomina in a scene that recalls a party at Susy's in *Giulietta degli spiriti*. Their relationship is based on friendship and support: Saraghina tries to cheer up the existentially maudlin Maddalena, Susy expresses concern about the direction of her relationship with Giulietta (with a comic edge, given the nature of the video), and Susy tries to distract Giulietta from her terrifying visions. Even gloomy Maddalena proves solicitous, warning an annoyingly narcissistic Sylvia "you'll catch your death" as she wades about in the fountain. An emphasis on communication extends even to the nod of French and Saunders to both Fellinian self-reflexivity and his notable financial difficulties with finishing projects. Toward the end of the video, they start talking to the camera, saying that the cameraman / producer (whom they are addressing indirectly) will stop filming when the money runs out. One might take their "talking back" to the camera as a mise en abyme of their talking back, throughout the episode, to the Fellini to whom they have paid a strongly self-aware tribute.

Their women-centric connectivity can be contrasted with the far more masculine vision of *Everybody Hurts*, which, despite its implied message of solidarity, tends to show people walking in rows separated by cars, all in the same direction but not intermingling. The R.E.M. members are above them, on a raised concrete walkway, separate from the crowd and each other. Ultimately, they all end up dissociated from the scene / world. The male alienation of *Everybody Hurts* certainly takes cues from the Fellini of *La dolce vita* and *8½,* but the woman-centric dimension of "Franco e Sandro" can also be traced back to Fellini's resonant and complex female characters: Gelsomina, Cabiria, Maddalena, Sylvia, Luisa (*8½*), Giulietta, Susy, and others.

Northern Exposure: The Limits of Difference

Northern Exposure was an American television series that ran on CBS from 1990 to 1995. It places New York physician, Joel Fleischman, in the small Alaskan town of Cicely, where he is obliged to practice medicine to offset his student loans. While taking Fleischman's culture shock as its point of departure, the show also focuses on the town residents, many of whom come from elsewhere and have interesting back stories. The episode I will be addressing, "On Your Own," was aired on 9 November 1982.

The spirit of Fellini might be glimpsed on at least three levels. First of all, there seems to be an underlying whimsy to the show. It is present in the credit sequence that opens every episode, when a moose happens by and wanders through the deserted streets of Cicely, recalling the memorable scene in *La strada* when an abandoned Gelsomina sits on the sidewalk and a horse unexpectedly saunters onto the scene. That whimsy seems present in the naming of the town "Cicely," which of course calls to mind the Italian Sicily. The latter is there, like the vagabond moose, through phonetic reference and textual allusion as a Derridean specter, suggesting that the town is as much an imagined as an inhabited community. In fact, I would argue, it is an "otherworld" rich with implications.

The second level operates among certain of the characters and what they bring to the town. Bob, stage name Enrico Pellati, is the "flying man," a seemingly mute former circus performer who has come to town with his "New Perception Players" and seeks to renew a romantic relationship with Marilyn, Fleischman's Native receptionist. His name is another doubling of American and Italian identity, and his ties to the circus evoke Fellini, who disseminated the apocryphal story that he ran away with the circus as a child, and whose movies (most especially *I clowns* 1970) are steeped in circus iconography. Further evocative of Fellini, Pellati's "New Perception Players" put on a circus-like performance midway through the episode.

At the same time, we have Mike, a hyper allergic character whose immune issues force him to live in a totally controlled environment. His protective bubble house and astronaut suit, borrowed from Korean war vet Maurice and necessary to protect him from the environment, provide a strongly Felliniesque visual flavor to the proceedings, as does the New Perception Players' creation of fantastically incongruous costumes out of everyday materials. Even more than Mike, the Players transform the landscape of Cicely and perform the characteristically Fellinian magic of making the normal marvelous and vice versa.

Most important for our purposes is Ed Chigliak, half Native American and an aspiring filmmaker, who suffers director's block until he discovers a ring in a fish he has caught. The ring is inscribed "F.F.: Con amore, Giulietta," and this sets in motion a host of Fellini associations. The appearance of the ring is a typically Fellinian eruption of the unexpected amid the ordinary, and the fish that delivers it resonates (more strongly at the episode's end) with the sea creature beached at the end of *La dolce vita*. The ring and inscription revisit the Fellinian emphasis on love (or its absence), present in early- to mid-career Fellini films and in many of his pronouncements on those films. Ed's predilection for letting the camera roll and capture what is in front of it ("I decided to shoot without a script") recalls both Fellini's origins as a neorealist filmmaker and his reputation for improvisation. Most important, once the ring has appeared, Ed begins to have dreams of winning lifetime achievement awards as a Cicelian / Sicilian director, and every time he points the camera at a typical Cicelian scene, images of Italian characters, Italian situations, and Fellinian film sets appear in his viewfinder.

For all the seeming celebration of Fellini, however, from the moose to the ring to the superimposition of the imaginative on the real, the episode presents the Felliniesque as something highly problematic—at least from the point of view of its characters. To appreciate this fully, we need to look briefly at the cultural and historical context of *Northern Exposure*. The show can be read as a broad updating of issues implicit in the founding of America, the closing of the frontier, and the settling of the West. Euro-Americans emigrate to the far Northwest and settle in a world of Native Americans, where they dominate, though not as viciously as their European forebears. Their migration and dissociation from their roots, as well as the encounter between native and settler cultures, raise issues for many of the characters about identity and sense of home, and these in turn encourage a revisiting of conflicting American values: the frontier spirit (exploration and adventure) and settled isolationism, or to borrow an Italian term, "campanilismo": the inclination to stay securely within the sound and sight of one's bell tower. Both have significant implications for how one relates to others or "the other" in psychological as well as social terms.

The title of the show offers some hints. It suggests not true discovery of the northland, but a distanced view—the northern exposure offered from the windowed security and comfort of a house or home. "Exposure" is not immersion, and it even implies a fear of contagion. Moreover, "northern exposure" identifies the show with the perspective of the Euro-Americans—not of Native Americans, who become what is exposed. This speaks to a multicultural conservatism that the show does not idly mirror but critiques. The fact that "On Your Own" is directed by someone who worked closely with one of the most profound cultural critics in the history of American film makes it virtually certain that this episode, in particular, is highly self-aware.

Returning to the episode proper, what, we might ask, are the characters' predilections in terms of adventure versus settlement? Maggie, a bush pilot who has left her debutante world of Grosse Pointe, Michigan, seems the one Cicely resident willing to keep living on the move. She claims she has no need for romantic entanglements, though it is clear in this episode that she is tempted to settle into a relationship with Mike. The visiting Bob / Enrico is not about to give up his itinerant life, though he wants to share it with Marilyn. Others, however, prefer to stay put. Ed's acceptance speech is an affirmation of roots: "We all come from the place we're from and we can't really be from anywhere else." Marilyn puts it most succinctly, "I can't go back, I can't go forward. My home is here. My job is here." Still others "resolve" the adventure vs. at-home-ness dilemma by taking their environment with them wherever they go. This is Mike's strategy, setting up his bubble house on the frontier. And it is the function of Maurice's space suit, which seems to bespeak a new kind of frontier spirit in which one can voyage far and wide but only by remaining hermetically sealed within a protective environment one has brought along. This is consistent with the fact that Maurice is presented throughout the show as the consummate "American"—hyper patriotic vet and ex-astronaut, defender of the Vietnam War, entrepreneur supreme—but also as one who, instead of experiencing the world, "wears" his Americanness, like his NASA suit, wherever he goes. In the context of his militarism, his having fathered a child during a casual liaison with a Korean sex worker serves as a metaphor for American imperialism, not as an encounter with others. All the businesses, wealth, and property he has accumulated are their own kind of bubble, with which he now wishes to envelop his son. ("Adoption" of the "other" is, of course, a loaded term in relation to Americanization.) Much is implied by his last name, Minnifield, which suggests the reduction of life and adventure to a mini field (the size, perhaps of a space suit) but also the mine field that such reduction inevitably becomes—especially when mini-mindedness assumes the form of American military imperialism.

Fleischman, too, is living in a bubble, in a mini field. His imposition of his middle-class Northeastern culture on his surroundings is most clearly signaled in this episode by his undaunting efforts to improve his golf swing.

Given all this, Mike's medical condition becomes the physical manifestation of a pervasive cultural anxiety: the need to remain totally "immune." (Despite its recourse here to metaphor, the show is consistently sympathetic toward Mike's medical condition and implies, as well, the compromised relationship between people and their world caused by everything from diet and overmedicalization to environmental degradation.)

What happens when Fellini and the Felliniesque run up against "the bubble"? They suffer a double rejection. First of all, Marilyn refuses to join Bob in the world of the circus, travel, magic irrealism, and the mysteries of nonpowered human flight. Despite the appeal of his special powers and his fellow performers, the otherness that he represents can't be anything but out of place. Second, Ed comes to the realization that his flirtation with the Felliniesque is a form of psychological possession, whose continued pursuit would no doubt lead to insanity. The magic that manifests itself in conjunction with his dreams and visions, while providing much of the dynamism and intrigue of the episode, is a threat to the settled-ness of his identity and his place in the community. The Felliniesque characters who pursue Ed through the streets of Cicely are anything but the joyous flow of figures from Guido's past into the circus arena in *8½*. They recall instead the final scenes of *Giulietta degli spiriti*, in which the heroine is assaulted by creatures who terrify her. There is, however, a significant difference between Cicely's and Giulietta's spirits. The Cicelian apparitions are grotesque and foreign in their "Fellini-ness" and perhaps in their Italianness. Their difference makes them unnerving and unsusceptible to rapprochement. Giulietta's spirits, being projections of her psyche that fuse self and world, are uncanny: familiar and unfamiliar. They are frightening *because* they are both. But because they are part of her, they are

always already accepted, welcome—or, as they whisper at the very end of her film, "true friends." Their alien-ness lies largely in Giulietta's initial inability to acknowledge and make peace with them—in *her* failure to achieve rapprochement. At the end, she learns not to fear them but to carry them with her as spirits rather than as apparitions in her journey toward the future. Ed, on the other hand, must renounce the ring and the connection it articulates between himself and Fellini. He also, effectively, renounces the love expressed in Giulietta's message to F.F. The fish that gifted it becomes implicitly aligned with the monstrous (shades again of the end of *La dolce vita*), which can be banished only by Ed's rejection of all things Fellini (Figure 32.2).

The full danger of the Felliniesque is made manifest just before the Fellinian apparitions become their most frightening. Ed encounters an imaginary Italian figure who assures Ed that, assuming he continues to indulge his Fellinian filmmaking fantasies, he is going to be a great success, make lots of money, and have lots of pretty girls. Ed's remark "are you saying I should sell my soul?" and his inability to name the figure ("Are you…? I mean you couldn't be … You're not….") imply that this incarnation of the Felliniesque is nothing other than the devil, and that, for Ed, the Fellinian path is now to be associated with not just insanity but damnation(!). The fact that this figure is reiterating what was implied in Ed's lifetime achievement dream confirms the fact that this is all in Ed's head and that this representation of *italianità*, as with all implications of xenophobia and cultural prejudice in the episode, occurs on the level of character and not on the level of the show's creative intent.[11]

Figure 32.2 Felliniesque figures in pursuit of Ed seem menacing: part of a Fellinian "otherness" that must be rejected. "On Your Own." *Northern Exposure*. CBS. Screen grab captured by Frank Burke from 2006 DVD version.

One might argue that the powerful rejection of the Felliniesque is linked to Native rather than Euro-American culture: that Marilyn and Ed have a much stronger sense of place—the basis for their response to the Fellinian "intrusions"[12]—than the immigrant citizens of Cicely. I would argue, though, that the work of rejection and, in Ed's case, of exorcism is done on behalf of the entire community, ridding the town as a whole, not just its Native inhabitants, of the Felliniesque. In fact, the show ends with Bob / Enrico and his troupe departing as well. In a world of pervasive American-style campanilismo, Fellini is, in the end, too different. The most the Cicelians can enjoy is a brief moment of "Southern Exposure," in which they become witness to a seductive eccentricity that must ultimately be denied. Maggie's recommendation to Mike in the final scene, as he briefly ventures beyond his bubbled world, just to the edge of town, just to the edge of the woods, sums it up nicely: "Let's not go too far."

3rd Rock from the Sun's De-alienation

3rd Rock from the Sun was an American sitcom that aired on NBC from 1996 to 2001. A small group of aliens is sent to earth to study its human inhabitants. They masquerade as a family, the Solomons, and Dick, the head of the expedition, takes a position as a physics professor at a local university. In the episode under discussion, the two-part "Nightmare on Dick Street," which aired on 18 May 1997, the extraterrestrials experience dreams for the first time, a sign they are becoming humanized.

The Felliniesque content in "Nightmare on Dick Street" is far more limited than it was in "On Your Own"—restricted to the dreaming unconscious of Sally, the alien crew's second in command. Her dream references the black-and-white cinematography and costuming of both *La dolce vita* and *8½*, and various scenes and relationships from the former: the airport arrival of Sylvia, the angst of Maddalena (clearly, we are discovering, an easy target for parody!), the relationship between Sylvia and Marcello, the striptease sequence at the concluding orgy, and the sequence in which Marcello uses chicken feathers to abuse a young woman and then "bless" the debauched guests as they exit into the dawn. It flaunts Fellinian visual virtuosity, turning sugar into snow into feathers, with a nod to the snow globe in Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane* (1941). Its musical score derives from *La strada*. Capturing the male insecurity central to Fellini's films, Sally becomes gigantic—able to munch on the earth in one absurd moment, and then shoot Don, her overmatched partner in life and in dream, as she morphs from Sylvia-esque siren into femme fatale.

Issues of migration, settlement, and adventure versus settledness are as prominent here as they were in "On Your Own." The series is premised on the difficult cohabitation not of different cultures, but of different species, dramatically upping the ante of cultural mixing. The show implies the challenges for the indigenous culture of integrating the genuinely alien—should they ever discover the true origins of their visitors. But foregrounded is the challenge for the aliens of melting into the mid-American pot in which they have landed. The issue of cultural encounter is raised explicitly at the beginning of "Nightmare on Dick Street" when Dick's academic colleague and girlfriend Mary receives a grant to go to Borneo and calls it "a chance to really immerse myself in primitive culture." Aside from her annoyingly colonialist attitude, she is describing what is actually the Solomons' relation to American culture. As in *Northern Exposure*, the effects of emigration and dislocation and, in Mary's case, the mere possibility of travel, trigger a powerful retrenchment and desire for home. The upshot is that Dick

offers to marry Mary to keep her from going. She accepts his proposal and decides to decline the grant and the ethnographic opportunity it offers. Moreover, as his dependency on Mary suggests, Dick is redefining what is "home" for him. He is supposed to join the others to return to their home planet for technological repairs and upgrades. However, his commitment to marry Mary makes him miss the rendezvous. As he rushes off in an attempt to make it, Mary asks where he is going, and he replies "Home, before it is too late." In the context of his choices and their consequences, "home" means something quite different from what he thinks. His actions, as opposed to his stated intentions, have confirmed the fact that home is no longer just his planet of origin but also his small Ohio apartment and his life with Mary. He has partially "melted" into the "pot" of the New World, envisioning home in terms of both origin and destination.

As *3rd Rock from the Sun* reprises the theme of cultural encounter and settledness that we saw in *Northern Exposure,* the cultural divide seems even greater. The principal trigger for Dick's dreaming—and a recurring anxiety throughout the series—is his concern that Mary will discover he is an alien and reject his difference. And in fact, the success of coexistence depends to a large extent on the aliens' ability to appear as human as possible; the onus remains on the "other" not on the Americans. At the same time, largely because of alien flexibility, there is greater interpenetration than in "On Your Own." The Solomons' pass for Midwesterners; they acquire the ability to dream; earthlings, such as Mary, are attracted to the aliens; Dick is willing to marry into a new species and reconfigure his sense of home. Moreover, having arrived as anthropologists, the Solomons rather quickly cede scientific detachment and rigor to curiosity and engagement. Accordingly, the rejection of the Felliniesque that occurred in the relatively closed world of *Northern Exposure* does not happen here. In fact, Sally's dream plays an important role in the negotiation of difference, and it distinguishes itself from the other aliens' non-Fellinian dreams that, though linked to interspecies anxieties, do not really address them, and serve principally as an occasion for allusive exercises in visual playfulness.

Sally's unconscious proves dedicated almost entirely to working out a crisis that derives from her species difference from her policeman boyfriend. Her supernatural powers have led her, prior to her dream, to embarrass Don by collaring a criminal whom he wanted to arrest in order to be promoted. While thinking in her waking life that she was doing him a favor, she comes to terms in her dream life with the effects that her superior capabilities have on him. She examines her superiority and the egoism and killing consequences that come with it. Moreover, her sensitivity carries over immediately into her waking activity, as she rejoices in the fact that she has not actually killed Don and expresses her desire for a continuing relationship. Though the dream is ridiculous in its excess (*3rd Rock*-esque, as much as Felliniesque, ridiculous), its emphasis on species difference is more than just casual. Sally's dream of Don turning out to be a chicken clearly references her anxiety about his otherness. Nevertheless, though she comically renounces species-crossing in her dream ("I could never give myself to poultry"), she is able to transcend any such prejudice in her waking relationship with a boyfriend who is not only human but also, as we have seen in various episodes, pretty much a chicken.

In contrast to "On Your Own," the Felliniesque in "Nightmare on Dick Street" enacts magical transformation not only of movie/television art (the visual metamorphoses that propel the dream logic) but of people and species (aliens as humans, humans as chickens, and, most important, a superhero who can grow to and through self-awareness). The ability for objects and characters to be more than one thing, to incorporate difference into identity, is a mystical power that bursts the bubble of isolation, of being "on one's own." It is the foundation of empathy, of communication, of communion.

Conclusion

The four television appropriations I have discussed have at least two crucial things in common. The desire on the part of R.E.M. to reach out to troubled teenagers and mitigate their sense of isolation, the ebullient comedic embrace of the Felliniesque and of women's solidarity by French and Saunders, the insistent critique of bubble vision in *Northern Exposure*—all reflect a commitment to the kind of connectivity that "Nightmare on Dick Street" evokes through Dick's choices and Sally's dream and its consequences. In this, all remain true to the spirit of Fellini's work.

In addition, all four, while finding Fellini a useful point of origin for expressing that commitment, talk back to the director—be it in the language of 1990s alternative rock, of highbrow British comedy, or of the progressive American sitcom. None of the texts has been slavishly faithful; each has made something new out of its originating material. While honoring Fellini and the Felliniesque, all four have, in their very processes of appropriation, chosen otherness over sameness, difference over simple imitation.

Notes

1 That marketability was more perceived than real, especially in the realm of cinema. Fellini's movies were not great moneymakers, partly because of his extravagance in making them. And he found it more and more difficult to mount projects because of diminishing marketability. See Corsi and Nicoli in this volume.

2 Ebiri also lists François Truffaut's *Day for Night,* and Christopher Guest's *The Big Picture,* but I do not see any significant Fellini influence on either.

3 Fellini's biographer Tullio Kezich (2006) claims Fellini's influence on a number of other films, including Arthur Penn's *Mickey One* (1965). However, Penn traveled to Paris before making *Mickey One*, met François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard, and was heavily influenced, as he made the film, by the French New Wave. Moreover, over the course of several conversations in 1974, while I was hosting him at the University of Kentucky, Penn said that he did not much like Fellini's 1960s work.

4 The 1999 Italian television commercial for illycaffè by Francis Ford and Roman Coppola, which reprises Fellini's *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952) in 110 seconds, is a wonderful ode to the Italian director, as is Wes Anderson's 2013 8-minute short, *PRADA Presents Castello Cavalcanti*.

5 See Dyer 2010, chapter five, and Sisto in this volume.

6 I play with grammar in this last quotation from *Playboy*, but do not distort the overall "divinizing" of Fellini.

7 Fellini may be using the generic "he" here, but there is no escaping the fact that his and *Playboy*'s gender biases at the time were distinctly masculine.

8 *Fellini - Satyricon* along with *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick 1968) were the ultimate midnight movie head trips for many a recreational drug user-cum-filmgoer at the time.

9 A view qualified or contested in Burke 1989 and 1996 and Miller 2008.

10 Teresa de Lauretis's 1987 essay, "Fellini's 9½," exemplifies such criticism, while the lack of varied and meaningful feminist discourse around Fellini among non-Italianists reflects, for the most part, an avoidance of the complexity of Fellini's engagement with gender. Among feminist Italianists who have written with complexity about Fellini's work are Waller (1990/1993), O'Healy (2002), and Picchietti (2002). Waller's essay convincingly counters de Lauretis's. O'Healy is critical of Fellini along gender lines, but without the lack of nuance that characterizes non-Italianist feminist critique of Fellini in the Anglophone film studies world. Milliken (1990) links Fellini's *La città delle donne* constructively to Bakhtin. Picchietti offers an insightful analysis of Fellini's unmasking of the masquerade and performances of femininity in Fellini's *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952). Waller's essay in this volume is the most ambitious effort to rethink gender in relation to Fellini and vice versa.

11 The figure's attire and the garden-like setting also have echoes of the Godfather's death scene in Coppola' film (*The Godfather* Part 1 1972). Fellini would have laughed at any assumption that his film-making brought him great wealth.

12 One could argue that their "bubbles" are as formidable as those of their Euro-American compatriots. In this case, the title of the show might reflect not merely Euro-American attitudes but the difficulty on the part of both cultures to risk anything more than mere "exposure."

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33

Il ritorno in patria: From Rimini to Winnipeg by Way of the Alps

Russell J. A. Kilbourn

> "This time I'm leaving for good. Again."
> *My Winnipeg* (Guy Maddin, 2007)

In some of the most famous examples of post-World War II modernist art cinema, the line is blurred between the documentation of the filmmaker's actual experience of coming of age in a specific place and the fictional protagonist's dream or memory or fantasy of return. Cinematic mediality takes precedence over the categories of memory, dream, or the past in itself. It is even possible for the mediated and fictionalized memory-representation to supplant the actual memory of the past in its authenticity. As Federico Fellini puts it: "[N]ow I can't distinguish what really happened from what I made up. Superimposed on my real memories are painted memories of a plastic sea, and characters from my adolescence in Rimini are elbowed aside by actors or extras who interpreted them in my films" (quoted in Bondanella 1992, 283). Out of all of his films, *Amarcord* (1974) and *I vitelloni* (1953) epitomize Fellini's unique brand of fictionalized autobiography.

In neither film does Fellini depict himself—or his avatar—returning home to Rimini, on Italy's Adriatic coast. Fellini, moreover, repeatedly denied the autobiographical veracity of his films: "my films … recount memories that are completely invented. And in the end, what difference does it make?" (quoted in Bondanella 1992, 281). His films are not fictional autobiography properly speaking, but about memory in a broader sense. While *Amarcord* appeared 20 years after *I vitelloni*, its story is set 20 years prior to that of the earlier film. This difference in chronology is also historically significant. In 1950s Italy, the postwar "economic miracle" was underway, and Italy had not yet "grown up" enough to begin to deal with the years of prewar Fascism. The 1970s *anni di piombo* marked a new period of criminal and terrorist violence, and yet in this post-May 1968 moment Italy finally began to critically confront its Fascist past.[1] The conditions were now right for a film such as *Amarcord* to be made (Fellini 1978, 21). Therefore, while the later film revisits the same autobiographical material as *I vitelloni*, the approach is radically different, and the content now explicitly "political." These differences are readily discerned in terms of the films' respective impact upon subsequent cultural production outside of Italy. Fellini's films are nodes in an intertextual / medial network stretching back, on the one hand, to Classical Hollywood, Italian popular culture, and postwar cinematic modernism, and ahead, on the other hand, to

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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non-Italian cultural texts, both films and works in other media. I will highlight two different examples: German author W. G. Sebald's late 1990s prose narratives and Canadian filmmaker Guy Maddin's 2007 fictional documentary, *My Winnipeg*.

While writing the screenplay of *My Winnipeg*, Maddin at first planned a homage to Fellini's *I vitelloni*. "I wanted to not just have myself wandering around town, but four of my dearest friends from my twenty-something most useless years. Just these … guys wandering around like lazy drones, experiencing the city and visiting things" (quoted in Wershler 2010, 39). Maddin ultimately abandoned this approach, however, and "[w]hat remained after banishing the aimless, aging dandies of his early adulthood from the centre of the narrative was their wandering itself" (40). The centrality of walking or *flâneurie* in his film also reflects Maddin's interest in Sebald's prose narratives. "I guess I was really emboldened by the writing of W. G. Sebald … I certainly wouldn't flatter myself that I'm Sebaldian, but I abandoned *I Vitelloni* and decided to think Sebald" (40). In choosing Sebald over Fellini, he was not really abandoning the latter; however, what Maddin apparently did not know is that Sebald was a fan of Fellini, especially, it seems, of *Amarcord* (Sheppard 2005, 443).

Sebald's former colleague, British scholar Richard Sheppard (2005), was the first to write of the author's love for Fellini's *Amarcord*, which he transmediates in two prose texts: *Vertigo* (1999) and *The Rings of Saturn* (1998). The latter recounts the narrator's walking tour of Suffolk's desolate coastal heaths, quasi-postapocalyptic spaces that resonate allegorically as the desolate interior spaces of a late modern masculine subject now known as "Sebaldian." Sheppard reveals (443) that Sebald appropriates one of *Amarcord*'s "most memorable scenes," that of the citizens of Rimini sailing out to meet the Rex, in his melancholic evocation of "the phenomenon of hundreds of ordinary people rowing out to sea of Lowestoft to watch high society enjoying itself." "[O]n the evening of the charity ball, the common folk who in the nature of things were not admitted, rowed out to the end of the pier in a hundred or more boats and barges, to watch, from their bobbing, drifting vantage points, as fashionable society swirled to the sound of the orchestra, seemingly borne aloft in a surge of light above the water, which was dark and at that time in early autumn usually swathed in mist" (Sebald 1998, 48). Transposing the visual elements of the *Amarcord* scene into the verbal account of the citizens of another town in a different country, Sebald turns a commentary on the Rex as nautical manifestation of Mussolini's hubris (Bondanella 1992, 274) into a more overt parable of the twilight of nineteenth-century bourgeois capitalism. Sheppard (443) reads this as part of the author's "extended evocation of what has been lost," highlighting Sebald's ambivalent valuation of this loss. He evinces an elegiac nostalgia for an event that is nevertheless all about the lower classes getting what secondhand enjoyment they can from a scene upon which they are mere passive spectators. In either case, the townsfolk in the boats are witnesses to a grandeur and luxury of which they will never be part. This message is less obvious in Fellini, given the deliberate artificiality of the ocean liner and the sea itself, famously recreated out of plastic on a Cinecittà soundstage (Bondanella 1992, 274). The remediated scene in *The Rings of Saturn* amplifies the melancholic affect lurking beneath the film's surface, extending it to a critique of capitalist modernity that transcends both modern Italian history and cinema as medium.

By contrast, *Vertigo* "explicitly uses the film, which Max particularly enjoyed, to evoke the pleasures of nostalgia … in a context [a Bavarian village] that was also the site of at least one traumatic childhood event" (443). Much of Part 4 of *Vertigo*, "*il ritorno in patria*," is a homage to *Amarcord* transposed to Sebald's postwar youth in the Bavarian Alps, his memories mediated through scenes and motifs in the film. The narrator (often taken as a stand-in for Sebald) journeys back to Wertach-im-Allgäu, his childhood hometown. He imagines himself as a boy, ironically recapturing his own youthfully naive point of view on 1950s village life. There is, for instance, "Fraulein Rauch," a teacher in the village schoolhouse and an unrequited love, who "walked

along the rows [of schoolroom desks] in her tight-fitting green skirt. Whenever she came close to me, I could feel my heart pounding in my throat" (Sebald 1999, 241). More overtly Fellinian still is the village milliner "who, despite her shortness, had a bosom of a size that I have only seen on one occasion since, on the tobacconist in Fellini's film *Amarcord*" (231). The same Fellini film thus acquires different shadings in Sebald's evocation of a personal past for which one may feel nostalgia even in the face of traumatic repetition.

In *Vertigo*, Sebald transmediates specific elements in *Amarcord*, in a microadaptation of the original that supplements the film's ironic nostalgia with something more melancholic: the underside of the moment in European history that begins (among other places) in Fascist Italy and issues in a small village in the Bavarian Alps, brought together here via Fellini's 1974 film. The shadow of the war looms across both texts, and it would require another essay to explore the relationship between prewar collaboration in a provincial Italian backwater, and the measure of perpetrator guilt shared by the denizens of Sebald's hometown, some of whose sons (including Sebald's father) fought in Hitler's Wehrmacht.

Sebald's narrator restages his memories from the perspective of a present in which he has long since gained physical, if not emotional, emancipation from the past. The desperately provincial nature of small-town life in the two Fellini films means that the inhabitants, with one exception, are doomed never to escape. Their fate is sealed by their inability to extricate themselves from highly gendered social roles in a small coastal town, something only Moraldo succeeds in doing, in the final scene of *I vitelloni*, when one morning, without warning, he boards a train and leaves. The film concludes with a subjective montage of Moraldo's sleeping friends as if seen from a passing train (Figure 33.1). In Bondanella's words (1992, 95), "[t]he camera follows Moraldo's thoughts, moving through each of the bedrooms and passing over each of his friends with a nostalgic caress."

Figure 33.1 Riccardo, one of the vitelloni, sleeping in the final scene of the film *I vitelloni* (1953). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Cité Films and Peg Films. Frame grab captured by Russell J. A. Kilbourn from the 2004 DVD version.

Figure 33.2 Sleeping Companions. *My Winnipeg* (2007). Directed by Guy Maddin. Produced by Buffalo Gal Pictures, Documentary Channel, and Everyday Pictures. Frame grab captured by Frank Burke from the 2007 Blu-ray version.

The opening scene of Maddin's *My Winnipeg* inverts this concluding scene, transposing the protagonist's sleeping friends from the bedrooms in their homes passing by as he leaves town *into* the train compartment alongside him (Figure 33.2). As Winnipeg's street fronts slip by in rear-screen projection outside the window, these anonymous friends accompany Maddin's sleepy stand-in, who is trying in vain to leave his hometown on a train that, like certain repetitive dreams and insistent memories, traverses and retraverses the same unbearably familiar territory, until he succeeds finally in waking up and breaking free. He effects this "escape" metacinematically, by *filming* his way out of Winnipeg. *My Winnipeg* is his final love letter to his hometown.[2] Yet, the *real* Winnipeg is no more Guy Maddin's than the title "*Amarcord*" (*mi ricordo*) implies Fellini's *own* singular act of recollection.[3]

Maddin's remediation of *I vitelloni* foregrounds a theme that runs counter to the overvaluation of nostalgia in contemporary popular culture: the desire to leave home, to get the hell out, before it is too late. "Too late" here means staying long enough to become the equivalent of Fellini's vitelloni, a "layabout," an aging man-child who does nothing productive, does the same thing every day, year in year out, growing older but never maturing, a perpetual adolescent in all but body. This syndrome is captured in all its comic pathos in *Amarcord*, whose story famously circles back to its seasonal starting point, with only the aging beauty Gradisca managing to escape this vicious cycle by marrying her "Gary Cooper" who, as the embodiment of her own cinematically mediated fantasies, offers a dubious prospect of genuine release and renewal.

I vitelloni, the earlier film by 20 years, is in some ways the more progressive film, insofar as Moraldo, emerging by the end as the protagonist, manages at last to leave the town in which he

has spent his entire life. In leaving without farewell, abandoning his family and friends, Moraldo admits that he neither knows why he is leaving nor where he is going. The point is that he is going, and the others are not. This sequence—a succession of smoothly conjoined panning shots, edited to resemble a continuous moving shot—attracted Maddin presumably because of how it shows the sleeping friends as if from Moraldo's perspective from the train as it passes by on the way out of town. More generally, Fellini's memory films likely attracted Maddin in their clear indifference to "historical truth," whether of the place or of the individual. Why does Maddin's narrator need to escape from Winnipeg? What does it *mean* to want to escape from one's home? The answer might lie in Fellini's *My Rimini* memoir (1967/2006, np):

> One thing is certain, anyway. I don't like going back to Rimini. I've got to admit it: it's kind of a block. My family still lives there, my mother, my sister: am I afraid of some of my feelings? What I feel above all is that going back is a complacent, masochistic, churning up of memories: a theatrical, literary business. Of course, this may have a certain fascination. A sleepy, fudged fascination. But I cannot see Rimini as an objective fact, that's it. It is a dimension of my memory and nothing more. And in fact, when I am in Rimini, I always find myself assailed by ghosts that have already been filed away, put in their place.

While it is possible that both Sebald and Maddin read Fellini's *My Rimini*, there is no question that they both watched his films attentively, assimilating their lessons about history, memory, love, loss, and whatever hope can be found in a world changed by the seemingly irresistible forces of industrialization, social alienation, and globalization. More than anything, perhaps, the three are united in their disparate critiques of the sort of disindividuated collectivity that represents the very opposite of everything a shared and dynamic cultural memory embodies.

Notes

1 See Dalle Vacche 1992, 52.
2 Maddin's title may be partly inspired by Fellini's autobiographical text "My Rimini."
3 See also, Burke 1996, 205.

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Natalia Ginzburg

When I finished watching Amarcord, *I felt a sensation quite strange and rare, composed of vital energy, complex and clear thoughts, febrile restlessness, and profound peace. I found and continue to find it difficult to explain to myself why* Amarcord *is so beautiful and why it so shook me [….] [Amarcord gives us] not the sensation of seeing a film but of seeing the very existence of nature. Here, when we see the snow, the fog, or the countryside, we don't think of Fellini's skill or genius, but we say to ourselves that we have always suspected that the snow and the fog were like this, and finally we know the whole truth about snow and fog. This is a sensation of great freedom and peace but also of nervous unease because knowing the truth of things we have always carried within us […] makes tremble and waver within us old terrain on which we were accustomed to live with a cautious and resigned dreariness.*

"Nebbia." In: Ci ha raccontati come nessuno. Fellini visto dagli scrittori, *ed. P. Di Paolo (Rome: Empirìa, 2013), 51–52.*

34

Fellini and South Asian Cinemas

Esha Niyogi De

> I think no filmmaker in the world can remain outside the influence of Fellini's self-portraying, self-analytical masterpieces on screen.
>
> *Tanvir Mokammel*, Bangladeshi Filmmaker, 2017

> *La Dolce Vita* is an experimentation in the sense that it has summed up the whole 2000 years of European Civilisation, which is decaying and dying … [through] a structure of filmmaking never before tried by anybody….
>
> *Ritwik Ghatak*, Indian Filmmaker, 1987, 36

> The Catholic Fellini appealed to the Hindu Bengali.
>
> *Sanjoy Mukhopadhyay*, Indian Film Scholar, 2017

The voices of renowned filmmakers Tanvir Mokammel and Ritwik Ghatak, from Bangladesh and India, respectively, shine light on Federico Fellini's indelible impact on the growth across South Asia of the reflexive, "self-analytical" (Mokammel 2017) filmmaker who takes up cinema both for political critique and for a serious study of artistic technique. Mokammel stands at the forefront of a film-clubs movement that spawned the Bikalpa Dhara / Alternative Stream Cinema in 1980s Bangladesh. Supported by screenings of international films at European and American embassies in the capital city of Dhaka, this transnational cinema movement was "both borrowing and indigenizing the understanding and appreciation of art cinema from the West" in order to cultivate a secular Muslim–Bengali aesthetic at odds with the "pro-Islam national identity" being propagated at the time by the nation-state (Raju 2015, 173). Ghatak, the leftist trailblazer of experimental cinema in India and South Asia, broke away from the neorealism practiced by the towering Indian auteur Satyajit Ray to explore the "limit…, the border, … up to which the expression of film can go" (Ghatak 1987, 35–36). In the "suggestive acuity / *tikhna bhab*" of *La dolce vita* (1960), Ghatak (2005, 225, 227) found an unprecedented experimental form entwining "perceptive affect / *anubhuti*" with a profound "world-thinking / *brahmando bhabna*" about the malaise of modern conditions. Mokammel, while adhering to social realism in his own films, also celebrates Fellini striding beyond neorealism's "naïve optimism about human character" (2017). He exemplifies the South Asian association of Fellini with a reflexive aesthetics that opposes or riddles existing patterns of signification.

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The complexity of Fellinian cinephilia in South Asia lies in the fact that three films—*La strada* (1954), *La dolce vita,* and *Amarcord* (1973)—moved beyond serious cinema circuits to commercial theaters in Kolkata (Calcutta), India. Fragments of these works are memorialized in many narrative turns and throwaway shots appearing in entertainment genres of the late 1950s and 1960s (Mukhopadhyay 2017). By contrast, other European art repertoires, such as Michelangelo Antonioni's work, remained confined to elite cineaste circles. It seems that diverse contexts and genres of South Asian cinema share a love for Fellini's aesthetic, because selected affective and narrative Fellinian codes became widely disseminated. They were thus "historically available for the contemporary" (Vasudevan 2002, 224) in the South Asian terrain of developmental modernity and (anticolonial) religious nationalism. Both filmmaker Mokammel, speaking from Muslim-majority Bangladesh, and film scholar Mukhopadhyay, speaking from Hindu-majority India, refer to their "developing societ[ies']" dialogue with Fellini's religious imagery vis-à-vis "capitalist human relationships" (Mokammel 2017). Specific Fellinian codes come to be indigenized, as filmmakers reflexively talk back about relevance and difference in diverse generic idioms. Both political and popular filmmakers embrace Fellini's critical approach to signifying practices—aesthetic and social. However, they talk in ambivalent accents about the humanist teleology recurring in Fellini's explorations of the self, community, and religion. Consider the following complexities described.

While Mokammel applauds Fellini's autobiographical portrayal in *8½* (1963), what he finds most meaningful about its reflexivity is a "movement away from the primacy of the individual" (Burke 1996, 11). Mokammel (2017) extols Fellini's ability to refrain from making filmic characters a mere "extension of [his own] psychic traits," his readiness to delve into other "human conditions." For example, in Fellini's figurations of a "female Jesus" in *La strada* and *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957), Mokammel finds a "sacrificial human lamb of the time as protagonist" (2017). In temporalizing the portrayal, Mokammel is emphasizing what he sees as Fellini's satirical (Mokammel 2017) self-critique of patriarchy in these explorations of women's conditions in Catholic contexts. What he implicitly rejects are the self-indulgent specular and "voyeuristic" (O'Healy 2002, 209) tendencies in Fellini's reflexive gaze on women and their abject self-sacrifice. These comments are intertextual with Mokammel's own self-critically engendered depictions of identities that are "eccentric" (Waller 2002, 9) to contemporary Bangladeshi hierarchies of gender, religion, and secular nationalism. Noteworthy is the politics of realism in *Rabeya* (2008). The narrative portrays a redemptively devout, self-sacrificing village woman in Bangladesh who clings to her Islamic faith while contravening militarized fundamentalism.

Fellini's religious imagery had a more contradictory import for signifying practices in India because the films I mentioned above were both commercially released and censored. Remarking on their commercial appeal, Sanjoy Mukhopadhyay (2017) points to the ready acceptance of Fellini's Catholic iconography by an Indian culture pervaded by Hindu icons of gods and goddesses. Writing in the 1960s, Ritwik Ghatak (2005, 226) reports, however, that Kolkata theaters were screening a version of *La dolce vita* from which Fellini's satire of commodified religion—the "miracle" episode, for example—had been cut. Ghatak himself reconstitutes a complex Fellinian politics of spiritual sensuality by piecing the censored version of *La dolce vita* together with Fellini's screenplay. In the failed miracle, the statue of Christ with arms uplifted in benediction, and the sheer disgust of a "strip tease" performance in the midst of punctured pillows (2005, 226), he finds an im/possibility of spiritual acuity animating Fellini's "protest/*protibad*" (2005, 219) against capitalist humanism (2005, 226). These comments demonstrate Fellini's influence on Ritwik Ghatak's experimental leftist approach to "sensuousness as something that consciously reverses the petrification … of dominant structures of perception" (Rajadhyaksha 1982, 51, 49). Yet, these words also reveal Ghatak's inclination to rethink Fellini's satire on religion and

individualist self-doubt, and instead, to discern a revolutionary politics of spiritual affect in *La dolce vita*. Fellinian codes thus spoke also to negotiations of Hindu censorship by mainstream cinema in 1950s Kolkata. Indeed, Fellini's Americanized "brand of individualism as an anti-authoritarian response" (Burke 1996, 5) to socioreligious norms conflicted with the communal obligations depicted in the popular melodramas being produced in the context of modernizing India (Biswas 1990, 309).

A compelling resignification of the moral polarities in *La strada* appears in Bikash Roy's *Marutirtha Hinglaj* (*Hinglaj, the Desert Shrine* 1959), a road narrative pitting the journey of Hindu pilgrims against the self-destructive path of an itinerant performing couple and their extramarital sexual desires. This left-leaning melodrama turns Zampanò into a low-born, homeless performer rebelling against high-caste Hindu virtue. As the protagonist plummets toward insanity, we see the onset of madness depicted in a waterside shot memorializing the closing scene of *La strada* (Mukhopadhyay 2017). Yet, the narrative refuses the binary "evolutionary model of psychospiritual enlightenment … [placing] spirit versus matter" in *La strada* (Burke 1996, 53). The narrative ends, on the one hand, with the spiritual enlightenment of the faithful community of Hindu pilgrims. On the other hand, it depicts a self-reflexive pilgrim interrogating the exclusion of the subaltern couple from communal uplift and accepting the spiritual value of a mutual physical desire exceeding self-interest. Thus, Fellini's religious images speak powerfully to the conflicts over the self, community, and faith riddling postcolonial nationalisms across South Asia. If South Asian filmmakers embrace his reflexive figurations of marginality and eccentricity, they seem to talk back (in both political and popular idioms) to the specular and binary aspects of Western humanism implicit in Fellini's vision.

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Manoel De Oliveira

There is something of the extreme, the intolerable, about Fellini, but at the same time, something profoundly human. The elements that are found in his films are transfigured by a fantasy that is halfway between hell and paradise. Watching his work today, I can say that he is very old in his first films and terribly young in the most recent.

https://www.cinquantamila.it/storyTellerArticolo.php?storyId=4ea8145ac575d

Andrei Tarkovsky

I like Fellini for his kindness, for his love of people, for his, let's say, simplicity and intimate intonation. If you would like to know—not for popularity, but rather for his humanity. I value him tremendously.

https://www.scribd.com/document/381372486/Directors-Talk-Directors-My-Criterion-The-Criterion-Collection

35

Interview with Tanvir Mokammel

Esha Niyogi De

ED: How was Fellini's work received in your country? Were his films popular? Were they influential on local filmmakers and artists?

TM: Non-English European films are not released in cinema halls in Bangladesh, so there is no way to measure how popular Fellini's films are here. But for us, the cineastes, Fellini's films are still feasts for our hearts and senses. Federico Fellini died around 20 odd years back, but I think his influence is still very profound, especially among the film community.

Fellini may not be a household name in Bangladesh, but among cine-buffs Fellini is a much talked about name. During our youth, we were involved in the film society movement. As young cine-enthusiasts, we were deeply impressed by Fellini's superb films, and his influence on our psyche was all pervasive. Some of us, who later became filmmakers, went deeper into Fellini's creative world out of professional interest, but those who did not become filmmakers, or [do] anything related to cinema, I think, have also remained influenced by Fellini's creations.

Among intellectuals, Fellini is still a must-know filmmaker.

ED: Before Fellini, Italian neorealism was welcomed by international cinema culture as part of a desire for social and political change. Was Fellini also welcomed as a proponent of social change in your experience?

TM: Since childhood, I was steeped in Satyajit Ray's films, with their pronounced neorealist cinematic language. Neorealism as a visual language of cinema greatly influenced us. We believed neorealism was the *perfect* way to portray the social realities around us. But when we saw *La strada, La dolce vita,* and *8½*, we realized that neorealism's naive optimism about human character and human existence might not be the ideal or the only way to portray contemporary social reality—especially to depict the present world of alienated human beings and their sense of emptiness. We rediscovered Fellini and thought he was our artist. To be honest, I am still rediscovering Fellini and his vast creative gamut of works. I think Fellini's departure from neorealism did not do any harm to his creativity. Rather, by distancing himself from neorealism, he succeeded in delving deeply into the psyches of his characters in a way that was necessary for comprehending the complexity of modern human existence.

ED: Was there a moment in which his impact was strongest?

TM: For me, Fellini's influence remains strongest when I try to shoot a character. Maybe even before that, when I am about to write a character for the script. Fellini's characters are always

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Figure 35.1 Tanvir Mokammel, 2009. Photographer Wasim Hasan. Courtesy of Tanvir Mokammel.

multidimensional. Perhaps one trait of a character becomes predominant, like Anthony Quinn's raw brutality in *La strada* or Giulietta Masina's soft-heartedness in her prostitute character in *Le notti di Cabiria*. But these characters never become just an extension of the filmmaker's own psychic traits. They are always full-grown human beings. Fellini's image-making, his editing technique, which reached its zenith in *8½*, are all brilliant. But I guess his ability to portray human characters remains his most outstanding quality. His screen creations are a gallery of vivid human character representatives, truly a *comédie humaine*. No wonder that he is called "the Shakespeare of cinema." That's why, when I create a character for my films, I remember the lessons I have learnt from Fellini.

ED: Which were the most important films? Beyond individual films, was there a particular Fellinian way of seeing/representing the world that seemed to elicit response?

TM: *La strada* says a lot about the human condition and the human psyche. *Le notti di Cabiria* too. Both films have the Jesus-myth lurking behind them, a contemporary sacrificial lamb as protagonist, through whose sacrifice our sinful existence will be redeemed. Fellini's *La dolce vita* is also a prophetic film of immense depth, which portrays pleasure-seeking alienated human beings, bereft of any moral commitment, typical of our post-industrialist urban civilization. But for me, as a filmmaker, I think, Fellini's real master stroke was *8½*. Hardly any filmmaker has ever been as autobiographical as Fellini, and never had Fellini himself been as autobiographical as he was in his *8½*.

Fellini used his boyhood memories in some of his other films too, but his way of bringing images and characters from his boyhood and teens to the screen in *8½* was profoundly creative. In the post-Fellinian era, hardly any filmmaker could remain outside the influence of *8½*. The film's influence on subsequent generations of filmmakers is pervasive and profound. It can be compared only with Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane*. Though it is difficult, and also unfair, to grade the films of a creative genius like Fellini (but you have asked for it), I think *8½* is Fellini's most influential film. Close at its heels is, of course, *La dolce vita*.

Fellini has a special way of looking at the world. To him, it is not the plot, not the décor, not even the *mise-en-scènes,* but human beings that are the most important element. As an artist, Fellini's eternal quest is to seek and find the core of human nature. This particular *weltanschauung* of Fellini has made his work universal. Anybody, anywhere in the world, who tries to portray a human character on screen, is bound to be influenced, either consciously or unconsciously, by

the Fellinian way of presenting human characters. The sensual awakenings during his boyhood and teens, as seen in *8½* and *Amarcord,* are also universal.

Circus in cinema was always a matter of interest for Fellini. After all, life is a stage show. And for Fellini, life was a *screen show*. Anyone making any film on the circus and circus people cannot avoid the influence of Fellini's film *The Clowns*.

Another of Fellini's interests was traveling artists. All cultures have their own traveling artists, including our Bengali culture. On this stage of life, what are we, but a bunch of traveling actors, as in Fellini's *Luci del varietà*. So, Fellini's traveling artist characters seem to have a universal appeal.

Fellini's portrayals of the moral emptiness of Western civilization, the hypocrisy of Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular, means that the audience from a developing society like ours, steeped in religion, can take a lot from the films. Our societies are also stepping into the world of capitalist human relationships and egocentric lifestyles, especially the urban ruling class about which Fellini made scathing and brilliant satires. As religious bigotry and fanaticism undermine benevolence in our societies, we find that Fellini has a strong relevance for us, though our culture is lagging behind the problems and issues of Western civilization. I feel that the need for filmmakers like Fellini will be felt even more in the future.

ED: Was Fellini known as anything other than a filmmaker (e.g. a political cartoonist, screenwriter) in your country?

TM: The knowledge about Fellini's variegated qualities as a visual artist is known only among the film community, or to those who study cinema seriously. For myself, I am a great admirer of Fellini's scriptwriting prowess. His screenplays are amazing, his ideas are original, and with meaningful dialogue and well-constructed *mise-en-scènes,* he remains an artist par excellence. I am also very fond of Fellini's editing and his lucid flow of camera movement. Who can forget the brilliant bathing-cum-harem scene from *8½*? I often show that scene to my students. I think Fellini could not have made those scenes so brilliantly had he not had years of background as a screenwriter and a graphic artist.

ED: Your final thoughts on Fellini?

TM: His script ideas and the way he handles his screenplay, the way he constructs his *mise-en-scènes*, his use of actors—all can provide lessons for any budding filmmaker. So, any filmmaker from anywhere in the world can learn a lot from him.

It is also important not to forget Fellini's wife, Giulietta Masina. Giulietta was a fabulous actress. Her performances in *La strada* and *Le notti di Cabiria* are simply mesmerizing. They will remain a benchmark for acting. I often discuss her acting prowess with students in our film institute.

Fellini's penchant for portraying different kinds of human characters has helped me know human beings and human conditions better. I think Fellini's films have made me a wiser artist and a wiser human being, too.

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Roma, Fellini, and Me

Amara Lakhous

In Algeria at the end of the 1980s, I saw Federico Fellini's *Roma* (1972), which I consider his masterpiece. The film was strange, chaotic, without a classical structure, just like a dream. The main character was not Anna Magnani, Sofia Loren, Alberto Sordi, or Marcello Mastroianni, but Rome. From that day, I have been in love with the eternal city and with the Romans' *gioia di vivere*. I am still fascinated by this portrait of Rome between sacred and profane, between cardinals and prostitutes, between war and peace, between past and present. I appreciated Fellini's irony and subtle criticism of "Rome." For example, the scene of the fashion show for the men and women of the Catholic Church.

There is a sequence in the film in which the Roman subway becomes the topic. This project, planned since 1872, became operational only in 1955. The delay was due to the continual discovery of archeological remains. After each discovery, the workers stopped. This image of the past that blocks the present profoundly impressed me because in Algeria at that time there was a single party, the National Liberation Front (NLF), which blackmailed the population using historical legitimacy as its justification. They had liberated the country and therefore it belonged to them. In effect the booty of war. On the other side, there were Islamic fundamentalists who used the narrative of Islam from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (the myth of the Golden Age) to sabotage any modernizing change. We were prisoners of the past. Our present was like the Roman subway.

Another scene in the film that has remained imprinted in my memory is that of the subterranean frescoes that erase themselves without being touched. It is an extraordinary metaphor for the fragility of the past.

I have asked myself many times: why does the past, which is so fragile, have such great power over us? When I arrived in Rome in 1995, I had in mind the portrait of Rome according to Fellini. Just walking around the city center, one found oneself in front of the Colosseum, the Roman Forum, the Theater of Marcellus, etc. In other words, the past was everywhere. The question that arose was the following: *How* to live with memory? I have tried to respond to this question through the novels I have written in Italian. The first two, *Scontro di civiltà per un ascensore a piazza Vittorio (Clash of Civilizations Over an Elevator in the Piazza Vittorio* 2006) and *Divorzio all'islamica a viale Marconi* (*Divorce Islamic Style* 2010) are set in Rome. The other two, *Contesa per un maialino*

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italianissimo a San Salvario (*Dispute Over a Very Italian Piglet* 2012) and *La zingarata della virginella di via Ormea* (*The Prank of the Good Little Virgin of Via Ormea* 2014) are set instead in Turin. In all these novels, I have tried to reconcile Italians with their immigrant past.

In October 2011, after 16 years spent in Rome, I decided to move to Turin to follow my characters. My deep intuition, ripened during my Roman sojourn, was this: Italians cannot understand today's immigration if they do not reckon with their own past migration, be it internal or external. Thus, I chose the San Salvario neighborhood in which to live and to set two stories. In the 1950s and 1960s, San Salvario was inhabited by immigrants from the south of Italy. They were severely discriminated against—not even able to rent lodgings—though they were Italians, Catholic, and white. It was said that they could not be integrated because they brought crime. What can we expect today when the immigrants arrive from somewhere else, perhaps with black skin, or Chinese, or Muslim? Italy cannot take a step forward without finding an effective way to live with its history.

I am very indebted to Fellini and his Rome. In 1995, when I fled Algeria because I was in danger of being killed, I found a city that opened its arms to me. I love Rome, and I have always felt loved there. This is why I always say that I am Roman, because Romans are not born but made. In Rome, I am always at home.

37

Fellini and Turkey: Influence and Image

Cihan Gündoğdu

Like many great artists, Federico Fellini used his fertile cultural context in his films, reflecting it onscreen with a great deal of originality and elegance. He is known for exhibiting a sensibility open to the universal, or at least the broadly transnational, while engaging intensely with his own subjectivity and with the cultures and dialects specific to Italy. His work has been able to reach people in many different parts of the world and has inspired other artists and filmmakers to reflect intensely on their own cultures. Beyond being a masterful storyteller, he was paradoxically able to work with specific cultural contexts in a highly nonparochial way.

Turkish cinema had been influenced by many cinema movements, including Hollywood's genre films, but perhaps the most noteworthy one was Italian neorealism. Particularly after the 1950s, important filmmakers such as Halit Refiğ, Metin Erksan, and Lütfi Akad were involved in the creation of a national cinema, and by following the model of Italian neorealism, they formed a short-lived, politically engaged "social realism" movement between 1960 and 1965 (Daldal 2013, 183–184). However, beginning in the late 1980s when filmmakers such as Ömer Kavur and Atıf Yılmaz decided to make more individual, auteurist, and alternative films, and continuing with the next generation of filmmakers, the transformation of Turkish cinema culture invites us to investigate to what extent Turkish cinema interacted with Fellini.

Fellinian Influence

Fellini's impact was not evident until the 1980s because of the late release of his films in Turkey, and the country's complicated political atmosphere. However, there are clear indications that Fellini was followed closely by some important Turkish directors. For instance, Atıf Yılmaz's *Dolandırıcılar Şahı* (*King of the Swindlers* 1960) shows significant similarities to Fellini's *Il bidone* (*The Swindle* 1955) in terms of title, theme, and approach. *Dolandırıcılar Şahı* follows the same path of a swindler's transformation—his "salvation" (Bondanella 2016, 182–190)—in a humorous vein.

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Several iconic scenes in Fellini's films were imitated by other Turkish directors. The striptease in Ertem Eğilmez's *Ben Bir Sokak Kadınıyım* (*I Am a Whore* 1966), for example, and some scenes in 1970s erotic films were greatly influenced by Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1960) (Özgüç 2000, 126).

It can be argued that Fellini's films also influenced Turkish auteur filmmakers. Turkish cinema could not remain indifferent to the groundbreaking impact of *8½* (1963) on world cinema. Ömer Kavur's very personal *Gece Yolculuğu* (*Night Journey* 1989) is reminiscent of Fellini's film in the way it uses a director's creative process as its subject and a *mise en abyme* (Metz 1974, 228–234) structure. The first three shots and the concluding sequence of Kavur's film confirm that the script written within the film is the film itself. In addition, one sees a similarity to Fellini in Atıf Yılmaz's emphasis on women and his way of working with marginal subjects. Both directors are also known for their distinctive stylistic elements. (Yılmaz was also a painter).

Turkish film critic Mehmet Açar affirms that the crucial period in which Fellini affected the Turkish cinema and its audience was the 1980s, when Fellini was also embraced by Turkish intellectuals. When Fellini's films became accessible at festivals and on video cassettes in the 1980s, there was high audience demand. Açar conveys a personal experience: When *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980) screened at the Italian Cultural Center, Istanbul, in 1983, the film was received with enormous interest by audiences. Even in the absence of subtitles or translation, the theater drew standing-room-only crowds (Açar 2017). Similarly, *Amarcord* was received with great enthusiasm in May 1981, at its first screening in Istanbul. The screening weeks of the film were described as "victory weeks" in the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* because of the surprising attention the film received. Ülkü Tamer, who brought the film to Turkey, proudly stated that the film played to a full house for 19 weeks in its first release. Many audiences had traveled from other cities to watch the film. *Amarcord* would be on screen three times more within the next two years. The film also elicited an important intellectual response. Tamer claims that there were probably more articles written about *Amarcord* than about any other foreign language film (Tamer 2005, 296–297). Between 1981 and 1984, many reviews were published in which critics praised the film. However, there was an intriguing debate between film critic Atilla Dorsay (1981), who praised the film enormously, and writer Aziz Nesin (1981), who disliked it and identified it as "literary" rather than cinematic.

Açar claims that Fellini is the source of inspiration for Turkish directors and scriptwriters to create cinema "grounded in one's own dreams." He suggests that the energy of Turkish cinema's town films, set in the Mediterranean and the Aegean, comes from Italian films, and specifically from *Amarcord*. Likewise, *Amarcord* greatly influenced the nostalgic, rural town films, the most obvious example being Yılmaz Erdoğan's *Vizontele* (2001) (Açar 2017). Indeed, Yılmaz Erdoğan's *Vizontele* and Yüksel Aksu's (*Dondurmam Gaymak / Ice Cream, I Scream* 2006), both small-town comedies, have benefited from the heritage of Fellini's film. Another striking example is Ali Ilhan's *Sinyora Enrica ile İtalyan Olmak* (*Being Italian with Signora Enrica* 2010), a Turko-Italian comedy–drama film shot in Rimini and Istanbul, referencing Fellini and *Amarcord*. A third example is director and actor Uğur Yücel's explicit acknowledgement that *Amarcord* was the film that triggered his desire to be a film director (Özyurt 2014). In short, Fellini's inspiring film (*Amarcord*) has been directly or indirectly influential for many Turkish filmmakers.

Fellini and Turks

Although Fellini often maintained that he was not interested in politics, there are political moments and scenes in his films. In one of the most noteworthy, an emir and his cortège are welcomed at the Grand Hotel in *Amarcord*. In conjunction with the voiceover of the film's occasional

narrator (an unnamed bourgeois lawyer), the scene is filled with orientalist clichés: the emir and his 30 concubines, men equipped with swords and wearing fezzes, women presented like an animal herd. A long shot reveals a Turkish flag at the reception desk. It seems reasonable that this is an Ottoman cortège. However, this is not historically possible; Turkey is a republic by the time of the film's action in the 1930s. Then another narrator, Biscein, of much lower social status, takes over, and the women are portrayed as lusty. They take him to their room, and, in another oriental cliché, they begin to dance.

Not only anachronisms, these representations perfectly coincide with Edward Said's (2003, 286–287) description of Orientalism, which includes the association of Arabs with lechery and a range of other pejorative European projections. In this short scene, it does not matter whether the visitors are Arabs or Turks. For the Orientalist imaginary, they are the same.

Even if Fellini's films are not politically engaged, they have a thematic richness that opens them to multiple political and cultural readings. For instance, as Marguerite Waller (2002, 5–6) has emphasized, a linkage could be established between the scene in Steiner's home in *La dolce vita* and both Orientalism and colonialism. Frank Burke (1996, 319) suggests that in some respects Fellini's films adhere to the perspectives of traditional European culture, representing non-Europeans stereotypically.

Do *Amarcord*'s Oriental motifs require us to label Fellini an Orientalist? In an interview, Fellini equated the phase of adolescence in individual life with Fascism in national life and noted that the comforting sensation of eternal childhood offers a kind of freedom, or at least, an absence of challenge, that encourages absurd dreams of sensuously exotic Oriental women. Either adolescent Italians of a certain period hang out doing foolish and immature things together, or, alone, they are filled with absurd dreams concerning the Orient (cited in Bondanella 1992, 266, 270). Considering *Amarcord*'s controversial portrayal of Oriental women, one may argue that the scene is critical of the average provincial Italian male. In addition, considering that *Amarcord*'s filmic construction of the past is presented as an invention, and this particular scene as the product of characters—the lawyer and Biscein—we can appreciate the degree to which these Oriental images are deliberate exaggerations. Bondanella (1972, 278–280) points out that one of the most distinctive stylistic elements of *Amarcord* is narrative multiplication and the lack of narrative reliability. The obviously subjective and exaggerated interpretations of events by his narrators confirm Fellini's hidden criticism, complementing the caricatural artificiality of the film's Oriental images.

Fellini's use of cultural elements from other parts of the world to enhance cinematic richness is also evident in his references to Turkey. For instance, he had already called upon the acoustics of the Turkish language, in the form of the famous Turkish poet Orhan Veli Kanık's poem "*İçinde*" (voiced by Güngör Batum), to enhance the oneiric atmosphere of the feast scene in *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969). Another striking example, which more clearly reflects the Turkish image in the director's imagination, is found in *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965) where Fellini employs the image of the Turk to visualize Giulietta's anxiety. In a dream in which Giulietta finds herself on a deserted beach, a raft conveying a group of savage men appears and approaches the shore. In the original screenplay (English version), this raft was named "Olaf," like the spirit whom Giulietta first heard in the séance sequence in her house (Kezich 1965, 83). As Hava Aldouby (2013, 39) has pointed out, the provisional script of the film calls Olaf a Turk, and, moreover, the raft scene is described as "the disembarkation of the Turks" and "the invaders" (Kezich 88). Not surprisingly, this fantasmatic Turkishness corresponds with Fellini's words regarding the image of the Turk in Italy. In an interview with Turkish journalist Vivet Kanetti (1991), Fellini claimed that, in Italy, Turks were seen as invaders who could come unexpectedly from the sea and who were sexually uninhibited. Like a fairy tale hero, the Turk came from an Oriental world of luxury and exoticism.

Fellini admitted (Kanetti 1991), however, that these beliefs were nonsense, and the sequence explicitly indicates that Fellini's portrayals of Turks should be read in terms of their cultural and historiographical context. In light of these comments, and taking into account Fellinian exaggeration and imagination, we may suggest that Fellini, without claiming any political position, represented Turks in his films within the framework of caricatural playfulness. Both the habit of exaggeration and the Orientalizing image of the Turk spring from and reflect back on his local culture.

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38

Fellini in Japan

Earl Jackson

I. A Tale of Two Films

Intervista (1987)

The film opens as Fellini and his crew move into the Cinecittà lot at night, setting up for a scene in his new film. Amid the fragmentary glimpses of crew and equipment, a young Japanese woman emerges from around a corner, in a white t-shirt and a purple overalls-jumper. She looks forward and bows formally. Her appearance is reminiscent of the colorful denizens of *La dolce vita* (1960), exotic and context-free. As she moves forward, she speaks in fluent Italian, saying that she had found out that Fellini would be there, suggesting she is a fan or perhaps a stalker. But then she is joined by a crew of three Japanese male colleagues, one holding a video camera.

They apologize, saying that they knew their interview was scheduled for the next day. Briefly Fellini speaks to them about the dream that the scene underway is to reconstruct, and then advises them to interview his assistant who "knows more." Fellini treats the team graciously, considering their uninvited arrival on the scene of a complex film shoot. However, the graciousness is, in fact, scripted. This is neither a documentary nor an actual interview: the Japanese TV crew are deliberately cast as uninvited intruders.

The partial recreation of Fellini's dream as described for the Japanese crew gives way to a sequence, that supposedly takes place the next day, in which their interview with Fellini's assistant is interrupted by Fellini's arrival. Fellini at this point asks the Japanese to talk instead with Nadia, who is in charge of the archive of Cinecittà. Nadia (who is in costume for the film being shot) demurs, explaining that she is too busy to speak with the Japanese as she is late having her cappuccino. After the cappuccino, she agrees to show the place to the Japanese crew but takes them instead to an unkempt backlot field where she picks chicory, allowing them to sample it for its bitterness before she wanders away.

Although the title *Intervista* ("Interview") would suggest a centrality to the visit of the Japanese TV crew, they are either epiphenomenal or in the way whenever they appear. The male crew members speak only Japanese, communicating through the only female, who is also the only Italian speaker, among them. In most cases, when Japanese is spoken, it is barely

A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke,
Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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audible, so there is no way for Japanese-speaking audience members to judge the depth or scope of what the crew says before it is translated by the interpreter. Questions about what is being suppressed in these exchanges may crop up retrospectively for viewers of Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation* (2003). In one of that film's central scenes, Bill Murray is making a commercial but cannot follow the directions given by the director's interpreter. The director is lucid, serious, and focused in Japanese, but his words are scrambled and rendered ridiculous by the incompetent interpreter. Because the director's words are fully audible but without English subtitles, we understand that he is made to sound absurd for a comic effect that slices in different directions depending on the linguistic competence of the viewer. In *Intervista*, by contrast, the only time one of the Japanese speakers is fully audible, he is claiming that he can cure an addiction to smoking through a magic touch. None of the crew's discussions of the questions to be posed to Fellini can be heard.

Although the Japanese interview is ostensibly the stimulus and premise for the film, the team is never part of a conversation. They merely witness monologues only one of them can understand. When the Japanese do not simply disappear, they are on display. Never is their interest in Fellini the focus of attention; it is presented, rather, as baffling or exotic, an index of the strangeness of Fellini's on-screen world.

Eventually, it becomes unclear whether the "intervista" of the title refers solely, or at all, to the actions of the Japanese TV crew. Their interview of the mature Fellini becomes complexly entangled at one point with a story Fellini tells them about his youth, when he was called to Cinecittà to interview a star whom he found sexually alluring. This interview is one of the few scenes of the several films within the film that is depicted almost completely. Shortly thereafter, Marcello Mastroianni appears, and Fellini takes him and Sergio Rubini, the actor playing young Fellini in the interview memory, to the house of Anita Ekberg. The Japanese film crew follow in a jeep and are among the spectators in Ekberg's living room who are eclipsed as Mastroianni and Ekberg watch their iconic night club and Trevi Fountain scenes from *La dolce vita* (1960). In a sense, the interview that the Japanese crew attempt to conduct is displaced by the interview Fellini remembers conducting in 1938, and the crew's attempt to engage in dialogue is absorbed into the film's self-contemplation.

This marginalization is continued into the credits. Of the four crew members, only the name of the head male, Mario Miyayama, appears and then only very late in the credits, slightly above the list of extras. The woman who plays the interpreter, who speaks and understands everything, is left anonymous, "uncredited." In an Italian DVD version of the film, none of the Japanese actors is credited.

Iwashigumo (*Summer Clouds*, Naruse Mikio, 1958)

Naruse Mikio's *Iwashigumo* is the story of a traditional farming family living in the mid-1950s in Kanagawa prefecture. The film goes into almost anthropological detail regarding family lineage, marriage practices, and land management. At one point, the middle son from the main household and the only daughter of a branch family meet by chance and decide to go to the movies at the largest town in the prefecture, Atsugi, not recognized as a city until 1955 when it merged with a neighboring village. It is surprising, therefore, to see the young people attending a large multiplex theater whose signs announce screenings of *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957), *The Killing* (Stanley Kubrick 1956), *Kanał* (Andrzej Wajda 1957), and *The Spirit of St. Louis* (Billy Wilder 1957). Naruse does not show us which film the pair chooses, but the film journals and entertainment magazines of 1957–1958 document the release and reception of all four films in Japan at

that time. More than likely the members of a television crew who come to Italy to interview Fellini in the 1980s are well-informed, not only about their own contemporary film culture, but also about the long tradition of screenings and appreciations of Fellini within Japan's sophisticated and rich repertoire of world cinema. To make this point most succinctly, I would like to look at one particular engagement with Fellini in Japan by the director and film theorist, Masumura Yasuzo (1924–1986). With his 1957 directorial debut, *Kuchizuke* (*Kisses*), Masumura was hailed as a pioneer of what would later be called the "Japanese New Wave." Although he remained a company man for Daiei Studios his entire career, he maintained a reputation for his aesthetic and intellectual contributions to Japanese cinema.

II. Masumura and Fellini

An essay Masumura wrote in English on the history of Japanese cinema earned him a fellowship to study at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome from 1951 to 1953. The Centro is the oldest and most prestigious school in Italy for the study of film theory and practice. "Practice" includes every aspect of film art from acting to cinematography to set and costume design. The list of former students reads like a roll call of significant figures in Italian and transnational cinema history: Michelangelo Antonioni, Marco Bellocchio, Liliana Cavani, Giuseppe De Santis, Claudia Cardinale, Dino De Laurentiis, Francesca Neri, Alida Valli, etc. Masumura also worked as assistant director on Carmine Gallone's Japanese–Italian musical *Madama Butterfly* (*Madame Butterfly* 1954), starring Yachigusa Kaoru. Upon his return to Japan, Masumura became a principal assistant director to Mizoguchi Kenji and Ichikawa Kon.

Masumura's critical engagement with Fellini began with an essay in a special April 1955 issue of *Kinema Junpo* dedicated to Italian cinema.[1] He begins with a description of *I vitelloni* (1953), which he had seen in Rome, but which was not released in Japan until 1959. Masumura's reading of *I vitelloni* focuses on the protagonist, Fausto. He tells of Fausto's boredom with life in a village and how this leads him to allow gambling, carousing, and drinking to dissipate his youthfulness. Worried about his son, Fausto's father finds Fausto an upstanding bride, Sandra, and a decent job. But this does nothing to suppress Fausto's dissipation. After enduring all she can, Sandra takes the children and leaves the house, which is the shock that Fausto needs in order to realize how much he loves her. He searches for her everywhere and falls weeping and repentant in her arms (Masumura 1955a, 72).

But Masumura (73) rejects an uncritical reading of this story, which becomes instead the point of departure for a more philosophical interpretation:

> At a glance this story seems merely a run-of-the-mill tale of dissipation and penitence. But Fellini only borrows Fausto's story to describe a profound aspect of human life. Fausto is no mere profligate. It would be easy for him to become a good husband to Sandra and to become a son his father could be proud of. But he could not bear this. Rural monotony was smothering his life. He attempted to escape that oppression through his dalliances with women and his gambling. Within his arrogant contempt for civil society and amid his following his momentary impulses, he was also subsumed with anxiety.
>
> Fausto is thus one of the subjects of despair that Kierkegaard writes of. A despairing subject that has rebelled against the transcendental subject that supports eternal life—one might say—truth, love, god, and is adrift in transitory impulses. Fellini depicts Fausto as a Kierkegaardian subject of dejection. And correlatively, Sandra is not a typically bitter, betrayed wife, but actually the agent of Fausto's salvation.

Kierkegaardian pathos is depicted even more vividly for Masumura in *La strada* (1954), which for him shares the thematic foci of the earlier film. Distinguishing between the representational modes of these films and their philosophical import, he argues that both Fausto of *I vitelloni* and Zampanò of *La strada* are driven by a pride and selfishness that render them exemplars of the anxiety Kierkegaard discusses in *The Sickness Unto Death* (1849/2013). Sandra and Gelsomina are their respective agents of salvation. He stresses, however, that Fellini never "reduces these characters to conceptual schemata" (74). On the contrary, Fellini's characters are always presented as "individuals replete with aspects deserving of love, persons with living personalities that might be left over from classical film" (74).

Two more aspects to Masumura's first take on Fellini deserve attention. First, addressing the integration of performance with the cinematic *Gesamtkunstwerk* of the film as a whole, Masumura writes, "What is essential to Fellini's art—which lies in his attitude as an observer of the psyche—is that his cinematic sense and the performance techniques are never two different levels" (74). This achievement, however, depends on the performances of the lead actors: in *La strada*, the facial close-ups of Anthony Quinn as the brutal strongman at inner war with demons he never fully recognizes, and the peculiarly dance-like rhythms of Giulietta Masina's movements as the doomed, angelic Gelsomina.

Although Masumura wrote extensively about Western film into the mid 1980s, his critical engagement with Fellini was largely restricted to Fellini's early films. The only exception is his 1969 review of *Histoires extraordinaires* (*Tre passi nel delirio*/*Spirits of the Dead* 1969). Masumura wrote more extensively on Fellini's contribution, "Toby Dammit," based on Edgar Allen Poe's "Never Bet the Devil Your Head," than on the other two episodes of the anthology film. There seems to be a kind of identificatory ricochet operative in Masumura's enthusiasm for the short. Fellini's making the story contemporary and using a movie being shot on location as its *mise-en-scène* elicited various between-the-lines readings. One possible subtext, which Masumura picks up on, is Fellini's use of Poe, a writer unappreciated during his lifetime, as a response to those critics who found Fellini's films esoteric and noncommercial (Masumura 1969/2014, 230–233). By the time of his review, Masumura had been criticized for being "too commercial," a view that, conversely, suppressed critical appreciation of how radically he manipulated the cinematic conventions to which he seemed to adhere.[2] Meanwhile, Masumura's privileging of "Toby Dammit" continues his pattern of paying attention to those Fellini films in which traditional modes of acting dominate.[3]

Returning to Masumura's point about the reconciliation of the planes of cinematic representation and performance, it might be helpful to use the term "affect." "More than Ford, Fellini's screen overflows with a kind of sublime interior poetry, that inevitably moves the spectator. In *La Strada*, when Zampanò kills the fool, or when he abandons Gelsomina, or in the final scene in the seaside village when he hears Gelsomina's song—while these scenes depict a reality reminiscent of Neo-realism, they are filled with a pure lyricism that cannot be found in any realist film up to this time" (Masumura 1955a, 74). Given that the only two films under discussion here are two of Fellini's earliest, it is remarkable that Masumura discerns both the stimulus of neorealism and Fellini's departure from it.

Masumura first discussed Fellini while he was still an assistant director yet to make his own film, introducing films as yet unseen in Japan. By the time he revisits *I vitelloni* in 1959, on the occasion of its Tokyo release, he had made eight feature films, and would release his ninth the following month. The 1959 essay shifts the focus from redemption to attitudes toward "freedom," advancing its argument with a more certain expectation of the kind of informed spectatorship/readership indicated in the scene from Naruse's *Summer Clouds* I discussed earlier.

Masumura states that his initial impression of *I vitelloni,* which led to reflections on *La strada*, *Le notti di Cabiria*, and *Il bidone* (*The Swindle* 1955) as well, took shape in the context of the popularity in Italy of Renato Castellani's films, in particular *È primavera* (*It's Forever Springtime* 1948) and *Due soldi di speranza* (*Two Cents Worth of Hope* 1952), the latter winning Best Film at Cannes. Both Castellani films featured people who followed their passions without regard for wartime moralism or sentimentality, and this kind of energetic abandonment of former restrictions was immediately taken up by Luciano Emmer and Gianni Franciolini. When *I vitelloni* and other early films appeared, according to Masumura (1959, 172–173), the characters shared the freedom and wildness of Castellani's characters.[4] While Castellani's conception of the human subject was charged with energy and speed and was basically affirmative, Fellini's characters harbored an inner vacillation and evinced a kind of negativity. Masumura discerns the consequences of unbounded freedom in the tears of Zampanò in *La strada* and Augusto in *Il bidone* (173–174).[5]

In these samplings of commentary on Fellini, we see serious engagement with the films through the lenses of philosophy, history, and even Masamura's sublimated dialogue concerning his own position within his native cinema. We do not see passive reception or the acritical stares to which the Japanese TV crew were reduced in *Intervista*.

Returning to that portrayal, let us recall that the TV crew was promised a tour of Cinecittà and a lecture on its history by the archivist who instead wandered off to pick chicory. Perhaps she knew that they had been fully educated about her domain, having read the rather dense and thorough study of Cinecittà, its methods of production, its place in Italian film culture, and the structure of the Italian film industry, written by Masumura in 1955 and published in the same special issue on Italian cinema in which his first piece on Fellini appeared (Masumura 1955b).

It is both sad and a little ironic that *Intervista* was made the year after Masumura's death. It would be impossible to predict what he would have thought of it, but one can imagine a scenario in which he witnesses his exclusion from a conversation he had been conducting for over 35 years. It is heartening, however, that a new conversation might be possible to update the West on one of the richest and most continuously sustained cinephilic cultures across the Pacific, where "Fellini in Japan" is not a decorative addition but part of a vital, dynamic polylogue across cultures and among film makers, critical theorists, and a continually self-informed spectatorship.

Notes

1 There are other noteworthy critical encounters between major Japanese directors and Italian cinema: for example, the grand old man of the Japanese New Wave, Shinoda Masahiro (1965) wrote a fascinating response to Antonioni's *Il deserto rosso* (*Red Desert* 1964). But such encounters are occasional; Masumura's attention to Italian cinema was lifelong.

2 See, for example, Yamane 1992, 18–23. Even as early as 1957, after releasing his third feature film, Masumura (1958) wrote a response to his critics in which he strategically pleads "guilty" to the transgressions they discerned in his work.

3 Given that Masumura was widely considered the "go-to" man on all things related to Italian cinema, his absence from the 1970 issue of *Kinema Junpo*, which featured a cover story on *Fellini - Satyricon* (1970), the entire screenplay in Japanese translation, and a special panel discussion of the film (Shirai et al. 1979), is noteworthy, clearly delineating the restricted scope of his critical interest in Fellini's oeuvre.

4 Although Masumura does not mention any titles, he is probably referring to Emmer's *Le ragazze di Piazza di Spagna* (1952) and Franciolini's *Buongiorno, Elefante!* (*Hello Elephant* 1952), or the film Franciolini codirected with Vittorio De Sica, *Villa Borghese* (*It Happened in the Park* 1953).

5 Around the same time, there is an intriguing defense of *Il bidone* by a critic (Sasaki 1959, 70–71) who argues that the film is a neglected key to Fellini's aesthetics.

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39

Fellini in Russia

Naum Kleiman

To begin with, I am not an expert on Fellini, so all my ideas and impressions are purely subjective. There were people, such as Victor Demin, our first specialist in Fellini, who would have been able to tell you much more about the Russian perception of Fellini, but he is no longer with us. I do have some vivid impressions of meeting Fellini when he came to Moscow, though, and of the first times I saw his films.

When I studied at our main film school, VGIK, now called the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography (1956–1961), Fellini was presented to us as someone who had distanced himself from neorealism and in a way betrayed it, someone who had yielded, as our teacher put it, to the "pressure of Catholic ideology." According to them, Fellini already began to waver in *Il bidone (The Swindle* 1955). In *I vitelloni* (1953), he maintained some of his ties to neorealism, but rather than depicting the working class, he turned to depicting the bourgeois and the idlers.

La strada (1954) was initially shown only to filmmakers at the House of Cinema, a sort of a closed club for members of the film guild, and all of them, including representatives of the old school, such as Sergei Gerasimov, immediately fell in love with Fellini—especially the younger generation, including Marlen Khutsiev and the Georgian director Tengiz Abuladze. All of a sudden, they saw that verisimilitude and metaphysics could be combined and that one could break through to metaphysics by depicting facts realistically, without Hollywood scenery or mystic scenes in the Scandinavian style.

The first film to be bought officially in the Soviet Union was *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957). It was first screened at the World Festival of Youth and Students in 1957 and was immediately a great success, giving birth to a sort of a cult of Fellini and Masina with the "progressive viewer." Because of its success, *La strada* was also eventually bought and released for the general public, under the title *Oni brodili po dorogam* ("And So They Wandered along the Roads" 1967), in a terribly censored version. All of the metaphysics had been cut and the film was reduced to a single story line: a villain who repents.

In 1963, when I was working for the Russian state film archive (Gosfilmofond), a colleague told me that Fellini's *8½* (1963) was to be screened at the White Hall of the House of Filmmakers for the selection committee of the Moscow Film Festival. I told my friend Victor Demin. We each found some excuse not to show up at work and went to the screening, trying to make ourselves inconspicuous in the last row. We saw the film in the original, with English subtitles, and of

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course were spellbound. It was a revelation. But once the screening was over, the officious critic presiding over the committee, Rostislav Yurenev, stood up and said: "It's an awful film, for it shows nothing but the doubts of a certain representative of the intelligentsia. I will do everything in my power to prevent it from coming to the festival." I think he did try, but fortunately failed, maybe thanks to the director Pavel Chukhrai, head of the jury, who adored Fellini's film from the very start. It was certainly thanks to Chukhrai that the film won first prize, for there was considerable pressure to give it to the typically Soviet industrial drama *Znakomtes, Baluev!* (*Meet Baluev!* 1963). This film, which no one remembers now, eventually got some prize, too, maybe as "best film about a certain Baluev!" Chukhrai had fought on the front line during the war and was absolutely fearless.

Another person who played an active role in this battle was the journalist and influential member of the Italian Communist Party, Antonello Trombadori, who came specially to Moscow at the time to defend Fellini and his film. He went daily to the ideological department of the Central Party Committee, threatening to break off all relations between the Russian and Italian communist parties if the prize was not given to *8½*. How do I know all this? Every evening Trombadori came to see Eisenstein's widow, Pera Atasheva, to tell her everything and let off steam. He had brought her a wonderful two-volume edition of Leonardo's paintings, dedicating it to "Eisenstein, the Russian Leonardo." And I was at the time part of a group of young critics who helped her prepare Eisenstein's unpublished texts for his six-volume edition. We also came to her place every evening after work, and thus learned what was happening in the backrooms of the festival and even in the cultural department of the Central Committee. The battle for Fellini went on for a whole week, though the public had immediately welcomed *8½* with a standing ovation.

The screening of *8½* was to be followed by a press conference, and since it was clearly the best film at the festival, everyone wanted to attend. Fellini was to go there with Marlen Khutsiev, whose film, originally entitled *Zastava Ilyicha* (*Ilyich's Gate* 1962) was still withheld from release (it was shown after many changes in 1965 under the title *Mne dvadtsat let—I Am Twenty)*. Someone must have told Fellini about this, for he immediately took Khutsiev under his wing and showed his sympathy by bringing him wherever he went. It looked very funny, because Fellini, a tall man, was constantly accompanied by the small Giulietta Masina on one side and by the small and slender Khutsiev on the other. When Fellini invited him to the press conference, Khutsiev said to Victor Demin that he would try and bring him along, too. Victor, in turn, told me. So we asked a young woman to keep an eye on the books we were selling in the hotel lobby (in order to be close to the festival, we had convinced our boss at the state film archive that we had to sell our publications at the Hotel Moskva, where all the guests were staying), and we went to the press conference. In order to bypass the guards, we formed a "conga line." Fellini had his arm around Marlen Khutsiev's shoulder, Marlen held Victor Demin by the hand, and Victor gave his hand to me and was dragging me along. In this sort of clown train, we came to the hall jammed with people. The conference was chaired by Vasily Zakharchenko, editor-in-chief of the popular journal *Science and Life*, who kept asking things, like "What is the film about? What did you mean by it?" while all the journalists yearned to ask their own questions. At a certain point, he turned to Masina and asked her: "Signora Masini" (that's how he pronounced it), how do you prefer Fellini, as a director or as a husband?" Poor Giulietta looked at him, then at Fellini, and finally said: "As a director." Fellini looked as if he wished he could vanish under the table. Of course, everyone laughed, and in a way this awkward question broke the ice.

Another person one could often see next to Fellini during that stay was Sergei Gerasimov, the éminence grise of our cinema and, as I mentioned, a great admirer of Fellini. One day he invited Fellini over to taste his handmade meat dumplings (*pelmeni*), something he was famous for. After tasting them, Fellini supposedly said to Gerasimov: "Signor, I don't know what sort of films you

Figure 39.1 Gelsomina meets a kindred marginal figure, Osvaldo: psychologism and clownery converge. *Source*: *La strada* (1954). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Ponti-De Laurentiis Cinematografica. Frame grab captured by Frank Burke from 2017 Blu-ray version.

make, but you do make great meat dumplings." I don't know how much truth there is in this anecdote. The words could have been attributed to Fellini later, but people loved repeating it. Nevertheless, Fellini always remained a great favorite with Gerasimov, who showed Fellini's films to his students at VGIK, interpreting his work from a psychological point of view, as neorealism going "into depth." He once told me during an interview about young Eisenstein that he loved the eccentric image created by Giulietta Masina in *La strada*, because for him "psychologism did not exclude clownery" (Figure 39.1).

I should add that Fellini had a strange reputation in the Soviet Union at the time. When *La dolce vita* (1960) was shown at Cannes, some of our critics wrote that Fellini had betrayed himself. In spite of the critical portrayal of bourgeois society, the film showed that he had lost all interest in the "rank-and-file people," with the exception maybe of the smiling girl at the end of the film. So, the film was not bought, though the state film archive somehow managed to get a pirate copy, maybe through the partly unofficial practice of the so-called "indirect film exchange" with our allies from Eastern Europe. If one of them, say, Poland, bought the film, they might lend it to our filmmakers, and a pirate copy could be made. Anyway, it is certain that the film was shown privately at many dachas of party officials. Thus, paradoxically, Fellini was criticized in the Soviet Union for betraying the principles of neorealism, while the lifestyle described in Fellini's films of the 1960s appealed to the party elite, fascinated by the "beautiful decay of the Western bourgeoisie," which deep down they wished to be part of. And while many ordinary researchers of the state film archive never had the opportunity to see this "undesirable" film, the director of the archive had the famous image of Anita Ekberg in the Trevi Fountain hanging in his study. Both funny and absurd, isn't it?

In the end, *8½* won first prize, but, against festival rules, it was not bought. It was shown a few times here and there, without ever being released. Nor were *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965), *Roma* (1972), and many other films. The first film to be distributed after the severely censored *La strada* was *Amarcord* (1973). It was also a little trimmed, as I learned, by pure chance. If I am not mistaken, in 1978, there was an exhibition of Eisenstein's drawings in Pesaro, and I was to bring the originals as the person responsible for them at the Eisenstein archive. I was met by an Italian who spoke good Russian. The first thing he said to me was "How could you! How dare you! All the newspapers are talking of this! We shall protest against Soviet censorship!" It took me a while to understand that he was speaking of Fellini's *Amarcord* and the fact that it had been cut for the Soviet screen. "How dare you touch Fellini!" the man rambled on all the way to the car. I had seen *Amarcord* at the House of Filmmakers and knew that it had by now been released, but not that it had been censored. As it turned out, the cuts were not that severe by Soviet standards, only a couple of shots. On the whole, it was a huge step forward that one of Fellini's films was finally bought for the public. I think that Abuladze's *Natvris Khe* (*The Wishing Tree* 1977), with all its mythology, eccentricities, and autobiographical references, was to some extent influenced by it. I am not so sure about Andrei Tarkovsky's *Zerkalo* (*The Mirror* 1975). This complex director was in many ways closer to Antonioni. But I can say that the strong tendency of our cinema toward autobiography, toward an objective story enriched by subjective experiences, toward history seen through a personal prism, toward a combination of tragedy and eccentricity—all this owes something to Fellini. Whoever saw his films realized that cinema could not be reduced to verisimilitude, that there could be an eccentric line within the tragedy. I know that his authority was particularly felt in the Georgian cinema. And of course, he was an important source of inspiration for Kira Muratova (1934–2018), an idiosyncratic Soviet and Ukrainian film director with a love for the absurd and a penchant for the grotesque. Nikita Mikhalkov only imitated Fellini's style in *Oci ciornie (Dark Eyes* 1987).

An active role in bringing *Amarcord* to the people was played by the so-called Cinema Propaganda Office—a part of the Union of Filmmakers—which was responsible for the population's cinematographic education. They set up film clubs all over the country and invited lecturers to present old films, such as films of the silent era, and recent films that had been poorly distributed. It is through this system that *Amarcord* was shown at all universities of the USSR. In Novosibirsk, for example, they showed *La strada*, *Le notti di Cabiria, Intervista* (1987), *E la nave va* (*And the Ship Sails On* 1983), and later *8½*, when it was finally bought after Perestroika.

Many films, including *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980), *Roma*, and *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976) were not released during the Soviet era, and we saw them only at special screenings at the House of Filmmakers, when copies were sent for possible acquisition, or at special events organized by embassies. Nor was the general audience able to see his early films, such as *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952) or *Il bidone*. Only Muscovites were fortunate: they had a screening venue, the Illusion, that belonged to the state film archive. So *Amarcord* remained Fellini's best-known film, and Fellini thus came to symbolize confessional cinema, since his other, more satirical, films were unknown to the public. The same happened with Ingmar Bergman: filmmakers could see his films at special screenings, while only two of them, *Smultronstället* (*Wild Strawberries* 1957) and *Höstsonaten* (*Autumn Sonata* 1978), were in fact released, so that for the general public Fellini and Bergman were great myths. It was typical of Soviet reception that the mythological figure would often prevail over reality.

A highlight of Fellini's reception in Russia was, of course, the Golden Prize awarded to *Intervista* at the 15th Moscow International Film Festival in 1987. The festival coincided with the turbulent and politicized years of the beginning of Perestroika, and I remember the debates of the old "Fellinists" with the young fans of a more radical cinema, who thought that Fellini

was not "critical enough" or was "too egocentric," while of course the old "Fellinists" were very happy he got the main prize.

In any case, Fellini got his "payback" among the young with a retrospective, sometime after the award for *Intervista*. I remember that the cinema was so full that they allowed the students to sit on the steps, against all rules. Thanks to the retrospective, *Intervista* was finally reunited with *La dolce vita,* which our viewers saw practically for the first time legally, and with *8½*, and this context really helped Fellini be fully understood and appreciated.

During the Soviet era, not only was access to certain movies and directors restricted, so was access to specialized literature on Italian cinema. I have here with me a copy of Giuseppe Ferrara's *Il nuovo cinema italiano*, published in the Soviet Union in 1959. It still bears the stamp "for research libraries," which means it was not for sale, but distributed through a special network. I managed to get it only years later, when someone I knew gave me one of the two copies in his possession.

Beginning with the 1960s, along with the "officious" critics, headed by Yurenev, there appeared the so-called "new critics," such as Victor Demin, Tatiana Bachelis, Vera Shitova, and Inna Solovieva, who admired Fellini. Tatiana Bachelis and Victor Demin started writing their books on Fellini, and the latter even went to work as a "scientific editor" for the publishing house Iskusstvo ("Art") in order to have a book on Fellini (containing the director's own texts and interviews, as well as articles by famous foreign critics) published in 1968. It was the first Soviet edition to show Fellini in a positive light.

Another colorful detail of Fellini's reception in Russia is that, at a certain point, two parties were formed at the state film archive, the "moralists" and the "harmonists." The first, supporters of Fellini, were nicknamed "moralists" by their opponents, who thought that Fellini moralized too much. This second group supported representatives of "pure art," such as Antonioni, who wanted to reveal pure "harmony"; hence, their name. I tried to reconcile the two parties by pointing out that geniuses always "walked in pairs"—Leonardo and Michelangelo, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, Fellini and Antonioni—but I was instantly labeled "conformist," losing favor with both camps.

As for my personal perception of Fellini, I can say this. People sometimes ask me how I combine my love for Eisenstein with a love for Fellini. To begin with, there exists one element common to all artists, the fact that they are all trying to comprehend the world. Yet, one can find more specific parallels between these two artists, in spite of their obvious difference in style. When I first saw *8½*, it came to my mind that as early as 1930 Eisenstein, in his script for the film based on Theodore Dreiser's novel *An American Tragedy*, had made an attempt to represent the inner monologue of a character and convey the flow of imagination and thought. Although Eisenstein is always regarded as an epic rather than a psychological filmmaker, he had an interest in visualizing the inner world and the flow of consciousness, following its logic rather than external narration—just like Fellini, who in *8½* broke the old schemes of narration and followed his own "phantoms." You can easily compare their love of the circus, their unexpected twists and turns in dramatic construction, their images of forceful femininity—both erotic and burlesque.

Fellini may have seen Eisenstein's films, but formally he borrowed much less from him than, say, Antonioni, who has the same purity of graphic line. I don't know what Fellini thought of Eisenstein, but it does not really matter. As Viktor Shklovsky brilliantly put it, "Eisenstein dissolved in(to) cinema like sugar in tea." The influence may not come directly from the source, but from the flow that originated from it. It is fascinating how Rossellini is similar to Eisenstein in one way, Fellini in another, and Visconti in a third. Unlike the extremely intellectual, psychological Visconti, who quotes Giotto and Verdi, Fellini "borrows" in a different way. He takes the square root of reality where cultural sources are already dissolved like sugar in tea.

Fellini's criticism of Catholicism is also similar to Eisenstein's. It is not antireligious but rather anticlerical. Eisenstein used many religious images and reminiscences. He was obsessed with the notion of apocalypse and interpreted revolution as an apocalyptic event. One could not say this openly in Soviet times, but the soldiers in the famous scene on the Odessa steps look like black angels casting down those who were considered sinners by the regime, while people are rising toward them—a popular motif in Renaissance painting.

Even Fellini's drawings remind me of Eisenstein's, for within the intellectual construction of their drawings they both visually rendered sensual impulses. Though Eisenstein's shots and frames may seem purely epic or historic, there is, in reality, a strong sensual component in both their construction and their editing. The same can be said about Fellini. This is why both Fellini and Eisenstein have such a strong impact on the viewer. They are not alike, but they are related, like two brothers, who may not resemble one another physically.

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Fellini in the Cuban Context

Luciano Castillo, Jennifer Ruth Hosek, Mario Naito López, Mario Masvidal, and Rebeca Chávez

Federico Fellini never came to Havana, although Alfredo Guevara invited him while Fellini was at the Venice Film Festival promoting *La dolce vita* (1960) in 1959. Perhaps this offer from the president of the nascent Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry (ICAIC) was not surprising. Revolutionary Cuba was turning over a new cultural leaf. During the first six decades of the twentieth century, movie houses had exhibited primarily Hollywood and popular Mexican, Argentinian, and Spanish films, supplemented by Cuba's modest national cinema production. Fellini was known in this prerevolutionary Cuba. *La strada* (1954) had earned critical attention, particularly among professed Catholics. Critics had deemed *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957) one of the best films of the year, citing its human values. Cineclubs would continue to study the cinematography of *La strada* and *Le notti di Cabiria*. Guevara, however, was inviting Fellini to contribute to Cuba's new, concertedly revolutionary artistic vision.

The Cuban Revolution's triumph on 1 January 1959 led to an expansion of the filmic offerings screened on the island. While hostilities between Cuba and the United States blocked the distribution of Hollywood productions, new relations with the Soviet Union meant that a flood of East European works filled the screens of Cuban cinemas. China sent programmatic war films. Though many were excellent, the public was not accustomed to these kinds of productions. The aesthetics and themes of Socialist realism often seemed Manichean, especially in the Soviet films, where optimistic tragedy and positive heroes predominated. In response to the public's lukewarm reception, ICAIC soon found it necessary to educate audiences with more varied, high-quality, and complex programming. In 1963, ICAIC premiered films by directors as diverse as Akira Kurosawa, Andrzej Wajda, Shintaro Ishihara, Marcel Ophüls, François Truffaut, Marco Ferreri, Andrei Tarkovsky, Luis Buñuel, and Pier Paolo Pasolini. Also included was Fellini's *La dolce vita*.

In addition to this cinematographic broadening, Italian neorealism influenced ICAIC filmmaking in 1960s revolutionary Cuba. During the first half of the 1950s, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Julio García Espinosa had studied in Rome's Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia under the principal theoretician of neorealism, Cesare Zavattini. They returned imbued with neorealism's low-budget, humanist-oriented spirit to become two of Cuba's most important directors and the founders of ICAIC. Documentaries such as Gutiérrez Alea and García Espinosa's *Esta tierra nuestra* (1959),

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García Espinosa's *La vivienda* (1959), and José Massip's *¿Por qué nació el Ejército Rebelde?* (1960), and the first of ICAIC's features, Gutiérrez Alea's *Historias de la Revolución* (*Stories of the Revolution* 1962), García Espinosa's *Cuba baila* (*Cuba Dances*, 1961) and *El joven rebelde* (*The Young Rebel* 1961), and Oscar Torres's *Realengo 18* (1961) evidence the new realism that opposed itself to Hollywood commercial cinema.

In this period of cultural foment and openness, which lasted until around 1971, the widespread screening of the box office hit *La dolce vita* in 1963 caused a furor. As in many socialist countries, art in Cuba was and is ascribed great cultural influence. The appearance of a film with iconic West European stars brought long queues at the cinema and provoked violent reaction in the press. Conservative personalities such as the Communist leader and party functionary Blas Roca and the well-known TV actor Severino Puente hotly debated ICAIC President Alfredo Guevara about the exhibition of *La dolce vita* and other films in the Cuban daily *Hoy* and the film journal *Cine Cubano*. Pasolini's *Accattone* (1961), Buñuel's *El ángel exterminador* (*The Exterminating Angel* 1962), and Lautaro Murúa's *Alias Gardelito* (*Alias Big Shot* 1961), among others, were deemed to advocate petty-bourgeois ideology and deform the public's political attitudes. Roca writes, for instance, "the Accattones and the Gardelitos are not role models for our [revolutionary] youth" (Encrucijadas 1963 / 1998, 77).[1] Many critics praised *La dolce vita's* cinematic value but bemoaned what they saw as its narrative "defects," such as inattention to the psychologies of characters or the root causes of societal decline. The controversy about the form and role that art should take in the Revolution expanded to other filmmakers and works. The dispute revealed the closed-mindedness of many advocates of the new system and their discomfort with the idea that films could interpret reality—even Cuban revolutionary reality—in various ways. Fortunately, these deliberations also ended up promoting the role of art as a mode of critical engagement when, to stop the increasingly uncivil dialogue, Guevara invoked Fidel Castro´s famous June 1961 "Words to the Intellectuals" speech. Often summarized by the variously interpreted quote "within the Revolution, everything; against the Revolution, nothing," on this occasion Castro's address was deployed to defend constructive critique through artistic expression.

In the wake of this foundational debate lasting until the end of the 1960s, the leadership of ICAIC continued its efforts to engage spectators through a diversity-based film screening policy. This heterogeneous movie landscape in turn enabled the public to develop critical tools with which to engage intelligently with any work. Cubans continued to see movies that were contentious in Cuba for what were considered their decadent values, while at the same time savoring the scene of the Trevi Fountain and getting to know Marcello Mastroianni. Indeed, so singular was this film's mark in Cuba that the phrase "dulce vida" became a synonym for hedonism with overtones of corruption. Particularly in those years, if officials were decried for having used their power or position to illicitly redistribute material goods or privileges, to enjoy the "worldly pleasures of capitalism" or even "perverse" lifestyles, the vox populi labeled them as having been punished for "the sweet life."

Although many of Fellini's films were not screened widely on the island, *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965) opened in 1967 and was selected as one of Cuba's ten best film releases of the year. While some important critics considered it inferior to Fellini's previous works, its technical aspects, particularly Gianni di Venanzo's photography and Giulietta Masina's acting, were admired. *8½* (1963) was not seen commercially in Cuba until 1976 because the exhibition rights were held by a US company. When it was finally shown—its premiere in a pirated copy of very poor quality that was acquired through some association or person friendly with Cuba—it passed somewhat unnoticed. In 1990, when *8½* was rereleased in art cinemas, its true importance could be appreciated. After *Giulietta degli spiriti*, Fellini's films were not exhibited in popular cinemas until *Amarcord* (1973), either because it was impossible to buy them or because it was not in

ICAIC's interest to screen them for general audiences. Nearly all of them have played at the art-film theatre, Cine Charles Chaplin, however, because many among the Cuban intelligentsia enjoy these masterpieces. *Amarcord* was well received by critics and selected as one of the best films exhibited in 1978; two years previously it had been screened at an Italian cinema week in Cuba, suggesting both that Italy wanted to create a profile for the film on the island and that Cuban officials agreed to this. In 1986 and 1990, respectively, *E la nave va* (*And the Ship Sails On* 1983) and *Ginger e Fred* (*Ginger and Fred* 1985) were included in the annual Film Critics Award selection.

It is unlikely that any Cuban director could have been an explicit "imitator" of Fellini. In contrast, critics said that, in the mid-1960s, Fausto Canel's *Desarraigo* (1965) adapted Antonioni's style to Cuban cinema. Nevertheless, Fellini's influence can be seen in every decade of Cuban production. Consider the lush "feast of the bourgeoisie" scene in the classic *Lucía* (1968) by Humberto Solás, a historical melodrama that illuminates Cuban history through three distinct, eponymous characters at three revolutionary moments: independence from Spain and struggles against Machado in the 1930s and against Batista in the 1960s. This fête conjures up the decadent soirées of *La dolce vita*. Consider also one of the most recognized Latin American films, *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (*Memories of Underdevelopment* 1968) by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, which has an emotionally and sometimes visually detached aesthetic similar to *La dolce vita*'s and whose Sergio bears strong parallels to Marcello (Figure 40.1). These bourgeois protagonists distance themselves from and scrutinize their realities without commitment, and practice a certain cultural hedonism, although clearly in very different historical and geographical circumstances.

Fellini's influence has insinuated itself into many other Cuban films. *La strada* arguably informs Manuel Octavio Gómez's *Tulipa* (1967) based on Cuban Manuel Reguera Saumell's play *Recuerdos de Tulipa*. In *Tulipa*, an older nude dancer in a circus sees her position threatened by a young rival newcomer preferred by the boss. In *La strada*, the strong man of a circus, Zampanò, is upset when a newly arrived tightrope walker, *Il Matto*, interests his female performance partner Gelsomina. The genders are reversed, yet these circus tales resonate with each other. (Fellini's somewhat

Figure 40.1 The befuddled and dissociated bourgeois consciousness of Sergio in *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (*Memories of Underdevelopment* 1968) recalls the Marcello Mastroianni protagonists of Fellini's early 1960s films—though also the work of Michelangelo Antonioni. *Source*: *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (*Memories of Underdevelopment* 1968). Directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea. Produced by Cuban State Film, ICAIC. Screen grab captured by Frank Burke from the 2018 Blu-ray version.

analogous *Luci del varietà* [*Variety Lights* 1951] was exhibited in Cuba, at Cine Charles Chaplin, only many years later.) Octavio Gómez's *Los días del agua* (*The Days of Water* 1971) draws on *Giulietta degli spiriti*'s style and use of color, particularly in the sequence "The Gospel According to Tony Guaracha." The "sanatorium" of Daniel Díaz Torres's *Alicia en el pueblo de Maravillas* (*Alice in Wondertown* 1990) is reminiscent of the exaggerated health resort in *8½*. In Juan Carlos Tabío's fairytale-like *El elefante y la bicicleta* (1994), a young man seeking riches in order to wed brings the cinema to a small village nearly surrounded by the sea. The Fellini-like setting—town, sea, and fair—evokes *Amarcord*. Perhaps it is but elegant happenstance that circus and cinema inspired both the Italian director and, decades earlier, those most significant Cuban film industry entrepreneurs, Pablo Santos and Jesús Artigas (Agramonte and Castillo 2013).

Although shortly after meeting with Guevara in Venice, Fellini was demonized as a betrayer of neorealism, his friendship with Cesare Zavattini survived. Zavattini's visits to the radicalized Caribbean island must have been a recurring topic between the two artists. In his enthusiastic proselytism, the screenwriter must have tried to convince the director that he would feel at home in Havana's intense nightlife on La Rampa's sidewalks. However, Fellini was increasingly reluctant to leave Rome. Like his G. Mastorna, whose *viaggio* always resisted being filmed for one reason or another, Fellini never undertook the trip to Cuba.

Note

1 Encrucijadas (1998) includes a summary of Blas Roca's and Severino Puente's position statements on revolution and cinema in the Cuban daily *Hoy*, December 12 and 24, 1963, and ICAIC President Alfredo Guevara's responses were published here as well. Our analysis of the debate draws on this authoritative source.

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Part VII

Short Takes on Individual Films

Atom Egoyan on his installation “8½ Screens” for the opening of the TIFF Bell Lightbox cinema complex and headquarters for the Toronto International Film Festival in September 2010.

A virgin cinema is a tempting place for an installation. A room dedicated to the viewing of films is full of promise and anticipation. In this room—Cinema 4—there will be myriad private experiences formed between future filmgoers and artists. This work is about watching. The original idea was to compile a selection of classic images of characters viewing films […]. The list is long and full of possibilities. When I came across the screening room scene near the end of Federico Fellini's masterpiece 8½, the original concept shifted. Here was possibly the single densest sequence of collective watching ever staged. The complexity of the relationships between the viewers (a director, his frustrated producer, his luminescent muse, his alienated wife, her bemused friend…) and the screen auditions they were viewing (for the part of an alienated wife, a frustrated mistress, an idealized prostitute…) was overwhelming. Rather than a compilation of clips from various sources, the installation became a deconstruction of a key scene from one of the greatest films about filmmaking (and film watching) ever made. By the end of this scene, as the director's wife Luisa leaves the theatre, the marriage is effectively over. [Guido] is metaphorically hung out to dry, and so the billowing sheets—a recurring motif in Fellini's cinema—became an essential part of the installation. “8½ Screens” is a fantasy fuelled by one of the greatest imaginations of cinema's golden age. I offer it with deep respect, more than a little nostalgia, and tremendous excitement about the opening of this magnificent new home for a cherished institution.

https://datadatablog.wordpress.com/2010/12/26/125/

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Lo sceicco bianco (*The White Sheik* 1952)

Dom Holdaway

In a profile in *Sight & Sound* of promising Italian directors of the mid-1950s—one of the British magazine's first references to Fellini—the director is praised for the creativity and "promised talent" of *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik* 1952) and *I vitelloni* (1953). These films, it suggests, demonstrate Fellini's contribution to the exciting "new style" of *Luci del varietà* (*Variety Lights* 1950), previously thought to be Lattuada's. Nevertheless, the author (Anon 1955, 120) views *La strada* (1954) and *Il bidone* (*The Swindle* 1955) as less rewarding, and concludes: "Clever, inventive Fellini seems at present adrift with his own facility. Will he commit, and find, himself?"

In retrospect, this question seems comically misguided. Critical reflection on Fellini's early cinema since the 1950s has demonstrated that the director was not as "adrift" as he may have appeared to some viewers, and the films mentioned in the *Sight & Sound* profile instead seem to foreshadow his celebrated "Felliniesque" aesthetic. *Lo sceicco bianco* has been redeemed and justified within the Fellini canon, and, intriguingly, its genesis, as we shall see in a moment, has come to be narrated in creatively divergent accounts by participants who became significant protagonists of Italian cinema in the 1950s and 1960s—accounts that transgress the borders of fiction and fact in the same way the film does.

The film provides a series of firsts in Fellini's modus operandi and in his collaborations with composer Nino Rota and screenwriters Tullio Pinelli and Ennio Flaiano. It was, nevertheless, a critical and popular failure upon its release. Most critics present at its screening at the 1952 Venice Film Festival reacted adversely, with the important exceptions of Callisto Cosulich and Tullio Kezich, who recognized the film's originality (see Rossi 2003). At the box office, it made only ₤41 000 000—around $65 000 at that time, or $600 000 today (Rondolino 1979, 64).[1]

Lo sceicco bianco was based on a treatment by another emerging maestro of Italian cinema: Michelangelo Antonioni. Carlo Ponti, who was originally to produce, passed the treatment to Fellini, who extended it into a script with Pinelli and Flaiano. Antonioni fell ill and the film was handed to Alberto Lattuada (Kezich 2006, 121), but accounts of exactly why Lattuada did not end up directing it contradict one another. One of the most entertaining versions is actor Alberto Sordi's. He takes full credit for Fellini's involvement, claiming that he recognized omnisciently that Lattuada's aesthetic vision was not a good fit with the screenplay, and persuaded Ponti to give it to Fellini (Tornabuoni 1980, 18). A less romantic version is more likely the truth: Lattuada and Ponti abandoned the project because they

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lacked faith in its commercial promise; Fellini adopted the project for his directorial debut and sought out a new producer on his own, finding eventually Luigi Rovere. And despite the egocentrism of Sordi's version, it was actually thanks to Fellini that the actor remained attached to the project in the face of Rovere's skepticism. The director persuaded the producer of the importance of this casting (Laura 1978, 62).

Once *Lo sceicco bianco* acquired art-film status, it contributed, in conjunction with *I vitelloni*, to a brief attempt to legitimate Sordi's reputation as a highbrow actor in auteur films. The film is the basis of Lorenza Mazzetti's *Sight & Sound* presentation of the star to the British public as a "person of talent" (1956, 51). Though he gained some recognition for dramatic performances, Sordi ultimately found fame for his roles in comedy vehicles, especially after *Un americano a Roma* (*An American in Rome*, Steno, 1954).

Lo sceicco bianco had a more lasting effect on the career of Leopoldo Trieste, launching (not entirely to his pleasing) his rich career as a comic film actor. Trieste (Kezich 2009, 27) claims that, though he was convinced comic acting was below him, it was his quickly improvised sonnet during a screen test ("eri sì dolce, e bella, e piccolina," which appears in the film) that won him the role. According to Fellini, he first encountered Trieste from the window of a dubbing studio, "in a sombrero, playing a Mexican priest who was condemned to be shot" (27). Though the sequence was part of an unrealized dramatic film, the image entertained Fellini so much that he quickly sought out and involved the actor.

These stories may vary in their historical accuracy, as may others: for example, Brunella Bovo (playing Wanda) and Sordi being thrown into the water as their boat scene was being shot, thanks to energetic crew members trying to make a wave effect (Bovo 2003)—or Fellini's (1993, 52) account of his nerves on the first day of the shoot. They nonetheless augment the mythology of the film, illustrating its centrality to a vital moment in Italian cinema, which saw the starting point of Fellini's incredible career and the film's intersection with the careers of Sordi and Trieste (and to a lesser extent, Bovo). What makes these accounts even more appealing is how the creativity of their accounts (Sordi's omniscience, Trieste as Mexican priest) mirrors that of the film.

In *Lo sceicco bianco*, the world of *fotoromanzi* provides a seemingly dangerous temptation for Wanda, a false area of escapism, but also freedom from the rigid expectations imposed upon her by 1950s society. In Fellini's astute critique, though, the invented world runs parallel to the creative falsehoods of the Church and the bourgeoisie in which Ivan and his family are invested. Both of these illusory worlds exist within a "real" Rome, though of course even its reality is only partial: a creation of Fellini and his film crew, a representation. The origin stories of *Lo sceicco bianco* constitute another layer of entertaining illusion. Yet, among these many layers of creation, illusion, and an implicit "real," Fellini does not provide closure or moral resolution. Instead we are left to reflect on the extent to which we ourselves might invest in created worlds—or in ideas about Fellini's inventions. This openness to unlimited invention and investment is the most significant innovation of Fellini's directorial debut.

Note

1 As a point of reference, the first in the *Don Camillo* series, directed by Duvivier and released in the same year, was a box-office smash with almost ₤1.5 billion, while Fellini's *I vitelloni* made almost ₤600 million—around the same as the popular comedy vehicle *Guardie e ladri* (*Cops and Robbers* 1951, Steno and Mario Monicelli) (Rondolino 1979; 80, 57, 41).

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42

La strada (1954)

Giuseppe Natale

La strada tells the tragic tale of a simple young woman, Gelsomina, sold into the service of an itinerant strongman/performer, Zampanò, who abuses her. She encounters a high-wire artist, *Il Matto*, who gives her a sense of purpose in her relationship with Zampanò. However, during a chance encounter, Zampanò kills Il Matto, and Gelsomina, having witnessed the violence, withdraws into a catatonic state. Zampanò abandons her only to hear news of her death years later and respond with devastation at the film's end. In the ideation phase, Fellini laced his fable-like plot with heavy symbolism. He then decided to ground the "too beautiful" tale in more realistic narration. In the transition from script to film, Fellini replaced the "theological, philosophical, or literary" clues with "concrete, figurative cinematic language" (Bondanella 1992, 107). In the final scene, the night, the sea, the stars, and Zampanò's weeping became "objective correlatives of emotional states" (107).

Fellini filmed *La strada* in a period of deep travail that he dramatically described as a "Chernobyl of the psyche." He sought out a Freudian analyst, albeit with negative results (Kezich 1987, 229). Gianfranco Angelucci (2008, 29) points to this episode in his semi-fictional novel *Federico F.*, in which Fellini is reported saying that, while shooting the beach scenes, he "felt like a castaway clinging to flotsam, striving to stay alive; it was as if a part of me had to hold on to the other part that got separated…. I didn't sleep a wink for a whole week: sleepless at night and busy shooting during the day." Fellini's description of his split consciousness throws light on Giulietta Masina's assertion (Bondanella 1992, 113) that *La strada* is the portrayal of different aspects of Fellini's psyche and that the three protagonists are expressions of his conflicted personality. Partial support of Masina's assertion comes from a 1954 Fellini drawing that depicts Zampanò as a hermaphrodite wearing a clown-hat (Figure 42.1). The sketch indicates that Fellini saw Zampanò as a composite figure invested with dual sexual attributes—in effect a fusion of Zampanò and Gelsomina and the psychic values they represent. The recounting of Fellini's prolonged lack of sleep during shooting seems relevant to the film's psychological work, releasing the unconscious activity that would normally find expression through sleep into the waking state, i.e. into cinematic fiction.

Although Fellini's encounter with the Freudian analysis was unfruitful, he would enjoy a profoundly enriching relationship with the Jungian analyst Ernst Bernhard in the 1960s. *La strada*

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Figure 42.1 Zampanò with dual sexual attributes. Archivio Federico Fellini—Comune di Rimini—Fondo De Santi/Tomasetig. © Estate of Federico Fellini / SOCAN (2019).

seems in many ways a prophecy of that relationship. Jungian-oriented film scholars Hauke and Alister (2001, 2–4) have remarked that "cinema offers both a means and a space to witness the psyche—almost literally in projection" and, for this reason, it is the ideal medium for witnessing the interaction between conscious and unconscious. In commenting on an essay by Jungian Erich Neumann, Fellini (1980, 158) outlined the creative process of film direction through a set of images reminiscent of *La strada*'s final scene: "The creative [type] places himself between the conscious…and the subconscious, the original magma, the darkness, the night, the depth of the sea…. He lives in this intermediate zone in order to perform a transformation, a symbol of life; at stake is his own life, or his mental health." A distressed Zampanò walking into the sea and back onshore dovetails with the above process. If we assume that the images of water stand for the psyche, then the shore is the limen the artist must cross before returning to solid ground. Whether the artist realizes the existence of a psychic scope in his work is not relevant because "the creative [type] is hardly aware of suturing conscious and unconscious" (159). In this analogy, Zampanò becomes a "creative type," which seems to conflict with his destructive behavior. However, he has assembled a marvelous mobile home; surrounds himself with evocative symbols, such as an owl, snake, mermaid, and crossed swords; and seeks unconsciously in his routine—breaking a chain with his pectoral muscles or "heart"—to express his need to free himself through love. He, Gelsomina, and Il Matto can all be seen as artists and thus representative of Fellini-as-artist.

A particularly resonant suggestion of Jungian symbolism avant la lettre in *La strada* is Il Matto's use of a stone to tell Gelsomina that everything, even she, has a purpose. The Self (in dreams) is often symbolized in the form of a stone. In psychological terms, Gelsomina ("the pebble") symbolizes the need to develop an unappreciated but precious part of the Self, and to integrate it into the Ego.

Fellini (1980, 159) comes to equate filmic activity with oneiric activity, a sort of conscious or lucid dreaming. Despite its (neo)realist veneer, *La strada* is made of oneiric material and built on oneiric structure. The rationales of the main characters are too tenuous to seem plausible, as are the links connecting the fragmentary episodes, whose images follow one another in illogical succession. As a result, the film can be read in a Jungian key, even though Fellini might not have yet developed a full understanding of dream theories. "The dreamer stages characters from his own unconscious; and each character is linked to his personality. On the one hand is Zampanò, the dark side that has not yet reached awareness, a side that searches confusedly for some awakening.… On the other hand [there is] Gelsomina, perhaps the character who best embodies Fellini's *anima*, and Il Matto … the artist who somersaults through life" (Angelucci 2003). From a Jungian perspective, Il Matto embodies the "Shadow" or trickster character. And the combined sacrifices of Il Matto and Gelsomina allow the ego (Zampanò) to develop a new sense of Self, antithetical to the animal-like brutality with which the strongman breaks his chain. Like the unconscious in creating dreams, Fellini's film shapes a subliminal space where the fractured psyche can start its healing process. In this cathartic space, his symptoms are filmed away rather than dreamed away in sleep, or talked away in therapy (Beebe 2001, 208). As we engage in a Jungian interpretation of the film, however, we must be aware that at this juncture Fellini's psychoanalytic bent was inchoate. In his "Letter to a Marxist Critic," occasioned by the famed *Cinema Nuovo* attack, Fellini (1987, 212–213) stated that *La strada* is a film about communication; about creating a bridge to others where no relationship exists; about breaking solitude, which, he states, has its origin "in the very depths of our being." In psychoanalytical retrospect, we now realize that *La Strada* illustrates how the three main characters, as conflicting aspects of his psyche, try but fail to communicate with one other. This reading, however plausible, does not exclude other interpretations, be they poetic, salvific, or literary. Arising from an oneiric creation, the "real" meaning of *La strada* can never be exhausted.

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43

Le notti di Cabiria (*Nights of Cabiria*)—Cabiria in the Classroom: Teaching Fellini in the Twenty-first Century

Áine O'Healy

When one of my students asked, about a five years ago, "Who is Fellini?" I was taken aback, having assumed that anyone interested in taking a course on Italian film would know at least that singularly iconic name. I had noticed earlier that students were experiencing greater difficulty engaging with Fellini's work than had been the case in the past. Though endowed with remarkable audiovisual literacy—honed by their habitual engagement with new media—they often seemed impatient with the spectacle-driven films of the director's maturity and were generally unwilling to meet their interpretive demands. Searching for an earlier film that might offer readier access to the director's distinctive style and vision, I settled on *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1956). As this has become the Fellini film I most often include in my Italian cinema courses, I am prompted to reflect on the specific revelations it has provided in the classroom setting.

Fellini's second film to win an Academy Award, *Le notti di Cabiria* has been continuously accessible in subtitled versions to English-speaking audiences, first on celluloid, then on VHS or DVD and, more recently, via streaming. It has, to some degree, been overshadowed, however, by *La strada* (1954), which won Fellini's first Oscar, and to which it bears some resemblance due to the riveting performance of Giulietta Masina in both films. Although I also considered *La strada* for my course, *Le notti di Cabiria* seemed to make more sense pedagogically as a compelling standpoint from which to discuss the transition from neorealism to the Italian art film of the 1960s.

An introduction to neorealism is still the cornerstone of my course on Italian cinema, despite the recent critical debate about the validity of this once widely accepted category.[1]

A discussion of cinematic realism—as understood by the neorealist filmmakers themselves and by critics such as André Bazin who canonized their work—provides the pedagogical bridge linking Italian cinema of the 1940s to Fellini's films of the mid- and late-1950s. In addition to illuminating the historical transition from realist representation to the beginnings of auteur cinema, *Le notti di Cabiria* proves to be an excellent starting point from which to explore what John C. Stubbs (1993, 49) calls "the Fellini manner."

For Stubbs, the two basic elements that characterize Fellini's oeuvre are "the open form of narrative revelation" and "the visual style of excess" (49–50). Although this characterization may seem reductive, it offers a useful introduction to the director's creative process. Whereas "visual

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excess" is the element that most consistently disturbs students in later Fellini films, they often find the "open form" of his narrative process in the films of the 1950s equally disconcerting. Therefore, when I teach *Le notti di Cabiria,* I first address students' discomfort with the film's lack of conventional plot and with what they describe as its "confusing ending." Accustomed to the predictable arc of the Hollywood narrative, they are initially drawn to Cabiria as a struggling streetwalker perpetually yearning for happiness and duly anticipate that, by the film's end, she will have either fulfilled her heart's desire or faced definitive defeat. Their earlier exposure to two or three neorealist films scarcely serves to mitigate their struggle with the indeterminacy of Fellini's conclusion. Reluctant to read the heartbroken Cabiria's tearful smile in the film's final moments as an indication of psychospiritual transformation or redemption—an interpretation suggested by several scholars[2]—they tend at first to focus on a single, more mundane narrative issue: Has Cabiria given up prostitution, or will she return to it?[3]

Following a careful review of the film's narrative structure, I have been able to encourage a shift in perspective among even the most skeptical students. First, I show that even if *Le notti di Cabiria* appears to lack a conventional plot, it does, in fact, have a carefully organized structure, composed of a handful of discrete but loosely interrelated episodes, all of which underscore Cabiria's thwarted quest for a happier life. An examination of the opening episode, in which a presumed lover steals Cabiria's purse and pushes her into the Tiber, uncovers the narrative pattern that governs virtually all subsequent ones as the protagonist moves from hope or joy to a state of disappointment. The first episode also reveals the themes of betrayed love, robbery, and murderous intent that will reemerge in the film's concluding minutes in a sequence that—unlike its earlier counterpart—culminates in renewed hope rather than rage or disappointment.

Set against the backdrop of apartment buildings that recall the new but ill-equipped housing estate in the opening scenes of *Ladri di biciclette* (*Bicycle Thieves*, Vittorio De Sica, 1948) and then cutting to Cabiria's arrival at her house, a small concrete structure in a cluster of similarly modest dwellings that anticipate the shanty towns in Pasolini's films of the 1960s, the film's initial episode conjures up a distinctive social world and unique perspective on Rome's urban landscape (Figure 43.1). This perspective is not infused with the same order of realism as that embraced by the neorealists, but it is nonetheless rich in social, political, and anthropological insight. Angelo Restivo (2002, 37) has argued that neorealist filmmaking in its early stages possessed a "vital historical imperative—the imperative to discover 'Italy,' to construct new maps that had been negated by the homogenizing thrust of fascist ideology." The process of remapping was also important for Fellini. Restivo makes the claim that "Rome [...] is ultimately the vital subject of most of Fellini's work from the late 1950s on," and points to *La dolce vita* (1960) as the first of the director's films to offer a "cognitive map of the city" (37). I find, however, that *Le notti di Cabiria* provides an equally compelling "map" of the Italian capital, poised on the threshold of the Economic Miracle and so-called boom years, but revealing dramatic contrasts of wealth and poverty.

Over the course of Cabiria's nights and days, she is propelled across a broad swath of municipal territory and is witness to a wide range of socioeconomic circumstances. Some scenes are set in locations linked to the exigencies of her work: the street running just below the Baths of Caracalla where she plies her trade alongside her colleagues (some of whom are obliged by financial necessity to sleep under the arches); the more glamorous environs of the Via Veneto where she briefly tries her luck; the upscale nightclub she visits in the company of film star Alberto Lazzari; and Lazzari's ostentatious villa on the Via Appia Antica where she spends a disappointing night. In the company of her fellow streetwalkers, Cabiria also makes a pilgrimage to the semi-rural Sanctuary of the Madonna of Divine Love to beseech the Virgin Mary to change her life. She later attends a variety show in a modest suburban theater where she is subjected to the spell of an unctuous hypnotist.

Figure 43.1 Cabira's boyfriend steals her purse and tosses her in the Tiber while the background "maps" an urban periphery in transition. *Source*: *Le notti di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria* 1957). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Dino de Laurentiis Cinematografica and Les Films Marceau. Screengrab captured by Frank Burke from 1999 DVD version.

In another episode set in the urban periphery, Cabiria discovers underground caves inhabited by the most destitute members of society. The sequence has acquired notoriety and its own name—"The Man with the Sack"—because, while included in the version of *Le notti di Cabiria* that premiered at Cannes in 1957, it was eliminated from the cut originally distributed worldwide. It was included, however, in *Fellini: A Director's Notebook* (1968) and then reinserted, because of its acknowledged importance, in the restored version of *Le notti di Cabiria* released in 1998.[4] Since the sequence casts light on key elements of the overall narrative and is shorter than other major episodes of *Le notti di Cabiria,* I screen it multiple times in class to facilitate close analysis of its *mise-en-scène*, narrative structure, and affective arc.

Cabiria first meets the titular character, an anonymous citizen who delivers provisions to the homeless, after she realizes that a client has dropped her off in an isolated location without access to any kind of transportation. Pulling up alongside her in his car, the "man with the sack" offers his assistance, but she must first accompany him on his rounds. As they approach one of the caves—which is little more than a hole in the ground—she recognizes one of its inhabitants as an older, once well-to-do streetwalker, now reduced to a state of toothless abjection. Cabiria's surprise at meeting an old friend seems to impede her acknowledgment of the broader implications of the woman's present circumstances. Watching the scene, however, my students immediately realize that the only element that guarantees Cabiria a different kind of

future is her ownership of the small concrete dwelling she proudly calls home. The encounter with the aging prostitute thus adds an additional layer of poignancy to the film's final sequence, where Cabiria, now homeless and penniless due to her betrayal by the man she planned to marry, may well be headed in a similar direction even if her tearful smile suggests a shining, redemptive grace.

Significantly, it is in this episode that Cabiria, for the only time in the film, reveals her full name: Maria Ceccarelli. Inspired by the actions of the apparently selfless benefactor, she thus feels free to reveal something about herself. When the man finally drops her off at her tram stop following their visit to the dispossessed, she thanks him joyfully, buoyed by the example of his goodness rather than devastated by the poverty she has witnessed. As some of my more attentive students have noted, the restored episode is particularly striking for the fact that it reverses the affective trajectory of all other episodes in the film, with the exception of the final coda. Cabiria's discovery that individuals such as the "man with the sack" exist in the world she inhabits may thus perhaps be linked to her tentative smile at the film's end.

Bazin (1957/2005) famously characterized *Le notti di Cabiria* as a "voyage to the end of neorealism." Not quite a dead end, it seems, but rather a passage to "the other side" (87). Anticipating that the film would be criticized for falling short of the purported principles of canonical neorealism—as had occurred in the critical response to *La strada*—he seeks to persuade his readers that Fellini's poetic approach, with its use of symbols and simultaneous refusal to psychologize characters, succeeds in shaping reality anew rather than simply recording it (87–92).

Bazin interprets Giulietta Masina's tearful, smiling glance toward the camera in the film's closing shot as an invitation that is "direct enough […] to remove us quite finally from our role of spectator" (92). At this closing moment, the film seems indeed to blur the line between the performer and her character, meshing the diegetic with the metadiegetic, celluloid image with the world of the spectator. Just as the film viewers are hailed visually as Cabiria's/Giulietta's audience, so too has Cabiria been hailed as the audience of the group of reveling teenagers who surround her within the frame, embracing her company. As Bazin suggests, *Le notti di Cabiria* is crucially about encounters—encounters that tend to "befall" Cabiria rather than to derive from a progression of logical circumstances (84). And in the final moment, the sense of encounter is doubled, exceeding the limits of the film's fictional space. Tom Brown (2002, 81) has aptly described the final shot of *Le notti di Cabiria* as "one of cinema's most famous instances of direct address." But, as Bazin and other commentators have shown, Cabiria's/Giulietta's look is not fixed. Rather, it moves away and then returns and might seem almost accidentally directed at the audience.

As adept consumers of postmodern audiovisual narratives, my students have little difficulty recognizing the self-reflexive dimension of the film's closing sequence once they have been encouraged to go deeper than its surface narrative elements. Acknowledgment of this self-reflexivity prompts some of the more film-literate among them to identify other self-conscious or citational elements present throughout the film, including Masina's performative references to Chaplin and Keaton. Making sense of Cabiria's/Giulietta's fleeting gaze at the film's end thus becomes pivotal to classroom discussions of the shift from the (neo)realist aesthetics still influencing Italian filmmakers in the 1950s to the strategies of self-reflexivity and intertextuality that characterize much of the *cinema d'autore* of the 1960s. These strategies also crucially foreshadow the elements of irony, pastiche, and bricolage that saturate the audiovisual landscape of the present, in which my students—whether critically or uncritically—are already fully immersed.

Notes

1 This debate was triggered among Anglophone scholars by Alan O'Leary and Catherine O'Rawe (2011).
2 Frank Burke (1996, 97), for example, characterizes the concluding image of Cabiria as "a figure of intense vision" and describes the narrative trajectory leading up to this moment as "extraordinarily sophisticated in its rendering of individualized, psychospiritual development."
3 Students often assume that even in Italy of the 1950s prostitution was simply a misguided career choice rather than an economic necessity. Inviting them to pay closer attention to clues within the film itself is generally enough to challenge this assumption.
4 Different reasons have been given for the removal of the sequence, including an allegation of ecclesiastical censorship that Fellini himself helped to disseminate. A more likely explanation is provided by Dino De Laurentiis, the film's producer, in a commentary included in the Criterion edition of *Le notti di Cabiria* where he claims that he decided to eliminate the episodes because the film's original cut was too long.

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44

La dolce vita (1960)

Mark Nicholls

In the Bassano di Sutri episode, at the castle and dilapidated family villa of the aristocratic Montalbani clan, the essential experience of *La dolce vita* is expressed not in the simple juxtaposition of decadence and the numinous but in the surprising realization of what they hold in common. If we moralize the behavior in this sequence, we miss the truth of this surprising realization and, as Pier Paolo Pasolini saw it, "the almost sacred energy" of the film (quoted in Bondanella 1992, 149). We also run the risk of falling prey to the performance of a certain moral prejudice, which is no less fake than the performance of Halloween-style mock spiritualism enacted here by the party of decadents.

Shortly after Marcello's arrival at the castle, Maddalena, the wealthy and attractive woman with whom he spent the night earlier in the film, appears out of nowhere in a haze of perfume and leads him in a kind of Debrett's tour, casually critiquing the tired but noble families represented among the guests. Finally, she walks him past the chapel and the family portrait galleries into "the room of serious talk." There she sits him down before disappearing into another, distant room, from which she can talk with him, as "a disembodied spirit," through a water stoup mounted on the wall. Briefly and with some tenderness, they discuss their feelings, just as they did at the beginning of the film. As then, this frank discussion is followed by a sexual encounter, but this time it occurs apart from the solitary Marcello, as Maddalena is engulfed by a nameless party guest just as Marcello reaches his most revealing moment of eloquence in the film. At this point, Maddalena disappears from the film just as mysteriously as she arrived, and Marcello can find no one among the guests who even knows she was there.

Similar to their frank conversation in the deserted Piazza del Popolo, Marcello's mutual confessional encounter with Maddalena is the emotional heart of the episode at Bassano di Sutri. The mysterious trick of communication enabled here by "the room of serious talk" underlines the empathic nature of Marcello's conversation with the "extraordinary" Maddalena. She speaks of her love for him and her desire to marry him—be his faithful wife—and yet to "have fun like a whore." But she also knows that she cannot have it both ways—her self-loathing, she says, prevents her from making the kind of choices required to live the life of anyone but a "whore." Calmly, Marcello contradicts her, speaking of her extraordinary character, her courage, and her sincerity. Her desperation gives him strength and, even if she is "taking [him] for a ride," and a little drunk, tonight he loves her, needs her, and believes he would spend his life with her.

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Like Marcello's encounter at film's end with Paola, whom he had idealized earlier as "an Umbrian angel," and like Marcello's "baptism" and seeming "conversion" at the Trevi Fountain with Sylvia, there is some promise of a moment of truth. There is a glimpse of genuine aspiration and emotion. However, neither can be sustained. The deflationary irony of Maddalena's casual surrender to another is obvious, but it does not efface the effort at sincerity that went before. Neither Emma, Marcello's possessive lover, nor his aging father, nor his friend Steiner, who will later kill himself and his two children, engages in anything like this type of serious and sincere conversation with Marcello. Maddalena does, however, and her desires and attraction to Marcello are substantiated by her insight and lack of self-delusion. As she says to him, in the voice of the "disembodied spirit," "Have you ever heard me so clearly before?"

In this way, Fellini presents love and desire as fleeting, hopeless, and perhaps even venal, but the characters' quest for them is given its own valence and hence a kind of validation often ignored by those who want to see the film as social critique. Brought to Marcello by Maddalena, a midsummer night sprite who seems to float throughout the house, love, even in this dubious context, bares significant traces of the spiritual encounter the entire party are seeking.

Encompassing this phantasmic moment with Maddalena, Marcello's broader encounter with the Montalbani and their guests exhales a general air of decay. Their ghost-catching jaunt from the castle to the run-down villa, led by the loud American painter Jane, who looks like a cross between the great charlatan Sergei Diaghilev and James Whale's bride of Frankenstein, has all the lazy comic business and childish absurdity that is sometimes associated with the pleasure-seeking class (Landy 2008, 208). One son wants to turn the villa into a brothel; Nico dons a medieval military headpiece and parades around as the ghost of a Montalbani ancestor. Some of the party can barely restrain their mirth as Federica writhes about on a table during a séance, drunk they think, and merely expressing her sexual desire for the heir Giulio—but also seemingly in the grip of spiritual possession. The evening ends as various couples peel off and Marcello abandons his search for Maddalena in favor of a random sexual encounter with Jane. All, it seems, give up their search for the spiritual at the end of the night, in favor of the consolations of the corporeal.

When the party runs into the shock of Catholic religiosity in the daybreak apparition of the "principessa madre" and her train on their way to Mass, the contradictions of this episode are placed in even greater relief. Federica "the she-wolf" probably is drunk but the "truth … love, life, and everything that exists" that she cries out for in French are energetic and impressive aspirations. Marcello questions an "apparition" wearing a tiara and a dramatic white cape, about which painting she stepped from, only to find that he probably met her in an office somewhere. Like the lights he notices coming from the fields around the villa, which turn out to be tractors bringing in the harvest, she is no vision from the spirit world: she actually works. The Prince too, trailing behind the not so bright young things, has the glories of his atavistic memories largely annulled in the sadness he feels at the general decay of the villa and at the unlikelihood that either he or his heirs might restore them. Comparatively banal, these moments qualify the apparent purposelessness of this divertissement, pointing to certain ironized but not negligible sensitivities about love, desire, nostalgia, and loss that echo those raised by Marcello and Maddalena in "the room of serious talk."

At Bassano di Sutri, as elsewhere in Fellini's portrait of the Rome of his imagination (Angelucci, Fellini, and Rondi 1989, 4), we are presented with a potent critique of aristocratic and privileged in-crowd decadence, a first-world nostalgia, and a cast of pointless people in search of a questionable spiritualism (Burke 1996, 98; Richardson 1978, 105). Even so this portrait is not without insight, a certain discreet charm, and an incitement to understanding. It shows Fellini as the great humanist and as an empathetic witness, steadfastly declining judgment (Bondanella 1992, 148–149). In

Figure 44.1 Maddalena (along with Fellini) eschews judgment. *Source*: *La dolce vita* (1960). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Riama Film in coproduction with Cinecittà and Pathé Consortium Cinéma. Screen grab captured by Frank Burke from 2014 Blu-ray version.

fact, his point of view seems to coincide with that of Maddalena when she reproaches Marcello for his disapproving response to the behavior of some of the partiers: "Don't make that face. What, do you think we are any better?" (Figure 44.1) The worldview of this episode and the film generally might well be "dolce" with all the irony and genuine ambivalence the word really implies. Fellini contemplated calling his creation by the somewhat cumbersome, almost Shavian, title, "nevertheless, life has a profound mysterious sweetness" (RAI 2000)—which points us more directly to the kind of sensibility found at the heart of the film.

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Barbara Steele

This great bear of a man would meet you, his huge eyes totally focused on you, and out of this enormous fellow would come this tender conspiratorial voice, dolce and amused. Everyone who worked with him felt they shared a private secret with him—that he and he alone could mirror their souls like a great, slightly ironic Buddha.

The shoot for 8½ was very joyful. We had a little sixteen-piece orchestra that would play for everyone, sometimes over dialogue, which was always looped in those days. We were all caught up in an atmosphere of abundance and love. We somehow unconsciously all knew that we were part of a fabulous dance, an extraordinary moment in time. With Fellini at the height of his powers, Rome felt like the center of the universe.

Bowman, M., ed. (2015), Fellini: The Sixties *(Philadelphia: Running Press, 298–299).*

Spike Lee

At the time when I met him, my girlfriend and I had split up, and because I knew that, before becoming a director, he had been a cartoonist, I asked him to draw me something. He made a sketch on a napkin in which I was on my knees imploring "I beg you, take me back," and I gave it to my ex, to no avail. Then, I asked her to give it back to me, since it hadn't been of any use, but she kept it. I'm still trying to get it back….

Fofi, G. and Volpi, G., ed., Federico Fellini. L'arte della visione *(Rome: AIACE, 1993), 105.*

45

Oh, My *8½*

Caroline Thompson

I don't know who coined the term "Felliniesque." Not Fellinian, like Spielbergian. Not Fellini-ish, like delish, which his work, of course, is. But the term is "Felliniesque": elegant, mellifluous. It sounds like arabesque, balletic, and difficult, and all about the physical wizardry of balancing. Perfect for Fellini, that most choreographic of directors, whose camera waltzes and side-steps and soft-shoes in a kind of glorious celebration of being alive. Perfect too for his oft-presumed alter ego, Marcello Mastroianni as Guido, a movie director, who, in *8½* (1963), also waltzes and side-steps and soft-shoes; in his case, though, to evade and avoid and slither away from the bedlam of his professional and personal life. Taking them together, we whirl along with the masterly and breathtaking sleights of hand. The experience is visceral rather than intellectual, painterly rather than literary, which makes understanding a private, inarticulate affair.

When filming *8 ½*, Fellini apparently taped a note on the camera to remind himself: "remember—it's a comedy."

It is indeed, from the opening sequence. Guido is trapped in a traffic jam in a tunnel. His car soon fills with smoke. He can't get out. He pounds on the glass, and kicks. It doesn't sound very funny, does it? But his panic contrasted with the bland, bored, fascinated looks on the faces of the people staring at his struggle from the surrounding vehicles brings me to gales of existential giggles. We will meet these people soon enough. They are the producer, the actors, the players in his next film. And they watch him suffer with total disinterest. Why is that so hilarious?

Guido escapes the car and ascends into the sky. We can feel his yearning for the freedom of the clear blue. But before you know it, he is not an angel floating to heaven, but a kite, rope tied around his ankle, yanked rudely and summarily back to earth, falling, falling.

This is a dream, of course, but dreaming is not other in *8½*. Dreaming is all. And dreaming is constantly interrupted by mundane questions.

So is directing. I know this because I have directed a few films. I have only now seen *8½* again since taking up that task. In my head, my own movies get added to this movie about making a movie. A happy addition to an already delicious experience.

A film director's constant, unending, consistently perilous job is to answer questions. What color do you want the bedroom? What is my character's motivation? Do you like this sword for the sword fight or that one? Should the actress have long hair or short? Have you made a decision

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about locations? There are no stages available—how would you feel about shooting in an airplane hangar? Mostly, you don't know the answers to the questions, or you don't want to answer them because then whatever you say gets set in stone. You want to be left alone to feel your way through. But this never happens.

Along with the questions come the fools, yammering, suggesting, awestruck, critical, berating, bragging, attention-seeking, instructing, patronizing. It is madness. Among the many geniuses of the film is that you never need to put your eye anywhere near a viewfinder to know that the whirl-a-gig around Guido is absurd.

The first time I saw *8½*, I was young, barely in my twenties, and obviously had little experience of the world, so I could not really understand what Guido was going through. Still, I laughed and laughed. The action is the opposite of funny, but the timing is Buster-Keaton impeccable.

I love best the image of Guido in the bathroom. He is staring at himself in the mirror. His face is ravaged. There are dark, dark circles under his puffy eyes. A buzzer sounds, like those used on sound stages to signal "silence!" but it is contextualized and timed as if it were a phone ringing (Oh God, now what?). Guido sags and drops down, down, down under the weight of it all, in stages, like a mime descending imaginary stairs. Now that I've been there, I also get to laugh with recognition.

Though Guido is meant to be preparing his next film, he has ended up in a sanitarium taking the waters, exhausted after his last film. The prep has followed him there, more like pursued him really. The production office bustles. The actors lie in wait in the lobby of the hotel, ready to pounce any time Guido comes through.

Guido has invited a pretentious French critic to collaborate. The critic declares the film impossible: "this might be the most pathetic demonstration ever that cinema is irredeemably behind all the other arts by fifty years." Wow! Of course, he is critiquing the very movie we are watching. Fellini has a sly way of obviating criticism by coopting it; more fun, more soft-shoe.

But finally, Guido admits to himself that he is undergoing a crisis of inspiration. "What if it's not temporary?" "What if it's the final downfall of a big fat no talent impostor?" Every artist's nightmare.

Yet, at each turn of confusion or despair, Guido manages to comfort himself. He has a vision of Claudia Cardinale in white, a symbol of "purity and spontaneity" turning down his bed, setting out slippers. "I want to bring order. I want to clean," he has her say.

As much as Guido feels the victim of the chaos, he is also the perpetrator. He invites his silly mistress to visit, but then, he also invites his long-suffering wife to join him. The director cannot keep these women separate, control them, or direct their feelings. Luisa, his wife, has an outburst. To their friend, Rosella, she spews: "He drives me crazy. He acts as if he's telling the god's honest truth. Look at him. He thinks he's in the right." She whirls then on Guido: "How can you live this way? It's not right to lie all the time, never letting others know what's true or false. Isn't it really all the same to you?!"

If Guido cannot direct the flesh and blood women, he can direct his fantasies about them. In what is perhaps the most famous scene in the film. Guido is back in his childhood household (a household of loving women who bathe him and kiss him and wrap him in white sheets and carry him to bed), only now Luisa is his nanny and he's grown. He comes in from the snow carrying presents for everyone; Madonnas and whores alike, women from the film. His friend Mario Mezzabotta's neurotic young fiancée, Gloria, plays the harp. Carla is there. So is Saraghina, the whore giantess whom the schoolboy Guido paid to dance for him and his friends on the beach. An anxious French actress. A mysterious "beautiful woman" from the hotel—Guido asks her name; she says it's not important. His snarling sister-in-law, warm and loving now, as all the women are. This is Guido's fantasy harem. They even present him with an exquisite young black

woman "from Hawaii," provocatively wrapped in a sari-like sheet. The woman dances for him as Luisa prepares him a bath.

A show girl, Jacqueline, totters in on her stilettos, weeping. The mascara runs down her face. She refuses to go upstairs with the "older women." She's not old. It's not fair. She begs Guido, but he won't relent. "It's the rule. And the rule is the rule."

Here, paradise turns harsh. The women rebel. Guido pulls out his bull whip. Rather than wail, most of them shudder in delight. Luisa turns to the camera to report that Guido does this every night!

The scene is wild and imaginative, but as Guido slips into his fantasy, my interest slips with it. What some have admired as archetypes are to me ultimately no more than dull and predictable and a man's puerile BS. This is a shot fired at Fellini a lot, I know, especially his obsession for and adoration of huge breasts, but it makes me sad how thoroughly it loses me. I'm not so much offended as bored.

Somewhere along the way I think Fellini lost his reminder: "remember—it's a comedy."

What a pity that dimensionality belongs only to Guido.

Clear through to the end.

Still, truths are being told. The Claudia Cardinale character shows up for real, for work. "I didn't understand much of your story," she tells Guido. "A guy like your character who doesn't love anybody isn't very sympathetic, you know. It's his fault. What does he expect from other people?"

Guido expects a lot. And so does Fellini. Guido gives up his quest to tell the "truth." He gives up on his movie. The French critic says to Guido, "You did the right thing… No need to add chaos to the chaos."

But then, the Cabaret-style magician/psychic from the nightlife at the spa appears and purrs: "We're ready to begin."

And Guido feels a sudden happiness. "How simple. I feel like I've been set free. Everything seems so good, so meaningful. Everything is true. I wish I could explain… Now everything's all confused again, as it was before. But this confusion is me, as I am, *not as I'd like to be…*"

But then, weirdly, the most "as I'd like to be" sequence of all emerges. Luisa says she'll try again with Guido. All Guido's characters descend the stairs of the gigantic spaceship launching pad that had been built for his film (only the producer has described what Guido's supposed film was about: post thermonuclear war. The spaceship is a new Noah's ark; some will escape the atomic plague! WTF?). A band of clowns plays as the characters all hold hands and exuberantly—to Nino Rota's most Felliniesque (!) music—circle what feels like the base of a big top. Guido and Luisa join in; soft-shoe.

Even when I first saw the movie, this sequence didn't feel right to me. Guido surely is right back where he started—comforting himself from the inside of his own head. Though the scene turns melancholy, it remains self-indulgent. His fantasy of the light slips back into darkness, as it always does. All the grownups disappear (Figure 45.1). Of course they do. A Guido mini-me plays a melancholy piccolo and drifts out of frame. Starting over?

Figure 45.1 At the end of *8½*, as Guido's fantasy of light slips back into darkness, the grownups disappear. Source *8½* (1963). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Cineriz and Francinex. Screen grab captured by Frank Burke from the 2010 Blu-ray version.

46

Giulietta degli spiriti (*Juliet of the Spirits*): A Twenty-First Century Users' Guide

Erika Suderburg

APOLITICAL LIBERTINE. Often deemed APOLITICAL by himself and by others, Fellini might be construed a CATHOLIC libertine. It is perhaps more in character to imagine him as a director awash in vibrating flux, his oeuvre tethered to and populated by a rotating cast of archetypes, dream manifestations, spirits, and obsessions. A Fellini breviary might include: gaggles of virgins/whores, mamas that become mistresses, failing patriarchs, monsters, maestros in tantrum, maestros in despair, assorted Jungian archetypes, and nostalgic childhood chimeras.

BRI-NYLON is one of the few textiles ever given an opening credit line (Figure 46.1).

Figure 46.1 BRI-NYLON gets an opening credit, highlighting the importance of costuming in *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits* 1965). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Rizzoli Film, Francoriz Production. Screen grab captured by Frank Burke from 2018 Blu-ray.

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CINECITTÀ is the ultimate cinema machine, a legendary studio devoted to the fabrication of fantabulous fictional environments. Fellini was a maestro of concocting PHANTASMAGORIA. CINECITTÀ made it possible for Fellini to be Fellini. Neorealism may have been an origin story, but Fellini never lingered there, preferring the controlled artifice of the studio environment.

EYE-LIGHTS, CUCOLORIS, and GOBOS were techniques deployed to fashion a bright sharp band of eye-light for Giulietta's close-ups—a harsh eye-light prominent in film-NOIR, repurposed here for a subtler transition from acceptance to action. Fellini uses this NOIR staple to foreshadow enlightenment and signal the launching of a series of decisive actions that Giulietta will undertake to reveal her husband's betrayal. These actions include hiring a team of shady NOIR detectives who inhabit an office straight out of Raymond Chandler.

FASHION. Piero Gherardi constructs extravagant translucent capes and floppy distressed tulip hats from which Giulietta emerges as if a pale stamen searching for direction or sustenance. Hats and cloaks glide, flutter, levitate, and morph; frame disintegrates into new frame. FASHION is a weapon, a concealer, an editing technique, and ultimately a living character. Many of these clothes suggest that they have lives of their own—lives every bit as vibrant as the life into which Giulietta will be liberated.

GROTTO. Prefiguring some of the more advanced forms of licentiousness, Fellini will draw upon for *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969) and *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976); the MEN in *Giulietta degli spiriti* are set decoration and short-fuse catalysts dedicated to launching Giulietta's quiet revolt. Here, WOMEN always facilitate change and refuse passivity. Susy's bed comes equipped with a vast ceiling mirror and a shell orifice slide that ejaculates the passenger into a warm water GROTTO, perfect for après sex. Giulietta is mildly scandalized but returns to the bedroom slippy slide-cum-grotto to await her androgynous lover.

HATS are used as an editing device. Fellini invented the HAT wipe or HAT stagger cut. HATS solve a multitude of editing puzzles and facilitate breathless edits. The HAT wipe is used in many Fellini films to change direction, to smooth over a jump cut, and to move figures in and out of frame.

HOUSE. The scenic design applied to Giulietta's HOUSE is a mad melding of warped symbolist architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh (white wainscoting, flower appliqué theme, and excessively tall chairs) with a soupçon of MARIMEKKO at its boldest; Finnish patterning punctuating a drab white field with POP's bold daisy stickers (for shower or FIAT). The bright, white, and shiny are privileged in Giulietta's HOUSE but interrupted by these color notations that could grow in time into a disruption of the orderly arrangement of wainscot and flat white horizon. Giulietta's scenic environs serve as emotional retorts to Susy's orgiastic HOUSE, which is laced with translucent draping (see BRI-NYLON), sensual group couches in organic shapes, and dramatic purple-y darkness sliced into by narrow swathes of too strong light. Susy's HOUSE is a riot of color. Giulietta may just learn how to riot.

LSD. Fellini takes his first guided LSD trips under the supervision of his psychoanalyst prior to making this film. He finds this as useful as his dream journals, tarot readings, and drawings.

MARRIAGE. Allegedly the marriage of Federico and Giulietta was indeed crumbling or at least worn around the edges. This fraying of their marriage could not have been helped by Fellini's instructing Giulietta to "just play herself."

MEN are queered in this film. The masculine is always a bit bent—too neat, too well dressed, hair too perfect. Dandy MEN trigger plot points in what may be Fellini's most narrative-adherent film. The amount of eyeliner favored by all the male characters in *Giulietta degli spiriti* lends even the simplest encounter a QUEERED one. MEN are adorning, fawning, and gentle, if duplicitous. The performance of the feminine by the primary female characters in *Giulietta degli spiriti* (except for Giulietta) is expansive, excessive, and powerful. Gender is always fluid, and the lover Giulietta

proffered at Susy's house is gender queer, if not indecipherably androgynous. Manliness and its discontents continue to vex Fellini: Casanova is depicted as a well-endowed fop, fond of powder and decorative gesticulations. He is the seducing grand uncle of both Giorgio (Giulietta's husband), and José, her Spanish suitor.

QUEER. Fellini was most adept at queering all declaration of sexuality, gender, or terra firma. *Giulietta degli spiriti* is one of the few Fellini films that revolves around a woman. The hyper performance of the feminine by her mother, friends, and sister (all of whom could easily be mistaken for dated drag queens) is in sharp contrast to Giulietta's modest downplaying of the female costume. Susy urges nakedness or at least a goddess's diaphanous robe on Giulietta, and mother refuses to be seen in public with Giulietta unless she applies more make-up. Giulietta's weakness is identified as her inability to conform to the hyper performativity of the feminine in acquiescence to the male.

PHANTASMAGORIA is a precinema illusion exhibition: projected and performed fantasy worlds that were often frightening and evidently quite convincing.

SATYR. A declension of masculinity used by Fellini to distress tropes of the male, otherwise known as the horse/man of Greek mythology—characterized by a massive erection coupled with faun-like grace and furry fetlocks. Giulietta may or may not take one as an inamorato.

SPIRITS are not to be taken lightly. Both Giulietta Masina and Fellini believed in, and used, various modes of contact to intersect with parapsychology. Séances, SPIRIT visits, and cosmological readings were imported into the creative process as a direct channel to the unseen and unheard worlds being coaxed to the surface. At the end of *Giulietta degli spiriti*, we are unsure whether the SPIRITS declaring that they are "still here" are evil or magnanimous. We have seen the evil ones at play during the course of the film. Giulietta appears unclear as to which kind of spirit is asking to be welcomed back into her house, and a definitive answer is not forthcoming.

SURFACE OF MISERY hides the depth of agony framed in the heights of artifice. Misery is lightly drawn here, a black cloud on the horizon threatening to rain—a beach day deferred. Misery is darkly, if mundanely, depicted in the loneliness of the solitary television watcher.

TECHNICOLOR. As Fellini's first feature film in color, color is never discrete but broadly deployed to signify expansively in all directions like a pink elephant tasked with redecorating a small remote nunnery. TECHNICOLOR brings a deep, stain-like palette of supersaturated primary colors that lends a visceral depth and outrageous soaked-in quality. Color drips, stains, flows, and punctuates. Giulietta's domicile sports bold graphic highlights that break up walls and curtains of a fierce blown-out whiteness, while Susy's den of iniquity is draped in diaphanous, translucent shimmers of color punctuated by beds in solid saturated hues, inviting and vastly overstuffed.

Richard Dyer

"Nevertheless I love Fellini"

I've often felt that I oughtn't to like Fellini. Weren't his women either exaggerated erotic fantasies or sentimentalised half-wits, and his queers demeaning stereotypes? Wasn't it all just masculine self-indulgence? Yet when I saw La dolce vita *aged 16 I just wanted to be in its world, and when two years later I snuck away from a school trip to Italy to see* 8½, *I was intoxicated by it, even though I knew no Italian nor had any idea what was going on. What is it that caught and still catches me so?*

I have come to appreciate the exuberance of Fellini's pleasure in women and he began to atone for his earlier queers with Satyricon, Casanova *and* E la nave va *(even if the lesbian gynophobia of* La città delle donne *is not redeemed by acknowledging how unabashed it is). But it is not by virtue of reseeing or forgiving the ideological dimensions of his films that I still love them so.*

I remember once being in a hotel in Switzerland and flicking round the tv channels, as you do. A film already well under way came on and, though I didn't at first recognise it, I knew at once it was Fellini – something about the way the camera started to move immediately after the cut (without it being a cut on movement), the way the movement gave an unobtrusive lift to the scene. A minute or so later I realised it was Giulietta degli spiriti, *a film I hadn't seen for years, didn't remember and never much liked, yet that camera movement was elating. Eisenstein's work makes one understand why one might call films flicks, Ford's why it might be pictures, but Fellini's films justify, sublimely, the term movies.*

Personal correspondence with the editors, 2018

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Fellini - Satyricon

Cristina Villa

Fellini - Satyricon is a free adaptation of the first century CE work *Satyricon*, generally attributed to Petronius Arbiter. Fellini capitalized on the fragmentary nature of the original, in which "some of the stories have no endings, some no beginnings" (quoted in Chandler 1995, 171). He was fascinated by the missing parts of the "broken vase" that is ancient Rome (171) and used his imagination to "fill in" those pieces. The result is a visionary work that explores "the enigmatic transparency and indecipherable clarity of dreams" (Fellini 2015, 164). His comments on the film imply a notable temporal destabilization. On the one hand, he spoke of creating a portrait of a world that existed 2000 years ago only to fade into obscurity (Fellini 2015, 163). On the other hand, he described the film as a sci-fi projection into the past, instead of the future (Chandler 1995, 171). With the detached tone of a documentary, it paints a "lunar" Rome observed from the porthole of a spaceship (Costantini 1995, 74). The effect is a sense of unfamiliarity and even estrangement that is associated with the era in which *Fellini - Satyricon* was made: the 1960s—an epoch often characterized by the tension between generations, given the younger generation's lack of faith in authority and in traditional beliefs and principles, and yet its need, according to Fellini, to believe in ideals of some type (Costantini 1995, 74).

The film is very much concerned with 1960s counterculture, as it paradoxically offers a dream of the past deeply rooted in Fellini's experience of the present. Underscoring this connection, Tullio Kezich (2006, 294) recalls a screening at Madison Square Garden in New York City:

> The singularity of *Fellini - Satyricon*, born of a semi-archaeological premise, is that it resonates so strongly with the realities of the day. One of the unforgettable scenes surrounding *Fellini - Satyricon* was a 1:00 a.m. screening at Madison Square Garden following a rock concert. There were more than 10 000 young people in the audience: dropouts, hippies, ragamuffins. It's snowing outside, and inside there's the sense that you're floating in a cloud of hashish, finding yourself on a spaceship shooting off for distant stars. In the ship with you is the remote past (the images of the film) and the present (the audience), filled with added baggage and various unknowns.

Fellini's repeated highlighting of the new generation's yearning for profound social transformation, stemming from its rejection of the older generation's ideals, also calls to mind the

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Christian movement whose new values and attitudes generated a sense of disorientation in traditional Roman society.

In *Fare un film*, recently translated as *Making a Film*, Fellini suggests that Petronius's ancient Rome resembles his own epoch as a site of moral emptiness, materialism, inequality, corruption, and unrestrained hedonism (Fellini 1980/2015, 164). Fellini depicts this parallel dissolution in Trimalchio's banquet, where pleasure, opulence, and gluttony reign. We also observe Trimalchio's arrogance, vulgarity, and cruelty, the last of which is evidenced in the torture he inflicts on his inferiors, underscoring his role as tyrant. Trimalchio represents a nouveau riche industrialist, a parvenu, not only of the past but analogously, of the present (Cancogni 1968, 17).

In this scene, the counterculture of the Sixties is alluded to in Trimalchio's attentions toward a young boy. The Sixties were permeated by a vision of sensuality that was less repressive and shaming than that of the older generation. Many scenes in *Fellini - Satyricon* display naked or almost naked bodies, and a strong sense of erotic freedom underlies the lovemaking between Encolpio and Gitone and among Encolpio, his friend Ascilto, and an African girl in an abandoned villa. The gigantic Oenothea, a sorceress and Mother Earth, restores Encolpio's sexual potency thanks to healing intercourse. A more open sexual discourse, including gay marriage, appears, along with scenes of polymorphous sexuality. We see a nymphomaniac whom both Ascilto and Encolpio attempt to satisfy; a naked hermaphrodite worshipped as a semi-god; and a bisexual pirate and merchant Lichas, who, dressed as a bride, marries his young male prisoner, Encolpio (Figure 47.1).

Whereas in *Fellini - Satyricon* the older generation is embodied by Trimalchio and his lavish banquet, as well as by Lichas, the new generation and its counterculture are represented by Ascilto and Encolpio. Fellini describes them as "two daredevils who live a completely nonconformist life and that, with their pan-erotic dreams, resemble two hippies" (Cancogni 1968, 17), because "like hippies, they only obey their bodies, seek a new dimension through drugs, and refuse to acknowledge any problem" (Fellini 2015, 164). Carefree and aimless, they wander from one adventure to the other, ignoring the consequences of their actions, as is most clearly illustrated when their kidnapping of the hermaphrodite leads to his/her death by thirst in the desert. They travel like bohemians, often mocking the older generation, and carpe diem is the order of the day, reflected in their escapades with the African slave. This is even more so the case with

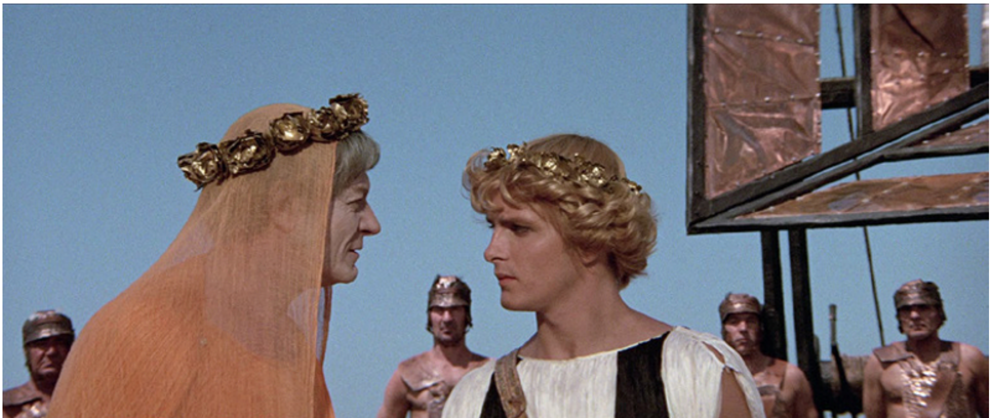

Figure 47.1 The marriage of Lichas and Encolpio: open sexual discourses in *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Produzioni Europee Associate. Screengrab captured by Frank Burke from 2015 Blu-ray version.

Encolpio than with Ascilto. During his encounter with Oenothea, he ignores the calls for help of his friend, who has been attacked by a boatman, and, his potency restored, he pays limited heed to Ascilto's death—then leaves for Africa seeking new adventures.

This portrait of a new generation stems more from youth culture's use of drugs and sex to escape reality and social responsibility than from the *pars construens* fight for freedom and equality—along with earnest spiritual quest—of the time. Fellini did, however, recognize the validity of the new generation's desire to reach interior awareness and hence transformation by expanding one's consciousness. During the 1960s, Harvard psychologists Richard Alpert and Timothy O'Leary proposed that such a state could be reached through Indian and Eastern spiritual teachings and psychotropic drugs; their experiments with LSD and Aldous Huxley's experiences with mescaline, starting in the 1950s, are prime examples. Inspired by Huxley (Fellini 2015, 145), Fellini agreed to experiment with LSD under a doctor's supervision and described how he found himself immersed in a great, bright, and terrifying peace, as the world beat with light and color to the rhythm of human breath (Fellini 2015, 6). The bright lights and saturated colors would be reproduced in dreamlike scenes in *Fellini - Satyricon* such as Encolpio's wedding to Lichas and his fight with a gladiator/Minotaur.

Fellini did not continue to use LSD and other hallucinogens, since, as he insisted, he was an artist and thus his "doors of perceptions" were already open to exploring and creating alternative worlds. Instead, he immersed himself in the inner dimensions of Jungian psychoanalysis, as can be seen in *Il libro dei sogni* (Fellini 2007)—a compilation of journals in which he recorded his dreams, nightmares, and visions through drawings and notes—and, of course, in his visionary films.

It can be argued that, thanks to Fellini's openness, interest in dreams, and inward focus—abetted by a social environment that encouraged his brief experience with LSD—we enter an alternative reality in *Fellini - Satyricon*. Fellini employed dark and light colors in an unconventional combination to enhance the illusory nature of his imagery, as seen in the somber tones of Trimalchio's banquet and the overexposed scenes of Encolpio's fight with the Minotaur. He also used cinemascope, whose large and compressed images that flatten three-dimensionality create a surreal universe. Danilo Donati's timeless costumes, an emotionally distant score coordinated by Nino Rota, and Fellini's eschewal of narrative invite the audience into a dreamlike or hallucinatory state (see Bondanella 1994, 261–262). As Fellini (2015, 167) himself underlined, audience estrangement is reinforced by bad acting, long silences, and faulty dubbing.

In sum, *Fellini - Satyricon* is "A movie that we should gaze at and contemplate like dreams [by which] we are hypnotized … [a] contamination of the Pompeian with the Psychedelic, of Byzantine with Pop Art, of Mondrian and Klee with Barbaric art" (Fellini 2015, 168).

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48

Roma: Amor Through the Looking-Glass

Rebecca West

There are films that are love letters to cities: think of Woody Allen's *Manhattan* (1979), in which the camera, like the protagonist, never stops caressing the captivating contours, the romantically conceived lights and shadows, of the always lovely, softly feminized face of New York (and of its infinitely desirable women). Fellini's *Roma* (1972), the catalyst of Allen's film, is also driven by a passionate man's emotional attachment to a city that is deeply intertwined in his imaginings with the feminine: maternal, sexual, or symbolic as the case may be. It is a film, too, about how to make a film about a city—or an idea of a city—that is ultimately too much to seize and to contain, *de trop*, overly abundant, oozing life and death from layers that can never be entirely peeled back. How to approach such a challenge except through a film that becomes itself *de trop*, overly abundant, and oozing with life and death, in which memories and fantasies, both individual and collective, are transformed into ostentatious artifice?

Roma read in reverse is "Amor," love itself as seen through the looking glass. But what sort of love, and what aspects of Rome, does Fellini's film explore? The most obvious is sexual desire, lust for a female body that is identified with Rome in an early scene of childhood excitation. Provincial schoolboys are watching a boring slide show of Rome's splendors when, to the delight of the children, a rogue slide of the large buttocks of a nearly naked woman appears on screen. The motif of Rome as an object of sexual desire plays out through subsequent episodes: the outdoor eating scene in a Cinecittà-created Trastevere restaurant where food and sex are flagrantly intermingled; the brothels of Fellini's youth, with their flamboyant, fleshy whores beckoning to the horny young men who gaze longingly at the women's shameless displays of self-sales(wo)manship. The "sexpot" women recurring throughout the film are all dark haired and abundantly endowed: archetypes of Fellini's sexual imaginings. Yet when, in a voiceover that is unmistakably the director's, Fellini accosts *the* embodiment of Roman womanhood at its most iconic—the actress Anna Magnani—she refuses to talk with him, saying she does not trust him (Figure 48.1). This rebuke prompts a question: are the film's many images of well-endowed women innocuous? The question is particularly meaningful in the context of today's adjusted perspective on male sexual behavior toward women and representations of such behavior in films, books, and the mass media. I, for one, have never found Fellini's adolescent focus on big tits and big ass appealing. It seems to me an attempt at a jokey coverup of an objectifying view of women that is, in the end, demeaning. Fellini's poetic, tender, multifaceted portrayals of women who do not fit this

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Figure 48.1 Anna Magnani, Roman womanhood at its most iconic, expresses her distrust of Fellini. *Source*: *Roma* (1972). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Ultra Film and Les Productions Artistes Associeés. Screen grab captured by Frank Burke from the 2016 Blu-ray version.

type (Gelsomina, Cabiria, Giulietta) are admirable, but are not to be seen in this film. I'm with Anna Magnani; I don't trust him either, even though, as the Magnani scene shows, we must credit Fellini with being well aware of his reputation.

If the city of Rome is associated with the doughy, overly maternal, and yet creepily sexualized, soft, and welcoming feminine of home and whorehouse, it is no less associated with the hard, overtly penile, and ultimately assaultive masculine dimension of Fellini's sexual imaginary. An enormous underground drill being used to construct the subway forces its way into a long-hidden uterine space full of ancient Roman frescoes. The twentieth-century drill's penetration of the ancient Roman house is nothing short of a rape. As the air touches them, the lovely frescoes disappear, underlining the destructive outcome of this assault. Another scene of masculine penetration occurs with the film crew's attempt to enter the city itself, inhibited by a massive traffic jam. This over-the-top scene verges on parody, so excessive is its "Felliniesque" signature of grotesque display. But does the self-parody of the flamboyant subway and Grande Raccordo Anulare episodes constitute a conscious self-critique of the unsubtle male aggressivity of a certain Fellini? Or are these scenes simply metafilmic, drawing attention to the artificiality of Fellini's *mise-en-scènes*, his preference for a constructed Rome within the walls of Cinecittà, rather than the piazzas, fountains, edifices, and gorgeous colors of the actual city?

Felllini nods to less retrograde ideas of sexuality in the scenes of hippies lounging on the Spanish Steps and in the Piazza of Santa Maria in Trastevere. But these passive hippies are mostly foreigners, non-Italians, or in any case young people who do not share his memory bank of the good old days when he was young, and bosomy women were objects of unquestioned lust. His heart is fairly clearly with the days of the brothels, of the *varietà* theater performances, of the earthy, vulgar (of the *vulgo*) Rome where people ate and screwed with abandon, without the inhibitions of more refined views of romantic, interpersonal, or social relationships.

Nineteenth-century Roman poet Giuseppe Gioachino Belli's *romanesco* poetry is also filled with off-color images and themes, so that it is just possible to legitimate Fellini's vision of his

adopted city by tracing it back to the great Belli's irreverent, raucous, gluttonous, sexualized, and deeply anticlerical portraits. Like Belli, Fellini gives us fragments that vary in tone and impact: exuberant, elegiac, grotesque. A favorite episode of mine and many others is the ecclesiastical fashion show, in which Fellinian excess and grotesquery are at their height of eye-popping visual wit and extravagance. From lowly nuns through the various hierarchies of the Church, all the way up to the Pope, costumes become more and more fantastic and the figures more and more phantasmatic, until there are literally only clothes with no bodies inside. The Church is empty and dead, its Pope a simulacrum. Fellini's love–hate relationship with the Church, as seen in so many of his films, here resolves into blackly comic disdain. If enveloping love (or lust) colors his recreations of the provincial youth's encounter with the teeming pensione, the brothels, the varietà performances, the gluttonous banquets of Trastevere, distancing derision and contempt shade the unforgettable fashion show, also connecting *Roma* with the anticlerical popular lineage of Belli's sonnets on Rome.

Fellini pulls out all the stops in this eccentric love letter to Rome, censoring none of his impulses, be they psychosexual, spiritual, or cinematic in nature. The film is a hybrid many-headed monster made up of snippets of autobiography, fantasies, dreams, vendettas, and various cinematic genres, from narrative to documentary to experimental. The director's conflation of bountiful women with the city of Rome seen as a maternal entity still disturbs me, though, despite my efforts to read the film as genealogically and aesthetically complex. As in Woody Allen's Fellini-inspired cinematic love letter to Manhattan, in which Allen's libido is spread out over the city he so adores, so Fellini's lust for the female type of his dreams—not the Woody Allen-esque teenager, but the Felliniesque bountiful, sexual yet maternal woman—is spread out over his film as a libidinous leitmotif. This is not the only theme or image in *Roma*, but it is certainly one of the most persistent. If one even unconsciously shares Fellini's rather adolescent perspective, then Rome as penetrable woman is likely not alienating, but if one either has, or can imagine, the viewer's gaze as itself feminine, then seeing Rome in the looking glass of Fellini's version of Amor can result in a wish, like Alice's, that one might be elsewhere, in some other Rome, one more congenial to a less masculinist, ego-driven concept of the city and a different approach to representing it on the screen.

49

Il Casanova di Federico Fellini (*Fellini's Casanova*) in the Age of #MeToo

Alberto Zambenedetti

In 2017 and 2018, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (MFA); the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas; and the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (FAMSF) co-organized an exhibition of eighteenth-century European art and selected Giacomo Casanova (1725–1798) as the figure anchoring their aesthetic exploration. As the exhibition traveled among the institutions, its title changed from "Casanova: The Seduction of Europe" (Kimbell and FAMSF) to "Casanova's Europe: Art, Pleasure, and Power in the 18th Century" (MFA), shifting the focus from the sybarite's extraordinary life to his environment and the circumstances enabling his occasionally troublesome behavior.[1] What inspired the retitling of this major exhibition was the sudden proliferation in October 2017 of the hashtag #MeToo following a surge in sexual misconduct allegations against the upper echelon of a variety of industries, including the art world. Of course, museums plan their activities years in advance, and only in extremely rare cases are exhibitions canceled or is artwork pulled from view as a result of controversy,[2] but in the midst of the cultural revolution incited by the #MeToo movement, referencing the Venetian Lothario's sexual voracity is a potentially problematic gesture in need of interrogation.

Giacomo Casanova was a prolific essayist, satirist, dramatist, historian, philosopher, and translator, albeit of modest success. Yet, in popular parlance his name has become synonymous with a proclivity for swashbuckling adventures and unbridled libertinage. The source of this reputation is his monumental memoir, in which the author boasts in fastidious detail about his many scandalous, and sometimes criminal, amorous encounters. When working on the film adaptation of Casanova's recollections, Fellini (Tassone 1978, 27) expressed disdain for the writer, describing his opus as a "kind of telephone book of artistically nonexistent and sometimes most boring occurrences." The director viewed the personality emerging from those pages as an opportunity to critique the national character; to him, Casanova epitomized "an Italian, *The* Italian: the indefiniteness, the indifference, the commonplaces, the conventional ways, the façade, the figure, the attitude. And, therefore, it is clear why he has become a myth, because he is really nothingness, a universality without meaning" (30). In an interview published in the Venetian newspaper *Il Gazzettino* on 24 March 1976, just as the troubled production of *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova* 1976) was resuming in Cinecittà, Fellini linked his adaptation directly to this attitude: "my film will be about Casanovismo, which is tied to the celebration of

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a vitality that conceals the protagonist's inability to love, going from one woman to the next without ever worrying to go beyond the barrier of sex" (quoted in Cibotto 1976/1977, 65).

To some extent, his critique of Casanova constitutes a moment of artistic self-reflection. As John Baxter writes (1993, 304), "The more he worked on *Casanova*, the more the director realized it would be his most crucial film, not only to his career but also to his understanding of himself." In fact, Fellini was no stranger to scandal throughout his life. Tabloids feasted on the rumors of his many extramarital affairs, and interviews with the director were rarely confined to his work. To this day, his reputation as a philanderer continues to be reinvigorated by fresh revelations that do not fail to link his indiscretions to his artistic genius.[3] Moreover, his behavior on set has been described as tyrannical, and his directing style as more than a little capricious. Yet, the enduring gossip about Fellini's public persona only contributed to his ascent to the Olympus of European art cinema auteurs.[4] Andrea Minuz (2018, 121) reports that "In 1973, as *Amarcord* was receiving almost universal praise, the newly created magazine *Effe* voted Fellini *anti-feminist of the month*." While the director would deliver a response to the growing importance of the Italian women's movement and the accusations leveled against him with *La città delle donne* (*City of Women* 1980), *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* already offered a trenchant critique of the kind of toxic masculinity that finds its primary expression in a compulsive womanizing that borders on sexual predation. In 2018, the #MeToo movement continues to make waves to fundamentally restructure the conversation around gender inequality and sexual harassment, prompting a profound re-examination of Casanovismo and its discontents, including the problematizing of a museum exhibition devoted to Casanova's world. In the midst of this cultural awakening, Fellini's film emerges as a singularly appropriate place to begin a re-evaluation and perhaps a reappreciation of the director's entire oeuvre.

In the final minutes of *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, the elderly protagonist returns in his imagination to his beloved hometown (a papier-mâché simulacrum created for Fellini by Danilo Donati) for one last waltz with one of his many erotic companions. (See Figure 21.2 in the essay by Bertetto.) His youth symbolically restored, Casanova glides on frozen canal "waters" with Rosalba, the dancing automaton whom he had once found so irresistible as to pioneer a disturbing sexual encounter between human and machine. Like many of Fellini's creations, from Cabiria to Guido, from Zampanò to Ginger and Fred, his vapid Casanova is rewarded with a moment of grace after a long and torturous cinematic journey.[5] The scene, which functions as Casanova's epitaph, is not a celebration of his life, however, nor the sudden realization of his place in the cosmos, but rather an extension into the netherworld of that "mechanical, frenetic ballet like an electrified wax museum" that is the film itself (Tassone 1978, 31). This is not to say that Casanova is not content with this scenario: because the film posits the Venetian as a performer of human-like behavior, rather than as a full-fledged human, Rosalba's mask ("a mould of my face," recalls Lojodice in "Leda Lojodice per Fellini…," 1976/1977, 67) and her robotic motions echo Casanova's lovemaking technique, a choreography of grotesque facial expressions and exaggerated pelvic thrusts accompanied by the automated erections of the precious golden bird he carries everywhere.[6] In the novelization of the film's script, author Bernardino Zapponi (Fellini's coscreenwriter, 1977, 24–25) allows Casanova to break the proverbial fourth wall and interrogate Fellini about the phallic mechanical bird, which is not in his memoir, thus substantiating Andrea Minuz's reading of *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* as "a decomposing national phallus" (2018, 117) that evokes *Pinocchio* (Carlo Collodi 1883), another quintessentially Italian tale of a lifeless object animated through love.[7] In their 2018 article on the current proliferation of increasingly sophisticated and technologically advanced sexual products, psychologists Nicola Döring and Sandra Poeschl (2018, e53) note that "Besides using dolls for sexual gratification, many doll-owners also report that they treat their dolls as artificial cohabitation partners …; watching TV with the doll,

talking to the doll and grooming and clothing the doll are typical activities of doll-owners, who often prefer the term 'love doll' to 'sex doll.'" Casanova's waltz with Rosalba signals his own transition into a cinematic land of the dead evoking Charles Foster Kane's snow globe, a memento of a place forever lost, an emotional plenitude never to be achieved again.

Significantly, *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*'s last dance seems to anticipate today's conversation on the automation of sex and, as Döring and Poeschl describe, the need for some to love inanimate partners, bypassing altogether the fundamental notion of consent. As more and more sex doll brothels open for business all over the world, exposing yet another nerve in the culture wars surrounding sex work and its regulation, *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, in its glacial monumentality, evokes the reckoning found in the tales of E. T. A. Hoffmann, whose 1816–1817 *Der Sandmann* (*The Sandman*) cautions against "the sinister imitation of the human by the puppet-machine … reinforced by the fact that the automaton usually brings about the destruction of the human's hopes and sometimes the human himself (sic)" (Nelson 2001, 64).

Notes

1 For a discussion of how the museums reflected on this potential impasse, see Durcanin (2018).
2 For instance, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. recently cancelled a Chuck Close exhibition following allegations of sexual misconduct. See Moynihan and Pogrebin (2018).
3 See, for instance, feminist author Germaine Greer's (2010) allusion to their brief relationship precisely during the filming of *Casanova*.
4 Gianfranco Angelucci (Angelucci and Betti 1977, 15–17) argues that this cycle of questionable behavior, continuous public scrutiny, and commercial success was in fact enabled by the special relationship Fellini enjoyed with his audience.
5 As Frank Burke (1996, 236) noted, "The concluding dance of the mannequins seems to offer something in the way of critical commentary of Casanova's life while also reflecting a sudden moment of identification on Fellini's part … a Fellini who cannot succumb entirely to the postmodern denial of individuality, coherence, and an accessible real."
6 Zapponi (1977, 219) describes the blurring of the lines between the biological and the mechanical in this gently funereal *explicit*: "They dance on a crust of ice, lightly, in jerks, like figures on a music box or a clock or a mechanical toy. They dance and, heavier and heavier, slower and slower, their movements wind down. They stop. Then, nothing."
7 Stephen Spielberg's 2001 film *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* is also concerned with in/human love, and like *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, channels Carlo Collodi's tale, with Haley Joel Osment in the role of the in/animate David/Pinocchio and Jude Law as the robotic sex worker Gigolo Joe/Candlewick/Lucignolo.

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Prova d'orchestra (*Orchestra Rehearsal*) and *E la nave va* (*And the Ship Sails On*)

John Paul Russo

Prova d'orchestra (1978), the first of Fellini's two overtly political films, appeared during the *anni di piombo* (the years of lead), when Italy suffered from constant disruption by strikes, protests, and home-grown terrorism. The film unfolds in a deconsecrated medieval oratory, scheduled for demolition, in which three popes and seven bishops had been buried, further investing the chapel with the aura of the sacred. After a glimpse of Roman traffic and a blast of its cacophony, the film focuses on the musicians who have come to rehearse a concert. Off-camera a voice (it is Fellini's) interviews musicians in a pseudo-documentary style. Each instrument has its advocates, and if the advocacy is self-centered, one nevertheless appreciates the deep affection the musicians hold for their art. Soon, though, disorder ensues. When the German conductor begins the rehearsal, his abrasive perfectionism gets on the players' frayed nerves and drives them into open rebellion. The trade unionist threatens to end the rehearsal unless the musicians are given their extended break. Some players begin to fight, others make love in the aisles, still others paint anarchist slogans on the walls. A voice cries "Death to the metronome!" Then, as the walls tremble, an old musician fires a gun in the hope of bringing the musicians to their senses. But it is too late. A wrecking ball smashes into the oratory above the altar. The collapsing masonry kills a harpist who, because of her instrument, her pacifism, and her sensitivity, has become associated with spirituality (her name, appropriately, is Clara, "luminous"). Finally, amid swirling dust and ashes, like Satan exhorting the fallen angels, the conductor summons the players with a noble call to the duty of preserving art—"Music will save us!"—and, with his shouting *da capo* ("from the top"), they begin again. Nino Rota's parody of a Rossini overture requires precision timing. The metronome is back, and the musicians demonstrate their capacity for working together.

Excepting *La dolce vita* (1960), the polemic triggered by this film was as sensational as any in Fellini's career. Pietro Ingrao, a leading member of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and president of the Chamber of Deputies, complained of the film's pessimism: "Italy has changed, people have matured, become democratic, disorder is not an illness but a necessary period of transition, fertile for change" (quoted in Tornabuoni 1978). Coldly calculating, Giulio Andreotti, then in his second term as Prime Minister, took Fellini to mean "all this rumpus has served no useful purpose, everything starts over, only in conditions that are worse than before; that is the moral of the film" (quoted in Augius 1978). Of "the moment of great beauty" when the musicians

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resume their orderly rehearsal, artist and PCI member Renato Guttuso asked, "Would the film have been reactionary if it had ended there? I don't think so" (quoted in Minuz 2015, 147). Why would Italy's greatest living painter, long-standing member of the PCI, and winner of the Lenin Peace Prize think he had to defend the film against being "reactionary," to defend the enjoyment of "the moment of great beauty?" Surely the artist was winning out over the ideologue. For Fellini, however, to have ended on "the moment of great beauty" would have been only part of the truth, the other part being the breakdown into violence. As the film ends, the conductor reverts to his dictatorial manner and his heavily accented Italian turns into his native German delivered in a barking tone: Fellini ironizes an ethnic stereotype. The screen goes black and, *da capo*, we are back where we started.

One is left pondering Fellini's position. Should we interpret this film to mean that a work of art cannot withstand political forces such as those that exist in this film? Or that the artist can create a work out of the messiness of violence and failed politics? Does the film's final meaning center on the *business as usual* ending: that Italian immobilism that has brought a country of immensely talented people to its knees? Or, does it mean that, however much they are vanquished and depleted, Italians return to their tasks and put on a good show. Fellini holds these various positions in equilibrium. For him, art is generally a matter of moral, as well as aesthetic, balance before it becomes, or should it become, political.

The wrecking ball is the antithesis of creativity. Surrounded by dust, like the mist of the mysterious, the wrecking ball is exaggeratedly large for its function; its size (it fills a substantial portion of the screen), its shape (circular), its color (dark), and the fact that it crashes through the wall above the altar evoke the most powerful example of the negative sublime in Western art: the angry God. An instrument of apocalypse, it swings from back to front, that is, in 3D fashion toward *us* in the audience. It makes immanent the divine judgment, stops the fracas, and brings musicians back to their senses, though they pay a heavy price with their loss of moral dignity, not to speak of the death of their beloved but quickly forgotten harpist. The sound of wind is heard blowing through the hall: the voice of the sacred, the sign of fate, the transience of all things. It is one of the more frequently recurring topoi in Fellini's films—one thinks of *I vitelloni* (1953), *Amarcord* (1973), *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969), and *Roma* (1972).

E la nave va takes place in the context of the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand in June 1914. Aristocrats, high government officials, fellow opera singers, voice teachers, lovers, and fans of the recently deceased Edmea Tetua, world famous soprano without equal, have gathered aboard the luxury liner *Gloria N.* in Naples to accompany her ashes to her birthplace, the island of Erimo in the Adriatic. Edmea is an anagram of Medea, which was one of Maria Callas's greatest roles. In 1979, Callas's ashes were taken to Greece and scattered in the Aegean. Erimo (Erebus?) appears on the horizon like Arnold Böcklin's *Isle of the Dead* (1880). Paralleling the international situation, one of the numerous underplots is a planned on-board assassination of a jolly German Grand Duke by his sister and prime minister, though circumstances thwart the attempt. Orlando, an Italian journalist, reports directly to the camera on the many bizarre events that unfold.

On the second day out, touring the liner, the opera singers arrive at the cavernous boiler room. On a balcony high above, in opulent finery (they always act "on stage"), they gaze down upon the sweaty, half-naked men, who seem like a species from another world as they shovel coal into glowing furnaces. While the singers, like ancient gods, display total indifference to the workers who count for nothing, they are inordinately suspicious of one another. When the workers shout up a request for a song, at first no one obliges. Then, out of vanity, the young tenor sings a few high notes, and an older tenor tries to outdo him; then the women begin a similar competition, finally including the reluctant Ildebranda Cuffari, who cannot bear to be upstaged. Second only

to Tetua, Ildebranda laments never having discovered Tetua's secret of singing *passaggio* through three octaves, as if Tetua's magic were some mechanical trick.

A Marxist critic might argue that the singers hardly differ from the capitalist ship owners. They remain aloof, at an unbridgeable distance from the workers, and only grudgingly offer an operatic treat, and then only to compete with and impress one another or amuse themselves. Yet, do any of their low motives really matter? The workers enjoy the impromptu entertainment, as shown by their hearty "bravos" and applause. The music conquered the distance, made them forget their labors, and lifted their spirits, if only for a moment. Later, as the *Gloria N.* is sinking, they add their robust voices to the medley of operatic bits and pieces from *Aida* (Giuseppe Verdi 1871), *La Forza del Destino* (Verdi 1862), et al., though they remain below and the singers are on deck. Ars longa, vita brevis. Is this experience of art-making the reason why Fellini thought his terribly mocking film left him "joyous" (Grazzini 1983, 225)?

On the evening of the third day, passengers discover that the *Gloria N.* has rescued a boatload of Serbian refugees who have fled their country fearing reprisals by the Austrians. The members of the funeral party decide against offering help, but the honorable Italian captain decides that the Serbs will remain aboard, though confined to the deck. They look hungrily through the windows of the first-class dining room, then the wife of the British aristocrat breaks ranks and brings food outside. Ultimately the singers and players dance with the Serbs to Serbian folk music, having broken down barriers in a Dionysian act of forgetfulness.

The film nears its climax when the Austro-Hungarian flagship appears on the horizon. Its admiral demands that the captain surrender the refugees, for they are suspected of harboring terrorists. Only when the captain protests on behalf of the burial of the great Tetua, and the German Grand Duke consents, does the admiral accept a compromise: the ship is permitted to "sail on" until the funeral rites are properly carried out. As in *Prova d'orchestra*, art either suspends politics or is permitted to take place under authoritarian control. Following the ritual, the refugees are put on boats and sent to the Austrian battleship. As one boat nears, a young Serb throws a home-made bomb into the battleship through a gun portal and succeeds in starting a conflagration. Before the battleship sinks, however, its cannon destroys the *Gloria N.* In the apocalyptic conclusion, many are drowned, though many are saved. The journalistic narrator Orlando is seen in a small boat with the rhinoceros that was being transported from Naples to a zoo. The camera pulls back to show Dante Ferretti's gigantic tilting set and rolling acres of plastic waves, first seen in Fellini's *Amarcord* and surely one of the most extraordinary trompe-l'oeils in the history of films. In transition, we detach ourselves from the powerful illusion of July 1914 and attend to the realities of film production. The main camera swings around to focus on a camera with a hidden figure behind it (Figure 50.1). It is likely the director himself; coming closer, the prying eye of the main camera peers into the camera's eye to "see" the all-seeing eye of the director.

If the dénouement of *Prova d'orchestra* affirms the value of art amid the messiness and violence of history and politics, the longer and more complex *E la nave va* (1983) subsumes this affirmation but goes beyond it. We are on the ground again, where the ground is a studio floor, on which the imperious sea is plastic waves supported by an enormous tilting apparatus, where the characters become actors, and the camera has a person behind it. I do not think that this sudden detachment posits some loss of contact with a real world on the part of Fellini. On the contrary, the ending displays his recognition and ardent love of Aristotelian poesis, the making of art itself. In this way, the ending prompts the spectator to contemplate, without necessarily drawing conclusions, the fluid interrelationships of history, politics, and morality, but also their submission to the artistic process, which, in Coleridge's words, "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate" (1970, 387).

Figure 50.1 The camera within the camera as *E la nave va* ends not on the story but on the art-making process itself. *Source*: *E la nave va* (*And the Ship Sails On* 1983). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Rai1, Vides Production, Gaumont, Società Investimenti Milanese. Screengrab captured by Frank Burke from the 1999 DVD version.

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51

Intervista: There Are No Rules

Elan Mastai

There are no rules.

That's what I learned from Federico Fellini's gloriously irreverent *Intervista*.

Screenwriting is so often about rules. Rules of act structure. Rules of character arc. Rules of set up and pay off. Rules of plot and theme and pace. Rules of what you should and shouldn't do. But *Intervista* evidences no particular interest in what you should or shouldn't do, only what you can and might do.

It's 1987, and a Japanese TV crew visits Rome to interview Fellini as he mounts a film adaptation of Franz Kafka's unfinished first novel *Amerika*, while regaling them with memories of the first time he visited Cinecittà as a young journalist to conduct an interview—and all is mounted as scenes within the film, intercut with Fellini's dreams about making his current film in the swirling chaos of the storied film studio, including an encounter with Marcello Mastroianni that climaxes in a reunion with Anita Ekberg to screen their classic Trevi Fountain scene from *La dolce vita*, 27 years after they shot it. I looked: the rules of screenwriting are nowhere to be seen.

The film opens with a row of vehicles passing through a security checkpoint in the dead of night. Dogs yap noisily before loping away. Mist rolls over the buildings. The camaraderie of the crew returning to the scene of a crime—it's cinema that's the thief, stealing moments of time to trap them frame-by-frame. Lighting equipment is rolled into place. Shrouded under a tarp, a camera is unveiled. A crane slowly approaches the location. The Japanese interviewer asks Fellini what film he's making. "A film that opens with the standard dream," he says. As if Fellini's dreams were ever standard.

The crew experiences technical difficulties, because in filmmaking there are always technical difficulties. But then we're inside a dream, as Fellini narrates—except the view of Cinecittà, seen though mist and moonlight, isn't the one we saw being shot. It's a model of the studio, the fake trees visible below us. We're inside the artifice now, but an honest artifice, a vulnerable artifice, an artifice that occasionally experiences technical difficulties.

The emotional center of the movie is the reunion between Marcello and Anita. For all its energetic metatextuality, *Intervista* comes alive when it unites the two actors onscreen, bantering, teasing, cajoling—Mastroianni vamping, Ekberg smiling perhaps a bit too widely as her countryside villa is invaded by Fellini and a gaggle of crewmembers and assorted hangers-on. Mastroianni,

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decked out in a tatty magician's costume, flicks his wand and a screen erupts before the delighted audience. Ekberg and Mastroianni dance in silhouette (Figure 51.1), until the screen flares into black-and-white, Nicola Piovani's supple score signaling what our memories have already evoked: their famous roles in *La dolce vita*.

This is where *Intervista* stops playing and starts meaning. Decades before Richard Linklater's narrative experiments with time's physical passage in *Boyhood* (2014) and the trilogy of *Before Sunrise* (1995), *Before Sunset* (2004), and *Before Midnight* (2013), or Danny Boyle brought the *Trainspotting* (1996) cast back together for a 20-years-later sequel in 2017, Fellini explored the delicate and melancholy power of juxtaposing the inevitable aging process of human bodies with the incandescent icons they once depicted onscreen. In the present, Mastroianni and Ekberg watch themselves in the past, their younger selves projected onto a sheet, flimsy but intimate, their faces shadowed by time.

It's a dazzling reminder of cinema's power, a showstopper of a sequence that only Fellini could orchestrate. Ekberg's eyes well with tears. Even Mastroianni holds his tongue. They watch themselves, and we watch them watch themselves, eyes on eyes on eyes, while the music swells.

As the camera leaves the villa and the day fades into twilight, Ekberg's leonine dogs, which previously lunged at the arriving cars, sit still on their haunches, calm and attentive. Of course, they're not the actual dogs, just painted models. They hold their mark.

Although not Fellini's last feature film, there's something climactic about *Intervista*, a coming-together of everything that seemed to interest him as an artist. There are elegiac touches, but the film feels vivid in its reverence for the power of an imagination so feisty it's as if the cinema itself can't keep up. It's bold and peculiar, self-absorbed and distracted, promoting the myth of the director as visionary demigod while simultaneously casting Fellini himself as a bedraggled figure barely hanging on to the runaway bull that is filmmaking, a man in an ill-fitting magician's outfit, waving a prop wand, casting a spell.

Figure 51.1 Marcello Mastroianni, dressed as Mandrake, dances with Anita Ekberg behind the screen he has magically made appear. The "tatty magician" serves as Fellini's final Mastroianni alter ego. *Source*: *Intervista* (1987). Directed by Federico Fellini. Produced by Aljosha, Cinecittà, RAI, Fernlyn. Screen grab captured by Frank Burke from the 2004 DVD version.

As a screenwriter, I don't find *Intervista*'s influence reductive as in: what would Fellini do? But the movie lingers, like a trickster, popping up whenever I face a narrative problem to murmur: don't worry about what you should do, think about what you *can* do, what you *might* do.

Intervista's metatextual layering deftly presaged the following 30 years of cinematic and televisual experimentation. Fellini flips channels between reality TV, behind-the-scenes production diary, surrealist art film, reunion special, prestige novel adaptation, action-adventure, coming-of-age, comic escapade—all wrapped up in the amusingly exaggerated ribbon of auteurism.

Through my work writing and producing feature films, I've spent a lot of time both on set and in the boardrooms and production offices that are just as important to the moviemaking process. I don't buy auteurism. Directors play a crucial role in the film's construction, but they're a spot-lit player in a true ensemble, and the best ones are the first to say so.

Still, as a film fan, the screenwriter in me happily agrees that nobody but Fellini could have directed *Intervista*. It's a multivalent circus performance with a ringmaster who yells action and cut without even checking the shot, because he already sees the film in his imagination.

Often the seminal works in our personal constellation of influence are a matter of when, in our intellectual development, we saw them. I was introduced to *Intervista* at a time when I was trying to wrap my head around what a movie is supposed to be. I'd never watched a single director's entire filmography all in a row before, but in my undergraduate years at Queen's University (Kingston, Ontario, Canada) I took a class on Fellini and got to experience his artistic progression from film to film, mastering cinematic forms, upending them, inflating them, and puncturing them, pulling at them like taffy to see how far they could stretch.

By the time the class arrived at *Intervista*, I understood: there's no such thing as what a movie is supposed to be. There's what you as an artist hope to achieve, there's what it means to its audience, and there's the inevitable gap between those poles, one that widens or shrinks depending on the pulse of your talent and the refinement of your skill.

These days, we live through screens frantic and blazing with strange, uneasy contrasts. Scrolling through a social-media feed juxtaposes comedy, tragedy, personal revelations, zany gags, searing insights, pop culture references, political furies, cries for help, shouts for attention, the lure, and the revulsion of an endlessly noisy world stuffed into your palm.

Watching *Intervista* again I was struck by how utterly contemporary it felt, its restless imagination and off-kilter energy seemingly made for our present moment, even though it's more than 30 years old. It's not a movie of its time—it's a movie for all time. The lesson I learned from *Intervista* remains just as vital today: there are no rules.

Appendices

Foundations and Archives for Fellini Research

Appendix A

Rimini and Fellini: The Fondazione Fellini, the Cineteca di Rimini, the Museo Fellini, and CircAmarcord

Marco Andreucci

The Fondazione Fellini, the Cineteca of the Comune di Rimini, the Museo Fellini, and CircAmarcord—the latter two to be inaugurated in 2020, the centennial of Fellini's birth—reflect relations between the city and its famous director since Fellini's death in 1993. Within a few months of his death, the Fondazione Fellini was created in his honor. More a cultural association than a foundation, it was, nevertheless, always identified as the latter by the city and by local press. It was headed initially by Maddalena Fellini, sister of the director, and then by filmmakers, Ettore Scola and Pupi Avati.

For 20 years, the Fondazione was the point of reference, both locally and nationally, for activities promoting Fellini's work and for safeguarding his artistic patrimony, along with the Cineteca, which was already in place. This collaboration was the method chosen by local administrators, beginning with the Comune di Rimini, to implement public policy aimed at celebrating Fellini's work and reputation. Priorities included the gathering and systematizing of material related to Fellini's work; the organization of conferences, shows, and study sessions; and the promotion of film art through the awarding of the "Premio Fellini" (Fellini Prize). In 1999, the Fondazione established an internet site, www.federicofellini.it, to acquaint the public with its activities. It disseminated studies of Fellini's artistic work through the quarterly journal *Fellini Amarcord*, published bilingually with translations into English. It helped produce an international bibliography on Fellini, published in three volumes.

The most important activity was the acquisition of Fellini material, particularly his drawings. In addition to drawings, the archive grew through the accumulation of other materials, the last and most precious of which was *Il libro dei sogni* (*The Book of Dreams*, Fellini), published in 2007 and again in 2016, and in English in 2008. The original *Il libro dei sogni* is currently on view at the Museo della Città in Rimini.

Through conferences and exhibitions, the Fondazione has honored Fellini's memory. The year 2003 marked the tenth anniversary of his death, and as part of the exhibition "Federico in costume" ("Fellini's costumes"), various outfits from his films—including those from the celebrated ecclesiastical fashion show of *Roma* (1972)—were displayed in the Palazzo dell'Arengo, while a conference, "La memoria di Federico Fellini sullo schermo del cinema mondiale" ("Fellini Remembered on the Screens of World Cinema") focused on ties between the work of the Rimini director and the cinema of other countries.

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The Fondazione ceased activity in 2015, and its materials were transferred to the Cineteca of the Comune di Rimini. Founded in 1987 and located in the Biblioteca Gambalunga, the Cineteca's mission is the conservation and promotion of cinematic culture, in particular that of Rimini. It has been the reference point for international film festivals, such as "Riminicinema." It is committed to continuing the Fondazione Fellini's work of celebration, research promotion, bibliographical updating, and acquisition—in the context of Rimini's cultural and cinematic identity.

The Cineteca has not remained the only significant site of Rimini's cultural policy around Fellini, as the city strives to do justice to a filmmaker who has made Rimini known to the world through films such as *I vitelloni* (1953) and *Amarcord* (1973). On 20 January 2018 (what would have been Fellini's 98th birthday), the newly renovated Fulgor cinema, where Fellini saw his first films, was inaugurated. The principal idea for the relaunching of the oldest Rimini movie theater was to create a multimedia venue to host films of quality, literary events, and retrospectives and debates, in Fellini's name. The renovation included not only a showcase main cinema, but a second, smaller theater called the "Sala Giulietta" in honor of Fellini's wife, Giulietta Masina. The task of designing the interior of the Fulgor was entrusted to Oscar-award-winning Dante Ferretti, Fellini's production designer from 1978 to 1990.

The reopening of the Fulgor is part of a larger Fellini-related project, a "diffused museum" within the city center, comprising the cinema; the Castel Sismondo (the fifteenth-century fortress of Sigismondo Malatesta),[1] which will house the Museo Fellini; and a large central urban space that combines two structures into what will be called CircAmarcord. Here, in the square in front of the fortress, stretched the tents of the circuses where Fellini first encountered his beloved clowns. This space will be dedicated to interactive installations inspired by places, people, and themes of Fellini's films.

Current plans are for the Museo to house the documents and works of Fellini currently held by the Cineteca: *Il libro dei sogni*; costumes from *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* (*Fellini's Casanova*, 1976) and *Roma* (1972); approximately 500 drawings; partial or complete screenplays and treatments; scripts and rushes from various films; a large selection of posters and playbills; nearly 600 photos taken on the sets of all his films; video material; academic and nonacademic books and journal articles in various languages; a collection of nearly 120 music scores, soundtracks, notebooks, and note sheets that reflect Fellini's work with Nino Rota; and hundreds of clippings from popular reviews and daily newspapers dedicated to Fellini from the 1950s till his death.

The Comune of Rimini has committed itself to a series of events to memorialize Fellini. "Verso il 2020. 100 anni di Fellini" ("Toward 2020: 100 Years of Fellini") is the title of the first cycle of events, already under way. Among these are: a conference at the Fulgor on the use and abuse of the adjective "felliniano" ("felliniesque") and a retrospective at the Cineteca's screening venue titled "I film che ho scritto" ("films I have written") on Fellini's decade-long predirectorial activity as a screenwriter in the 1940s. A second cycle of meetings, exhibitions, and retrospectives is planned for 2019 and 2020. Activities will not cease with the centennial; rather, the centennial will provide impetus for continued celebration of Fellini and his work on the part of his native city.

Note

1 There is indeed a slight variation in the spelling of the two names.

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Fellini, F. (2007) (2008) (2016). *Il libro dei sogni* (ed. T. Kezich and V. Boarini with a contribution by V. Mollica). Milan: Rizzoli. Published in English as *The Book of Dreams* (trans. A. Maines and D. Stanton). New York: Rizzoli.

Appendix B
Additional Archival Sources

The Editors

1 The Fondation Fellini pour le cinéma in Sion, Switzerland has been in operation since the beginning of the new millennium. It was made possible by (among other things) the availability of a significant collection of Fellini materials held by Gérard Morin, who served as an assistant to Federico Fellini in the early to mid-1970s. The Fellini holdings were expanded by a collection made available by Gianfranco Angelucci, a screenwriter, close associate of Fellini, and contributor to this volume. The Fondation holds over 15000 original documents related to Federico Fellini and world cinema. It has collaborated in the publication of many monographs and organizes events (exhibitions, conferences, etc.) worldwide, dedicated to Fellini and to other aspects of art and culture. Maurice Béjart, choreographer and opera director, created a contemporary dance, *Ciao Federico*, which was presented in world premiere for the opening of the Fondation's first international exhibition at Lausanne in 2003. In 2018, the Fondation helped develop and hosted David Lynch's *Dreams: A Tribute to Fellini*, consisting of lithographs Lynch has based on the concluding scenes of *8½*. The Fondation partnered with Gallimard publishers on the French edition of Tullio Kezich's biography *Federico Fellini, la vita e i film* (French edition, 2007), as well as on Jean Gili's *Fellini, Le magicien du réel* (2009).
2 The Lilly Library of Indiana University has a significant collection, begun by the late Peter Bondanella, of Fellini materials, including notes, screenplays, notebooks, letters, and drawings. There are numerous typescripts and drafts of Fellini's projects with handwritten additions and corrections by the filmmaker. Many of these materials are useful for tracking the creative stages of various Fellini works.
3 The Felliniana Archive, developed and curated by Don Young, began with the purchase of a single poster in 1994. As of 2018, the archive contains more than 5000 items of ephemera related to Fellini and his films including rare posters, photographic stills, press materials, magazines, newspapers, books, and audio/video recordings. Examples from the archive have been featured in several Fellini video releases from the Criterion Collection and Arrow Films. The collection was also featured at the Seattle Art Museum during the 2003 Felliniana academic conference and at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, during the 2006 Fellini Film Festival. The Felliniana website (http://www.felliniana.com/benvenuto) contains more information and a virtual tour of the international poster collection.

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4 A significant personal archive has been created by one of the authors in this volume, Cihan Gündoğdo. His goal at the start, in 2010, was to collect as many materials as possible related to Fellini's *8½*. The scope expanded to all available written documents about Fellini: articles, books, newspaper pieces, official documents, continuity scripts, Masters and PhD theses, and press books. Included also are posters and set photos, along with Gündoğdo's correspondence with Fellini scholars. His materials are in numerous languages, including English, Turkish, French, Italian, and Korean. Much of the material is stored electronically; the paper collection is in Istanbul. Gündoğdo may be located either through an online search or by contacting one of this volume's editors.

Self portrait. © Estate of Federico Fellini / SOCAN (2019)

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A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.

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A Companion to Federico Fellini, First Edition. Edited by Frank Burke, Marguerite Waller, Marita Gubareva.
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