

Directed by Federico Fellini
Story by Federico Fellini & Ennio Flaiano
Screenplay by Ennio Flaiano, Tullio Pinelli, Federico Fellini & Brunello Rondi
Produced by Angelo Rizzoli
Original Music by Nino Rota
Cinematography by Gianni Di Venanzo
Film Editing by Leo Cattozzo
Production Design by Piero Gherardi
Art Direction by Piero Gherardi
Costume Design by Piero Gherardi and Leonor Fini
Third assistant director...Lina Wertmüller

Academy Awards for Best Foreign Picture, Costume Design

Marcello Mastroianni...Guido Anselmi
Claudia Cardinale...Claudia
Anouk Aimée...Luisa Anselmi
Sandra Milo...Carla
Rossella Falk...Rossella
Barbara Steele...Gloria Morin
Madeleine Lebeau...Madeleine, l'attrice francese
Caterina Boratto...La signora misteriosa
Edda Gale...La Saraghina
Guido Alberti...Pace, il produttore
Mario Conocchia...Conocchia, il direttore di produzione
Bruno Agostini...Bruno - il secundo segretario di produzione
Cesarino Miceli Picardi...Cesarino, l'ispettore di produzione
Jean Rougeul...Carini, il critico cinematografico
Mario Pisu...Mario Mezzabotta
Yvonne Casadei...Jacqueline Bonbon
Ian Dallas...Il partner della telepata
Mino Doro...L'agente di Claudia
Nadia Sanders...Nadine, la Hostess
Georgia Simmons...La nonna di Guido
Edy Vessel...L'indossatrice
Tito Masini...Il cardinale
Annie Gorassini...L'amica del produttore
Rossella Como...Un'amica di Luisa
Mark Herron...Il corteggiatore di Luisa
Marisa Colomber...Una zia di Guido
Neil Robinson...L'agente dell'attrice francese
Elisabetta Catalano...Matilde, la sorella di Luisa
Eugene Walter...Il giornalista americano



Hazel Rogers...La negretta
Gilda Dahlberg...La moglie del giornalista americano
Mario Tarchetti...L'ufficio di stampa di Claudia
Mary Indovino...La telepata
Frazier Rippey...Il segretario laico
Francesco Rigamonti...Un'amico di Luisa
Giulio Paradisi...Un'amico
Marco Gemini...Guido da ragazzo
Giuditta Rissone...La madre di Guido
Annibale Ninchi...Il padre di Guido
Nino Rota...Bit Part

FEDERICO FELLINI (20 January 1920, Rimini, Emilia-Romagna, Italy -31 October 1993, Rome, Italy, of a heart attack) directed 25 films, some of which were *La voce della luna* (1990), *Intervista* (1987), *Ginger e Fred/ Ginger and Fred* (1986), *E la nave va/ And the Ships Sails On* (1983), *La città delle donne/ City of Women* (1980)*Prova d'orchestra / Orchestra Rehearsal*(1978), *Il Casanova di Federico Fellini/ Fellini's Casanova* (1976), *Amarcord* (1973), *Roma* (1972), *I clowns/ The Clowns* (1970) (TV), *Fellini - Satyricon* (1969), *Block-notes di un regista/ Fellini: A Director's Notebook* (1969) (TV), *Giulietta degli spiriti/ Juliet of the Spirits* (1965), *8½* (1963), *Boccaccio '70* (1962) (segment "Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio"), *La dolce vita* (1960), *Le notti di Cabiria/ Nights of Cabiria* (1957), *Il bidone/ The Swindle* (1955), *La strada/ The Road*(1954), *L'amore in città/ Love in the City* (1953) (segment

"Agenzia matrimoniale, Un"), *I vitelloni* (1953), *Lo sceicco bianco/ The White Sheik* (1952), and *Luci del varietà/ Variety Lights* (1950). He also wrote or co-wrote 53 films. Some of them, (in addition to his own films) are: *The Flowers of St. Francis / Francesco, giullare di Dio* 1950, *Variety Lights / Luci del varietà* 1950, *Path of Hope / Il cammino della speranza* 1950, *In the Name of the Law / In nome della legge* 1949, *Ways of Love / L'amore* 1948, *City of Pain / Città dolente* 1948, *Bullet for Stefano / Il pastore* 1947, *Flesh Will Surrender / Il delitto di Giovanni Episcopo* 1947, *Paisan / Paisà* 1946, *Open City / Roma, città aperta* 1945, *The Last Wagon / L'ultima carrozzella* 1943, *Apparition / Apparizione* 1943, *Peddler and the Lady / Campo de' fiori* 1943, *Before the Postman / Avanti c'è posto...* 1942, *I cavalieri del deserto* 1942

ENNIO FLAIANO (5 March 1910, Pescara, Abruzzi, Italy—20 November 1972, Rome, Italy) is credited as writer on 66 films, among them *Liza* 1972, *Sundance Cassidy and Butch the Kid / Vivio, preferibilmente, morti* 1969, *Sweet Charity* 1969, *The Oldest Profession / Le plus vieux métier du monde* 1967, *The 10th Victim / La decima vittima* 1965, *Juliet of the Spirits / Giulietta degli spiriti* 1965, *Run for Your Wife / Una moglie Americana* 1965, *Rapture* 1965, *Tonio Kröger* 1964, *The Executioner / El verdugo* 1963, 8½ 1963, *Boccaccio '70* 1962, *La notte* 1961, *Love in Rome / Un amore a Roma* 1960, *La Dolce Vita* 1960, *Fortunella* 1958, *Love on the Riviera / Racconti d'estate* 1958, *Nights of Cabiria / Le notti di Cabiria* 1957, *L'ultimo paradiso / The Last Paradise* 1955, *The Swindle / Il bidone* 1955, *Lost Continent / Continente perduto* 1955, *Too Bad She's Bad / Peccato che sia una canaglia* 1954, *Woman of Rome / La romana* 1954, *Modern Virgin / Vergine moderna* 1954, *La strada* 1954, *The Anatomy of Love / Tempi nostri* 1954, *Camilla* 1954, *I vitelloni* 1953, *The White Sheik / Lo sceicco bianco* 1952, *Variety Lights / Luci del varietà* 1950, *Roma città libera / Rome: Free City* 1946, *Inviati speciali* 1943, and *Pastor Angelicus* 1942

ANGELO RIZZOLI (31 October 1889, Milan, Lombardy, Italy—24 September 1970, Milan, Lombardy, Italy) producer 40 films, some of which were *Transplant / Il trapianto* 1970, *Mal d'Africa / The Final Prey* 1968, *Africa addio* 1966, *Juliet of the Spirits / Giulietta degli spiriti* 1965, *Red Desert / Il deserto rosso* 1964, 8½ 1963, *La Dolce Vita* 1960, *Black Dossier / Le dossier noir* 1955, *Napoléon* 1955, *Madame Butterfly / Madama Butterfly* 1954, *Madame du Barry* 1954, *The Barefoot Contessa* 1954, *Beat the Devil* 1953, *Lucrece Borgia* 1953, *Puccini* 1953, *Beauties of the Night / Les belles de nuit* 1952, *Wife for a Night / Moglie per una notte* 1952, *The Little World of Don Camillo / Don Camillo* 1952, *Umberto D.* 1952, *The Flowers of St. Francis / Francesco, giullare di Dio* 1950, *Yvonne of the Night / Yvonne la Nuit* 1949, *Rose scarlatte* 1940, and *La signora di tutti* 1934

NINO ROTA (3 December 1911, Milan, Lombardy, Italy—10 April 1979, Rome, Italy) worked with Fellini on all of his films, and composed scores for many other films as well—168 of them, including *Hurricane* 1979, *Death on the Nile* 1978, *Fellini's Casanova / Il Casanova di Federico Fellini* 1976, "E il Casanova di Fellini?" 1975, *The Godfather: Part II* 1974, *Amarcord* 1973, *Love and Anarchy / Film d'amore e d'anarchia, ovvero 'stamattina alle 10 in via dei Fiori nella nota casa di tolleranza...* 1973, *Sunset, Sunrise / Hi wa shizumi, hi wa noboru* 1973, *The Godfather* 1972, *Fellini's Roma* 1972, *Waterloo* 1970/I, "The Clowns" / "I clowns" 1970, *A Quiet Place to Kill / Paranoia* 1970, *Fellini Satyricon* 1969, *Spirits of the Dead / Histoires extraordinaires* 1968, *Romeo and Juliet* 1968/I, *The Taming of the Shrew* 1967, "Much Ado

About Nothing" 1967, *Shoot Loud, Louder... I Don't Understand / Spara forte, più forte, non capisco* 1966, *Juliet of the Spirits / Giulietta degli spiriti* 1965, *The Leopard / Il gattopardo* 1963, 8½ 1963, *Boccaccio '70* 1962, *The Brigand / Il brigante* 1961, *Rocco and His Brothers / Rocco e i suoi fratelli* 1960, *Purple Noon / Plein soleil* 1960, *La Dolce Vita* 1960, *The Law Is the Law / La legge è legge* 1958, *El Alamein / Tanks of El Alamein* 1958, *Città di notte* 1958, *Le notti bianche / Le notti di Cabiria* 1957, *Nights of Cabiria* 1957, *War and Peace* 1956, *The Swindle / Il bidone* 1955, *A Hero of Our Times / Un eroe dei nostri tempi* 1955, *Modern Virgin / Vergine moderna* 1954, *Mambo* 1954, *La strada* 1954, *Appassionatamente* 1954, *The Ship of Condemned Women / La nave delle donne maledette* 1954, *Star of India* 1954, *I vitelloni* 1953, *The Assassin / Venetian Bird* 1952, *The White Sheik / Lo sceicco bianco* 1952, *The Queen of Sheba / La regina di Saba* 1952, *The Small Miracle* 1951, *Valley of the Eagles* 1951, *His Last Twelve Hours / È più facile che un cammello...* 1950, *I pirati di Capri* 1949, *The Glass Mountain* 1949, *Fuga in Francia* 1948, *How I Lost the War / Come persi la guerra* 1947, *The Mountain Woman / La donna della montagna* 1944, *Giorno di nozze* 1942, *Treno popolare* 1933. "I believe Nino Rota was the greatest composer in the history of the movies," Roger Ebert wrote. "Who else wrote scores in the 1950s and 1960s that are in print and selling well today?" Here's a drawing Fellini did of Nino Rota:



GIANNI DI VENANZO (18 December 1920, Teramo, Abruzzi, Italy—3 January 1966, Rome, Italy) was cinematographer on 50 films, among them *The Honey Pot* 1967, *The 10th Victim / La decima vittima* 1965, *Juliet of the Spirits / Giulietta degli spiriti* 1965, *Il momento della verità* 1965, *Kiss the Other Sheik / Oggi, domani, dopodomani* 1965, 8½ 1963, *L'eclisse* 1962, *Salvatore Giuliano* 1962, *...And Suddenly It's Murder! / Crimen* 1961, *La notte* 1961, *Venetian Honeymoon / La prima notte* 1959, *Piece of the Sky / Un ettaro di cielo* 1959, *Vento del Sud / South Wind* 1959, *The Law Is the Law / La legge è legge* 1958, *Big Deal on Madonna Street / I soliti ignoti* 1958, *The Cry / Il grido* 1957, *The Awakening / Suor Letizia* 1957, *Kean: Genius or Scoundrel / Kean* 1956, *The Bachelor / Lo scapolo* 1955, *The Girlfriends / Le amiche* 1955, *Abandoned / Gli sbandati* 1955, *Women and Soldiers / Donne e soldati* 1954, *Love in the City / L'amore in città* 1953, *Ai margini della metropoli* 1953, and *Days of Glory / Giorni di gloria* 1945.

MARCELLO MASTROIANNI (28 September 1924, Fontana Liri, Latium, Italy - 19 December 1996, Paris, Ile-de-France, France, of pancreatic cancer) appeared in 143 films and tv series, some of which were *Viagem ao Principio do Mundo/ Voyage to the*

Beginning of the World (1997), *Trois vies & une seule mort/ Three Lives and Only One Death* (1996), *Al di là delle nuvole/Beyond the Clouds* (1995), *Prêt-à-Porter* (1994), *Le voleur d'enfants* (1991), *To meteorò vima tou pelargou* (1991), *Stanno tutti bene/ Everybody's Fine* (1990), *Splendor* (1989), *Ginger e Fred* (1986) # *Enrico IV/Henry IV* (1984), *Il generale dell'armata morte* (1983), *La nuit de Varennes/ The Night of Varennes* (1982), *La pelle* (1981), *La città delle donne/ City of Women* (1980), *Giallo napoletano/ Neapolitan Mystery* (1978), *Una giornata particolare/ A Special Day* (1977), *La donna della domenica/ The Sunday Woman* (1975), *La grande bouffe/ The Grand Bouffe* (1973), *Giochi particolari/ The Voyuer* (1970), *Poppies Are Also Flowers/ The Opium Connection/ The Poppy is Also a Flower* (1966), *La decima vittima/ The 10th Victim* (1965), *Casanova '70* (1965), *Matrimonio all'italiana/ Marriage Italian- Style* (1964), *Ieri, oggi, domain/ Yester, Today and Tomorrow* (1963), *8½* (1963), *Vie privée/A Very Private Affair* (1962), *Divorzio all'italiana/ Divorce- Italian Style* (1961), *L'assassino/ The Assassin/ The Ladykiller of Rome* (1961), *La notte* (1961), *La dolce vita* (1960), *La legge/ The Law/ Where the Hot Wind Blows!* (1959), *Le notti bianche* (1957), *Il medico e lo stregone/ Doctor and the Healer* (1957), *La bella mugnaia/ The Miller's Beautiful Wife* (1955), *La principessa delle Canarie/ The Island Princess* (1954), *Lulù* (1953), *Sensualità/ Barefoot Savage* (1952), *Vita da cani* (1950), and *I bambini ci guardano/ The Children Are Watching Us / The Little Martyr* (1944).

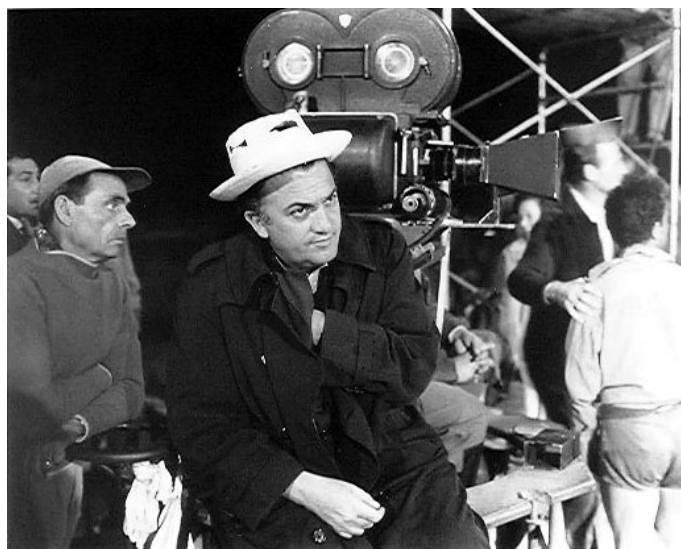
CLAUDIA CARDINALE (15 April 1938, Tunis, French Protectorate Tunisia [now Tunisia]) has appeared in 105 films, among them *Diventare italiano con la signora Enrica* 2010, *A View of Love / Un balcon sur la mer* 2010, *The String / Le fil* 2009, *The Demon Stirs / Le démon de midi* 2005, *Brigands / Li chiamarono... briganti!* 1999, "Nostromo" 1996, *Son of the Pink Panther* 1993, *La batalla de los Tres Reyes / Drums of Fire* 1990, *A Man in Love / Un homme amoureux* 1987, *L'été prochain* 1985, *Henry IV / Enrico IV* 1984, *Fitzcarraldo* 1982, *La pelle* 1981, *The Salamander* 1981, *Corleone* 1977, *Blonde in Black Leather / Qui comincia l'avventura* 1975, *Days of Fury* 1973, *The Red Tent / Krasnaya palatka* 1969, *A Fine Pair / Ruba al prossimo tuo* 1969, *The Conspirators / Nell'anno del Signore* 1969, *Once Upon a Time in the West / C'era una volta il West* 1968, *The Professionals* 1966, *Lost Command* 1966, *The Magnificent Cuckold / Il magnifico cornuto* 1964, *The Pink Panther* 1963, *The Leopard / Il gattopardo* 1963, *8½* 1963, *Careless / Senilità* 1962, *Cartouche* 1962, *Girl with a Suitcase / La ragazza con la valigia* 1961, *Rocco and His Brothers / Rocco e i suoi fratelli* 1960, *Venetian Honeymoon / La prima notte* 1959, *The Magistrate / Il magistrato* 1959, and *Big Deal on Madonna Street / I soliti ignoti* 1958.

ANOUK AIMÉE (27 April 1932, Paris, France) has appeared in 83 films, the most recent of which is *Tous les soleils* 2011. Some of the others are *Paris Connections* 2010, *Festival in Cannes* 2001, *1999 Madeleine* 1999, *Prêt-à-Porter* 1994, *A Man and a Woman: 20 Years Later / Un homme et une femme, 20 ans déjà* 1986, *Success Is the Best Revenge* 1984, *Long Live Life / Viva la vie!* 1984, *Mon premier amour* 1978, *Justine* 1969, *The Appointment* 1969, *Model Shop* 1969, *A Man and a Woman / Un homme et une femme* 1966, *Undercover Rogue / Le voci bianche* 1964, *The Terrorist / Il terrorista* 1963, *The Shortest Day / Il giorno più corto* 1963, *8½* 1963, *The Last Days of Sodom and Gomorrah* 1962, *The Last Judgment / Il giudizio universale* 1961, *Lola* 1961, *La Dolce Vita* 1960, *Modigliani of Montparnasse / Les amants de Montparnasse (Montparnasse 19)* 1958, *Nina* 1956, *The Crimson Curtain / Le*

rideau cramoisi 1953, *The Paris Express / The Man Who Watched Trains Go By* 1952, *Golden Salamander* 1950, *Les amants de Vérone* 1949, and *La fleur de l'âge* 1947.

SANDRA MILO (11 March 1933, Tunis, French Protectorate Tunisia [now Tunisia]) appeared in 53 films, among them *Happy Family* 2010, *Sleepless* 2009, *Grog* 1982, *Trusting Is Good... Shooting Is Better / T'ammazzo! - Raccomandati a Dio* 1968, *The Strange Night / La notte pazzo del conigliaccio* 1967, *Juliet of the Spirits / Giulietta degli spiriti* 1965, *Male Companion / Un monsieur de compagnie* 1964, *8½* 1963, *The Shortest Day / Il giorno più corto* 1963, *Vanina Vanini* 1961, *The Big Risk / Classe tous risques* 1960, *General della Rovere / Il generale della Rovere* 1959, *Herod the Great / Erode il grande* 1959, *The Adventures of Arsène Lupin / Les aventures d'Arsène Lupin* 1957, *Nero's Mistress / Mio figlio Nerone* 1956, and *The Bachelor / Lo scapolo* 1955.

BARBARA STEELE (29 December 1937, Birkenhead, Cheshire, England, UK) appeared in 54 theatrical and tv miniseries, among them *The Butterfly Room* 2010, *Her Morbid Desires* 2008, *The Prophet* 1999, "War and Remembrance" 1988, "The Winds of War" 1983, *Piranha* 1978, *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* 1977, *Caged Heat* 1974, *She Beast / La sorella di Satana* 1966, *Young Torless / Der junge Törleß* 1966, *Nightmare Castle / Amanti d'oltretomba* 1965, *Castle of Blood / Danza macabra* 1964, *The Ghost / Lo spettro* 1963, *8½* 1963, *The Horrible Dr. Hichcock* 1962, *Pit and the Pendulum* 1961, *Your Money or Your Wife* 1960, *Upstairs and Downstairs* 1959, and *Bachelor of Hearts* 1958.



from *World Film Directors, Vol. II*. Ed. John Wakeman. The H.W. Wilson Company NY, 1988, entry by Derek Prouse

Italian director and scenarist, born in Rimini, a small town on Italy's Adriatic coast, son of Urbano Fellini, a traveling salesman, and the former Ida Barbiani. The four or five years he spent as a boarder at a school run by priests in nearby Fano were rigorously formative. A regular punishment was to make the culprit kneel for half an hour on grains of maize, and a wintry Sunday treat was to be marched to the beach, there to kneel and gaze at the sea while reciting a prayer. Priests were to find their ritual place in many of Fellini's films, as was the circus that he encountered for the first time on a stolen day off and where he remained, entranced, until his truancy was discovered and he was returned to the school. The only aptitude Fellini showed at school was for drawing. In his final year,

he and some of his friends were frequent truants, leading the idle, aimless street life he was to recall in *I Vitelloni*.

This, at any rate, is an approximate account of Fellini's childhood. He enjoys obfuscation, and his own recollections vary according to whim. At some point in his late teens—in 1937 or 1938—like Moraldo in *I Vitelloni*, Fellini escaped from the hopeless limbo of Rimini. He made his way first to Florence, where he worked as an illustrator for a comic-strip story magazine. After six months he moved on again to Rome, joining a Bohemian set of would-be actors and writers. He began to sell stories and cartoons to the humorous weekly *Marc' Aurelio*, and before long was hired as one of the writers of a radio serial based on the magazine's most popular feature, which retailed the marital misadventures of Cico and Pallina—Italy's answer to Blondie and Dagwood.

In 1939, tiring of this chore, Fellini joined his friend, the comedian Aldo Fabrizi, on an odyssey across Italy with a vaudeville troupe. Fellini himself earned his keep as a sketch writer, scenery painter, bit player, and “company poet.” Years later he told an interviewer that this was “perhaps the most important year of my life....I was overwhelmed by the variety of the country's physical landscape and, too, by the variety of its human landscape. It was the kind of experience that few young men are fortunate enough to have—a chance to discover the character....of one's country and, at the same time, to discover one's own identity.”

Back in Rome, Fellini began a new career as a gag writer for the movies, and in 1942, when Aldo Fabrizi was offered the lead role in a film comedy. Fellini supplied the storyline, going on to a growing success as a film comedy writer. Meanwhile, a new actress, Giulietta Masina, had taken over the role of Pallina in the radio series. Intrigued by her voice, Fellini began a four-month courtship that led to their marriage in 1943. Her distinctive personality, puckish, vulnerable, but resilient, clearly fired Fellini's creative imagination, and together they were to forge a unique alliance in the Italian cinema. In 1944 Masina gave birth to a son who lived for only three weeks.

With the liberation of Rome, Fellini and some of his friends opened the “Funny Face Ships,” supplying caricatures, voice recordings, and other mementos for the occupying Allied soldiers to send back home. One day Roberto Rossellini came into Fellini's shop and invited him to collaborate on the script of *Open City* (1945), a landmark in the development of neorealism and the revival of the Italian cinema, and also the film that made Aldo Fabrizi's reputation as a dramatic actor.

Fellini's collaboration with Rossellini continued with *Paisan* (1946), on which he served as both coscenarist and assistant director. Two years later, after Rossellini had made a short film based on Cocteau's “La Voix Humaine: and needed a companion piece to make up a feature-length picture, Fellini wrote and acted in “Il Miracolo” (The Miracle). He played the part of a mute vagabond whom Anna Magnani, as a deluded shepherdess, takes to be St. Joseph and by whom she becomes pregnant. The film was a *succès de scandale*, outraging Catholic opinion everywhere.

During the same period Fellini started to work with another director, Alberto Lattuada. He collaborated with Lattuada on the screenplays of two notable successes: *Senza pietà* (*Without Pity*, 1948) and *Il mulino del Po* (*The Mill on the Po*, 1949), and then with Pietro Germi on *In nome della Legge* (*In the Name of the*

Law, 1949). Back with Rossellini, he worked as scriptwriter and assistant director on *Francesco, giullare di Dio*. After that his chance came, with Lattuada, to codirect *Luci del Varietà* (*Variety Lights*, 1950).

Nowadays, Fellini is no longer certain who directed what in the film. “I wrote the original story and the screenplay and I chose the actors. And the tawdry vaudeville routines I'd recalled from a touring troupe with Aldo Fabrizi. I can't remember exactly which scenes were directed by Lattuada and which by me, but I regard the film as one of mine.” Certainly the work is dense with moments and images that bear the Fellini stamp: the old hunchback who guides the camera to the advertising display outside the theatre where Checco (Peppino De Filippo) is presenting his show; the vivid detail of the company's arduous trek through the provinces to their dubious Roman goal; the progress of Liliانا (Carla del Poggio) from ambitious provincial amateur to opulently befurred Roman soubrette; and, above all, Checco's hopeless bid to possess Liliانا and thereby recapture his waning powers and youth.

It is significant that in this partial directorial debut Fellini had already enlisted several of the colleagues who were to work with him with remarkable consistency throughout his future career: the cinematographer Otello Martelli and the screenwriters Ennio Flaiano and Tullio Pinelli. Giulietta Masina appears as Checco's fiancée Melina; the film seems to have been very much a family affair as Carla del Poggio was Lattuada's wife and Masina, of course, Fellini's.

Fellini's first solo work as director was *Lo sceicco bianco* (*The White Sheik*, 1953), based on a story by Michelangelo Antonioni which the latter had hoped to direct himself. It was inspired by the *fumetti*, the enormously popular magazines telling romantic stories in photo-strip form. Fantasy and reality disastrously intermingle as in many of the director's later works, but here the vein is more comical, sometimes even farcical. Albrto Sordi plays the absurdly vain *fumetti* star in whom a provincial bride, honeymooning in Rome with her boring husband, temporarily invests her romantic dreams....Fellini's subtle guidance of his actors is already evident, and the plight of the romantic young wife (Brunella Bovo) emerges as both funny and touching...Several critics have pointed out the resemblances between this film and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, another story about a woman who prefers illusion to bourgeois reality.

I Vitelloni (*The Wastrels*, or, in England, *The Spivs*, 1953) gained Fellini his first distribution abroad and won the Silver Lion at Venice. The term “*vitelloni*” lacks an exact equivalent in English; meaning literally “overgrown calves,” the expression was current in Fellini's native Rimini to describe the goalless sons of middle-class families—idlers content to hang around bars or the fountain in the square hoping to encounter an amorous adventure....Fellini depicts his provincial scene with a humor that is never rancorous, and is perfectly served by the musical score by Nino Rota—a composer who was to make an invaluable contribution to all of Fellini's films thereafter until his death in 1979....Acknowledging the film's value as a social document, other critics nonetheless see it as a step away from the social preoccupations of neorealism and toward the development of Fellini's conception of character. He himself says that he was portraying not “the death throes of a decadent social class, but a certain torpor of the soul.”



After an eighteen-minute episode entitled “A Matrimonial Agency” in Zavattini’s neorealist production *Love in the City* (1953), Fellini embarked on a film that was to earn him worldwide acclaim, *La Strada* (*The Road*, 1954).

Gelsomina (Giulietta Masina), a diminutive and simple-minded peasant girl is sold by her mother to Zampanò (Anthony Quinn), a street entertainer performing a strong-man act who needs her as his assistant. A brutal and morose character, he subjects her to harsh training as they move from town to town, and also rapes her. Nevertheless, in her clownish fashion, she loves him and tries to establish a human relationship with him, but he always rejects her. She is befriended by a tightrope walker (Richard Basehart)—an ambiguous Christ figure whom Zampanò accidentally kills, causing Gelsomina to lose her tenuous hold on sanity. It is only after her death that Zampanò realizes the extent of his emotional dependence on her. The film ends, as it begins, on a beach, where Zampanò, in Edouard de Laurot’s words, “is finally struck down by a cosmic terror and realizes, in his anguish, man’s solitude in the face of Eternity.” It is a kind of redemption, earned by Gelsomina’s love and self-sacrifice.

...Suzanne Budgen in her book on Fellini writes: “The tenderness that [this key work] ...shows for the dispossessed, its great comic fancy, its preoccupation with circuses and circus people, the importance in it of the sea, and perhaps above all, its air of mystery...mark it as belonging to the very nerve-centre of Fellini’s creative talent.” Arthur Knight thought that *La Strada* was neorealism on a new plane, a mixture of realism and poetry. *La Strada* is Fellini’s own favorite among his films, and is regarded by many as his masterpiece. It received more than fifty awards, including the Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival and an Oscar as best foreign film.

Il bidone (1955), which followed, aroused curiously little critical interest. ...*Il bidone* was followed by a resounding success, *La notti di Cabiria* (*The Nights of Cabiria*, 1956). The character of Cabiria, ketched by Masina in *The White Sheik*, reappears as the star of the show. She haunts the Roman periphery, a lonely irascible little prostitute with a grave professional handicap—a tendency to fall in love, and with men whose main concern is to shove her into the Tiber or over cliffs in order to acquire her modest savings. ...And yet, as Fellini says, Cabiria is in the grip of “an incoherent, intermittent force that cannot be gainsaid—the anguished longing for goodness.” ...Masina won the award as best actress at Cannes, and was described in *Newsweek* as “the best tragi-comedian since Chaplin.” ...To those who found *Cabiria* overly episodic and unstructured, André Bazin replied that Fellini had introduced “a new kind of script,” based not on dramatic causality but on the revelation of character by an accumulation of episodes and examples: it is “the long descriptive sequences, seeming to exercise no effect on the unfolding of the ‘action’ proper [that] constitute the truly important and revealing scenes.... Fellini’s hero never reaches the final crisis (which destroys him and saves him) by a progressive dramatic linking but because the circumstances somehow or other affect him, build up inside him like the vibrant energy in a resonating body. He does not develop;

he is transformed; overturning finally like an iceberg whose center of buoyancy has shifted unseen.”...

The time was ripe for the ebullient Fellini to embark on a more ambitious project. The turbulent publicity that surrounded the making of *La Dolce Vita* (*The Sweet Life*, 1959) was an expression of the spirit of Rome at the time, poised to take over the mantle of Hollywood. The Via Veneto was becoming the Roman Sunset Strip and Hollywood Boulevard combined; actors whose American careers were on the wane flocked to Rome in the hope of achieving a professional renaissance there.... Perhaps the chief, and very considerable, merit of *La dolce vita* nowadays is as a testimony to a particularly turbulent period in the cinema’s history which changed, during its heyday, the character of an ancient city....

An episode in a mammoth production entitled *Boccaccio '70* followed in 1962. Visconti, de Sica, and Monticelli also contributed, though for reasons of length Monicelli’s episode was deleted from the film’s first showing at the Cannes Film Festival. Fellini’s section was entitled “Le tentzioni del dottor Antonio.”

Concerning a predatory temptress (Anita Eckberg) who materializes from a black board to provoke an aging puritan.... After the lip-smacking publicity surrounding the making of *La dolce vita*, Fellini retreated into complete secrecy about his next film, *Otto e mezzo* (8 ½, 1962). Whereas, formerly, his Roman offices near the Spanish Steps were a milling beehive of journalists, friends, and well-wishers presided over by Il Maestro with evident enjoyment, *joie de vivre*, and a word for everyone, now the order of the day was silence and the sets were closed to visitors. His enemies often labeled Fellini a

buggiardo, a big liar—even his wife said that he only blushed when he told the truth. But his friends discerned in him a rare sincerity. I wondered whether this new silence concerning 8 ½ was a calculated publicity ploy to offset the hysteria surrounding *La dolce vita*. On behalf of *The Sunday Times* I went to Rome to ask him about it. We talked in the stifling heat but merciful quiet of the Roman summer when everyone else had repaired to the beach.

“I couldn’t talk to people about 8 ½,” Fellini declared, “the film wasn’t clear even to me. I had a vague idea of it even before *La dolce vita*: to try to show the dimensions of a man on all his different levels; intermingling his past, his dreams, and his memories, his physical and mental turmoil—all without chronology but giving the impression that man is a universe unto himself. But I couldn’t resolve it and so made *La dolce vita* instead. Then I thought of an end: the man must find himself at a point of complete mental and physical crisis: an awful, mature stage of doubt when, devoured by his complexes, his incapacities and impotence, he is forced to try to understand himself. Then, when suicide seems to be the only solution, all the characters, real and imagined, who had contributed to his confusion reveal their positive aspects to him and invest him with new hope.”

But the project refused to cohere. “We made months of tests. Laurence Olivier was one actor I tried to get to play the part. But I still went on delaying, playing for time, secretly hoping that the confusion in my own mind would clear. We had to have a title



put on the actors' contracts so I decided on a temporary working one, *8 ½*, which was the humber of films I'd made, counting my episode in *Boccaccio '70 as the half*.

"Suddenly—and it's amazing how sometimes the obvious can strike you with such blinding force—I thought: Why not make the leading character a film director who is trying to make a film and, in his debilitated state, falls a prey to awful doubts? From that moment, as if I'd found the courage to make a confession, it started to go well. But would the problems of such a man strike audiences as unfamiliar? That was the disquieting possibility. One would need to be utterly sincere, not autobiographical in the ordinary sense, but to tap a more profound, private, and personal outlet. Then the problems would be recognized as universal. It would be like walking a tightrope and one's only chance of success would be to stay utterly faithful to the internal ear. That's why I knew we had to work as undisturbed as possible."



Marcello Mastroianni plays Guido Anselmi, a famous film director who goes to a spa resort to fend off a nervous breakdown. He is wrestling with a script about survivors of a third world war escaping to another planet, but is losing faith in the project and in himself, and is meanwhile besieged by demanding actors, writers, and producers. Guido overcomes his "block" when he recognizes that his real need is to make not an apocalyptic epic but an uncompromisingly honest personal statement, a confession. The film showing how Guido arrives at this discovery *is* the film he really wanted to make: *8 ½*.

"Think what a bale of memories and associations and all we carry about with us," Fellini remarked to Eugene Walker. "It's like seeing a dozen films simultaneously. There's memory, there's memory that's been sorted out and filed, what they call subconscious. There's a kind of idealized set of sketches of the dinner party we'll go to tomorrow night. And there's also what is happening around us, visible and invisible." All of these modes of experience are presented in the film, which cuts from flashback to fantasy to current reality to dream, from objective to subjective, ignoring structural continuity in favor of free association. The three women in Guido's life are his mistress (Sandra Milo), his wife (Anouk Aimée), and Claudia (Claudia Cardinale, in white), an unattainable vision of purity and salvation. Guido's co-scenarist Daumier (Jean Rougeul), endlessly disapproving, serves as his neorealist conscience (and gets himself hanged in fantasy for his pains).

The opening sequence is typical. Guido is trapped in his car in a soundless traffic jam. An initial impression of realism is soon rendered problematic by the silence, by a glimpse of a bare-breasted woman in another car, and by Guido's mounting claustrophobic panic. Suddenly he rises out of his car and soars above the traffic, higher and higher, until he is drifting free and joyful over sparkling water. And then he realizes there is a rope around his ankle. Like a tethered balloon, he is dragged down, down, into the waters of the unconscious. This pattern of crisis,

liberation, and fall recurs throughout the film, as Timothy Hyman points out in one of the essays in Peter Bondanella's collection.

At the end, Guido (told all along that he doesn't "know how to love") rejects all the exclusive claims made on him by others, and learns to embrace all of the various aspects of his life and his nature. Coming to terms with himself, he is freed as an artist. For Fellini, "*8 ½* is a film of liberation—nothing more."

Timothy Hyman writes that "*8 ½* demonstrated how a film could be made about a temperament: the events it dealt with were interior events.... In *8 ½*, Fellini renounced the political or social emphasis of neo-realism, and the new relation between the artist and the outer world that resulted has since become fundamental to much Italian cinema.... the transition from neo-realism to what might be called neo-symbolism."... For Hyman, "it is the oscillation of light and dark, the precise length of their duration, which finally shapes *8 ½* and this music of interval is

combined to maximum effect with with the actual music of Nino Rota.... The syntax of the film becomes the embodiment of Fellini's doctrine that our experience is cyclic, that pleasure comes out of pain, true out of false, comedy out of tragedy."

Christian Metz, in another essay in the same collection, discusses the "double mirror construction" of *8 ½*. "It is not only a film about a director, but a film about a director who is reflecting himself onto his film.... The ordinary interplay of reflection would never have yielded such a wealth of echoes and relationships between Fellini and his character had it not been reflected by the reflecting of that character himself; filmmaker and reflecting filmmaker, Guido is doubly close to the man who brought him to life, doubly his creator's double. "In the penultimate sequence, all the film's characters, real and imaginary (except the elusive Claudia), parade around the rim of a circus ring and, having organized his fantastic dance, Guido, holding his wife by her hand, *himself now enters* the circle.... this author who dreamed of making *8 ½* is now one of the characters of *8 ½*.... No longer is Guido at the center of the magic circle; now it is only the small child dressed in white, and blowing his pipe, the ultimate and first inspirer of the whole fantasy—Guido as a child has become the symbol of Fellini as a child." *8 ½* won first prize at the Moscow Festival, and both an Oscar and the New York Film Critics' Award as best foreign film.

Giulietta degli spiriti (*Juliet of the Spirits*, 1965), like *8 ½*, explores and inner landscape, but this time that of a woman, played by Giulietta Masina. Was this, then, Masina's *8 ½*? Fellini was characteristically ambiguous: "This woman, Juliet, is not *precisely*, my wife, the marriage is not *precisely* my marriage."... Throughout the film, as in *8 ½*, the narrative is densified by her visions, fantasies, memories, and dreams.... Fellini himself said of the film that "the story is nothing. There *is* no story. Actually, the picture can be described in ten different ways. Movies have now gone past the phase of prose narrative and are coming nearer and nearer to poetry. I am trying to free my work from certain constrictions—a story with a beginning, a development, an ending. It should be more like a poem, with meter and cadence."....

In 1967, abandoning a long-projected film called “The Voyage of G. Mastorna,” Fellini became seriously ill, suffering what was called “a total physical collapse.” He went back to work the following year, directing an episode in a three-part French production, *Histoires extraordinaires* (1968), based on stories by Edgar Allan Poe. Fellini’s contribution, “Toby Dammit,” starred Terence Stamp as a film star whose hallucinations on a trip to Cinecittà led to his death. The most admired of the three episodes, it seemed to Penelope Gilliatt

“fluently comic, sober, barbed, a little desperate, with a droll and perfectly earnest belief in Heaven and damnation.”

Also in 1968 Fellini, commissioned by NBC-TV, made a seldom-seen 54-minute film called *Director’s Notebook*. It includes a glimpse of what the uncompleted “Mastorna” might have been like, scenes from Fellini’s Rome, a passage cut from *Nights of Cabiria*, Fellini’s reminiscences of his childhood moviegoing, and a long concluding sequence showing a collection of bizarre characters auditioning for his next film, *Satyricon*. Joseph McBride claims that if, at first glance, the *Notebook* seems to be “a disconnected grab bag of gags, skits and memorabilia, it is actually a rigorous development of the theme of artistic stasis which Fellini pursued in 8 ½.”

Fellini Satyricon (1969) is an uninhibited and extremely loose adaptation by himself and Bernardino Zapponi of *Satyricon*, the satirical romance written in the first century a.d. by Petronius, Nero’s master of the revels. . . . Fellini himself has been even more than usually obfuscatory in his comments on *Satyricon*, in some interviews pointing out similarities between pre- and post-Christian Rome, in others asserting that the film’s atmosphere “is not historical but that of a dream world”; claiming it as autobiographical and as anything but. He has more consistently stressed the objectivity and detachment of the film, saying “I have made no panoramas, no topography, only frescoes, and so the cutting is very fast. It has no real time. It is like riffling through an album. There is no psychological movement in the characters.” It is also “a film made up of static shots—no tracks, no camera movements whatsoever.”

...With *I clowns* (*The Clowns*), commissioned by the RAI network and first shown in Italy in 1970 as a Christmas offering on television, the critical atmosphere warmed considerably. . . . Fellini’s *Roma* (1972) is an evocation, mingling memories and fantasies, location shooting and elaborate studio work, of the city which has done so much to fire his imagination. . . . *Roma* had a mixed reception. Most reviewers found something to praise—sequences rich in Felliniesque humanity—but many thought it too long and too diffuse. Richard Schickel said that he was tired of being fed Fellini’s “visions of Rome as combination brothel, freak show and symbol of the decline of the West.” Dilys Powell called the film “a huge dream, an offshoot from his *Satyricon*, grotesque, horrible, beautiful.” She hoped that Fellini might now find his way back to “the mysterious organism, more complex than Rome—the human being.”

This he did with considerable success in his next film *Amarcord* (1973), which in the patois of his native Rimini means “I

remember” (*a-m’arcord*). We are back in the provincial town of *I Vitelloni*, though this account of four consecutive seasons there during the Fascist 1930s was shot mostly on vast sets constructed in the Roman studios. . . . There are many passages that reveal the director at his imaginative best, such as the one where a frightened but defiant old man is interrogated and tortured by the *fascisti*, or the ludicrous family trip to the country with an idiot relative who climbs to the top of a tree screaming “I want a woman” and who is eventually reclaimed by a severe midget nun. . . .

Earning an Oscar as best foreign film, among many other awards, *Amarcord* was found uneven but rewarding, less strident, more mellow and affirmative than Fellini’s other recent films. But the decline in his reputation continued with *Casanova* (1976), freely drawn by the director and Zapponi from the memoirs of the famous Venetian libertine, and featuring in the title role the utterly un-Italianate Donald Sutherland equipped with a strangely heightened forehead. Fellini’s conception of *Casanova* is as a

victim of his own legend, a joyless coupler with everyone from a libidinous nun to the mechanical doll which seems to provide him with the greatest satisfaction. . . .

Three years elapsed before *Prova d’orchestra* (*The Orchestra Rehearsal*, 1979). “I’d like to do more little films,” Fellini told an interviewer, “but if I go to a producer with a very low-budget story, I see the lack of interest, the humiliation on his face. For him Fellini should shoot a ten-million-dollar film. The film doesn’t count at all, what counts is to build a business on me, the Fellini affair, and then to construct an immense financial edifice. And there I am, rooted in my film with all the problems it poses for me, and next to me is growing this huge labyrinthine construction to satisfy producers’ appetites, piranha-distributors who hope to make the deals of their lives.” . . .

La città delle donne (*City of Women*, 1980) found Fellini back in the superproduction category and once again generally out of favor with the critics. “I have the feeling that all my films are about women,” Fellini declared at the time. “Women represent myth, mystery, diversity, fascination, the thirst for knowledge and the search for one’s own identity. . . . I even see the cinema as a woman. . . . Going to the cinema is like returning to the womb; you sit there, still and meditative in the darkness, waiting for life to appear on the screen.”

In *City of Women*, the merely (and chauvinistically) male hero is once more played by Mastroianni, here called Professor Snàporaz. He is traveling in a train that unexpectedly stops and like a latter-day Alice, is lured through the fields to his Wonderland not by a clothed rabbit but by an exotic fellow-passenger. . . . The film inspired a very successful Broadway musical, “*Nine*.”

In 1983 Fellini made *E la nave va* (*And the Ship Sails On*). He described his film as a dream, an evocation of the subconscious. “I want people to see it without trying to understand it.” . . .

Fellini’s latest film, *Ginger e Fred* (*Ginger and Fred*, 1985) unites Mastroianni, once again as Fellini’s alter ego, and Giulietta Masina, Fellini’s wife, for the first time in their careers. It reveals Fellini, now in his sixties, in a mood paradoxically both more sour and more mellow. Sour in the way he portrays television



as an inimical purveyor of garbage, a world run by ghouls, and Rome itself as a putrescent dump; mellow in the way that he depicts his protagonists as finally capable of affection, of fleeting tenderness, united, momentarily, against the crass world that surrounds them.

Amelia and Pippo are two ex-variety artists who, long ago, were a touring team performing their mediocre imitations of the Astaire-Rogers routines. Lovers for a time, they had split up in the 1950s and had never met since. Now they are invited to make an appearance on a nostalgic TV Christmas Special, presided over by an unctuous veteran played by Franco Fabrizi, the shiftless young husband in *I Vitelloni*. Amelia is now a faintly prim provincial housewife in late middle age. Pippo has become a boozy, arthritic door-to-door salesman, and at their first meeting fails to recognize he. They find themselves in an alien city, rife with vagrants and junkies. The television show in which they are booked to appear is an assemblage of freaks, celebrity lookalikes, a levitating monk, and a miracle woman who has endured for three months the agony of not watching television. When Amelia and Pippo eventually perform their dance routine it is, despite a stumble on his part and a studio blackout, strangely touching. For a brief moment the couple experience a flickering of their old intimacy before once more setting off on their separate ways.

Orson Welles said of Fellini in 1967 that his “limitation—which is also the source of his charm—is that he’s fundamentally very provincial. His films are a small-town boy’s dream of the big city. His sophistication works because it’s the creation of someone who doesn’t have it. But he shows dangerous signs of being a superlative artist with little to say.” As Joseph McBride points out, “Welles undoubtedly picked up that last line from Guido’s declaration [in *8 ½*] that he has nothing to say but he is going to say it anyway.” And so, fortunately, is Fellini. “Does Fellini always make the same film?,” asks Aldo Tassone, “Certainly! But the language of the different chapters of this unique film is incessantly renewed....” It is precisely because it repeats recurrent motifs that Fellini’s fantasy appears unsurpassed, Casiraghi writes very correctly.”

from *Conversations with Fellini*. Edited by Constanzo Constantini. Harcourt Brace & Co., NY, 1995.

CC: *In reality television has granted you a kind of “License to kill,” which in *Ginger and Fred* and *Intervista* you use freely and to the full, with rage, disdain and fury. Are you satisfied with *Ginger and Fred*? How do you place this film in the sphere of your filmography? Of all the films you have now made, which do you prefer?*

FF: It’s difficult for me to say, especially because I hardly ever watch my films again. Every film corresponds to a precise moment, both objectively and subjectively. Personally, disregarding the approval they have obtained, trying to be passionate and detached at the same time, I would put *8 ½* first, then *La Dolce Vita*, *Amarcord*,

and *Ginger and Fred*. *Ginger and Fred* represents me as I am today.

from *8 ½ [Otto e mezza]*. D. A. Miller. BFI, Palgrave Macmillan, NY, 2008.

More than once, Fellini claimed that his films were part of his personal sexual liberation: ‘From first to last, I have struggled to free myself—always from the past, from the education laid upon me as a child.’ But through *8 ½*’s satire on GA/FF’s [Guido Anselmi/Federico Fellini] repressive Catholic boyhood offers the most direct strategy in that struggle, it also sufficiently indicates why the struggle is doomed, why ‘from first to last’, it will always require more effort, destined to fail in turn. In the Fellini ass, desire and shame are linked so intimately, so inextricably, that achieved sexual freedom would be as frustrating as total abstinence....

At Guido Anselmi’s signal, Boy Guido stations himself in front of a curtain, guardian of the revelation behind it. At another signal, the curtain parts, and we see GA’s cast and crew descending the tower staircase en masse. The mood is light, relaxed; people are laughing, chatting, being their ‘off’ selves. Yet the viewer’s joy at this sight may be so acute, and his relief so profound, as to bring him to sobs.... In homage to the child who has piped in this vision, GA keeps its elaboration in an ostentatiously childlike register, forming everyone into an elementary circle dance. Thus configured, the



social field no longer looks terrifying, and GA readily joins the circle, treading the dance just like the others. Even now he takes the precaution of entering the circle as a married man, with Luisa in tow, as if his social integration might prove difficult without this entitlement, but he no longer objects to being a character, one among many. The imagery recalls the Dance of Death from Ingmar Bergman’s *The Seventh Seal* (1957), but only by way of contrast; *8 ½*’s last and greatest dance is plainly a celebration of Life, a Life whose vital circulation could hardly be more literal—or more literally moving. ‘Life is a festival; let’s live it together!’ It is this pageant of ‘simplicity at last’, in which the person is whole and the artwork complete—that Boy Guido has been called upon to articulate....

If the circus finale feels ‘tacked on’, that is because it was tacked on, being literally a trailer that Fellini had never planned as part of the film. For that, as the published screenplay indicates, he had envisioned a different, darker ending. But once this ending had been filmed, it caused him such uneasiness that, late in editing, he replaced it with the trailer. Then, as if to leave no footprints, he destroyed it. ...To Lina Wertmüller, then Fellini’s assistant director...in rejecting the train ending, Fellini laudably chose the fragrance of life over the stench of death.”

from *8 ½* Criterion Collection. 2001: “A Film With Itself as Its Subject” Alexander Sesonske

8 ½: a bizarre and puzzling title, but one precisely appropriate for this film which announces in its first frame that modernism has reached the cinema. If the mark of modernism in art is self-reference, *8 ½* surely goes beyond any predecessor in having itself

as its subject. Before 1963 Fellini had, by his count, made seven and a half films; hence "8 ½" is like an opus number: this is film #8 ½ in the Fellini catalog. Self-referential enough, but only the beginning.

8 ½ is a film about making a film, and the film that is being made is 8 ½. Notice how everything Guido says about the film he is making turns out to be true of 8 ½, even the sailor doing the soft-shoe dance, how all the screen tests are for roles in the film we are seeing, how some camera movements create an ambiguity between Guido the director in the film, and Fellini, the director of the film, thus taking self-reference one step beyond the work to its maker.

It was perhaps this level of self-reference that led some critics in the mid-1960s to dismiss 8 ½ as autobiographical trivia, brilliant on its surface but devoid of significant content—a criticism already made within the film by Daumier, the writer. The worldwide success of 8 ½ and its current status high on the list of the greatest films ever made have long refuted such critics, but they were right on two counts: 8 ½ is both autobiographical and brilliant. Its surface flow of images dazzles us with sharp contrasts of black and white, startling eruptions from off-screen, unexpected changes of scene, and a virtuoso display of all the possibilities and effects of camera movement. We find almost a catalog of humanity in its stream of faces; some of them are momentary visions while others persist through the film and long after in our memory, such as Saraghina, that lumbering monster transformed into the embodiment of joyous life and movement. But Fellini's brilliance reaches beyond the surface to include an intricate structure of highly original, highly imaginative scenes whose conjunction creates an unprecedented interweaving of memories, fantasies, and dreams with the daily life of his hero and alter ego, Guido Anselmi. This more than anything, probably made 8 ½ the most influential film of the 1960s, liberating filmmakers everywhere from the conventions of time, place, and mode of experience that had prevailed in cinema for decades.

In a film in which almost every scene is memorable, within its own pace and ambience, its characteristic forms of movement and emotional tone, some scenes are extraordinary: a childhood reminiscence of a farmhouse overflowing with warmth, love, and security, with an ascent into an enchanted darkness where the magical words "asa nisi masa" promise wealth and happiness; a boyhood flight from the stifling confines of a Catholic school to the voluptuous marvels of Seraghina's rhumba, with its grotesque aftermath of punishment and guilt; young Guido being told that Seraghina is the devil, though a Dantean descent into hell reveals a cardinal enthroned at the center of the inferno, solemnly repeating that there is no salvation outside of the church; a whirling riotous harem scene which marks the absurdities of male fantasy.

Federico Fellini began his career in the motion picture world in 1945, as writer and assistant to the neo-realist director Roberto Rossellini, but by the time he directed his own first film his vivid imagination had begun to replace reality as the central source

of his inspiration. Through the 1950s he explores the fantasies and illusions which both sustain and destroy us in films peopled with characters whose lives run outside the normal streams of everyday experience, circus performers, swindlers, prostitutes. Then *La Dolce Vita*, a huge, sprawling evisceration of contemporary urban high-life, made him an international celebrity and faced him with that most stultifying challenge for an artist: After such a success, what can you do next?

Fellini responded, finally, with 8 ½, making the challenge itself his subject and expressing the stultification in his alter ego Guido's confusion and inability to choose. He made this an opportunity to probe the mystery of artistic creation and the problems of human relations created by a society whose traditional education portrays women as either sacred or profane, either mother or whore. Serious problems, but his film is comic. Hence none of the questions posed is ever really answered; for, as Guido tells us, he has nothing to say. But his complete mastery of film technique and form speaks for him, shaping a purely formal solution for Guido in an imaginary dance of acceptance and communion which leaves us, the spectators, feeling a glow of happy resolution as young Guido, now dressed in white, leads his clown band into the darkness.

One puzzle which remains unsolved for most viewers of 8 ½ is the meaning of "asa nisi masa." "Say the magic words, then when the picture moves its eyes, we'll all be rich." The words derive from a children's game, like pig latin, in which one takes a word, doubles each of its vowels and then puts the letter "s" between the two. So, run backwards, the root word is "anima," the Italian word for soul or spirit. Daumier dismisses all this as another idle childhood memory, devoid of all poetic

inspiration. Yet in the film the utterance of "asa nisi masa" works like magic, releasing the marvelous flow of joyful life of the farmhouse scene. And the childish promise is hardly idle; for it was when the picture moved its eye—when Fellini found his true métier in motion picture—that we all became enriched.

"I, Fellini" (Reprise) from *I, Fellini* by Charlotte Chandler, 1995

Our minds can shape the way a thing will be, because we act according to our expectations.

The hard thing is beginning. whatever you want to do in life, you must begin it. The point of departure for the journey I must begin for each film is generally something that really happened to me, but which I believe also is part of the experience of others. The audience should be able to say, "Oh, something like that happened to me," or "I'm glad it didn't happen to me." They should identify, sympathize, empathize. They should be able to enter the movie and get into my shoes and the shoes of at least some of the characters. I first try to express my own emotions, what I personally feel, and then I look for the link of truth that will be of significance to people like me.

The picture I make is never exactly the one I started out to make, but that is of no importance. I am very flexible on the set.



The script provides the starting point, as well as offering security. After the first weeks, the picture takes on a life of its own. The film grows as you are making it, like relationships with a person.

I must keep a closed set, though I make many exceptions and welcome good spirits, as long as there aren't too many of them. But if I become conscious of one wrong person watching me, my creativity dries up. I feel it physically. My throat becomes dry. It's insidiously destructive to work when there are long faces.

Understanding what makes a thing difficult doesn't make it less difficult, and understanding how difficult it is can make it

more difficult to attempt. Pictures do not get easier for me to make, but more difficult. With each one, I learn more of what can go wrong, and I am thus more threatened, Its always satisfying when you can turn something that goes wrong into something that is even better. If I saw that an actor like Broderick Crawford was a little drunk on the set, I tried to make it part of the story. If someone has just had an argument with his wife, I try to use his upset state as part of his character. when I cannot correct the problem, I incorporate it.

COMING UP IN THE FALL 2010 BUFFALO FILM SEMINARS XXI:

October 12 Mike Nichols *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* 1966

October 19 Francis Ford Coppola *The Godfather* 1972

October 26 Hal Ashby *The Last Detail* 1973

November 2 Bruce Beresford *Tender Mercies* 1983

November 9 Wim Wenders *Wings of Desire* 1987

November 16 Charles Crichton *A Fish Called Wanda* 1988

November 23 Joel & Ethan Coen *The Big Lebowski* 1998

November 30 Chan-wook Park *Oldboy* 2003

December 7 Deepa Mehta *Water* 2005

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