One of the last true poets of this century, Federico Fellini, author and director of masterpieces such as La Dolce Vita, Eight and a Half and Amarcord, recreates the atmosphere of an alternately middle-class, Fascist, working-class, aristocratic, boroque, cinematographic and contemporary Italy, and of Rome itself, in an extraordinary way. An entire universe is reflected in the eyes and faces of a whole range of true-life characters and personalities, with so many nationalities represented that it could almost form an international heritage of the human species.

From Gelsomina's expressive face to the grotesque clowns found in both the circus and real life, from the alter ego of Marcello Mastroianni to the tumultuous farrago of both noble and despable extras, from (post) neorealism to the psychoanalytical reinvention of cinematographic speech in the Sixties and Seventies, right up until the melancholy, prophetic Eighties, no-one else has ever achieved the same level of imaginative creativity. Fellini knew how to magically portray the contradictions within an individual, such as gentle reserve, overpowering humility, or just ordinary restraint. Body and soul exposed right down to unexpected depths, in deference to a genuine, penetrating, 'political' or intellectual curiosity.

Prince of clowns, Fellini has led different generations of viewers by the hand through an ironic, sentimental journey, amongst half remembered day-dream figures, sublime forgeries or dream-like realities, simultaneously creating evocative images that only a magician wielding a movie camera, a liberated vagabond of invention, in short, a bold dreamer of life such as he could unfold. And he did it by means of the disarming power of film, which continues to shine out from his unforgettable masterpieces.
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According to the Editor's research, the photographs in this volume are attributed to: Nicoletti (The Nights of Cabiria), Domenico Cattarich (Fellini's Satyricon, Toby Dammitt), Etienne Pecce (I Vitelliani, Variety Lights), A. Pianti (La Dolce Vita, Amarcord, Fellini's Casanova, I Vitelliani, Orchestra Rehearsed, City of Women, And the Ship Sails On, Ginger and Fred), G. B. Poletto (Il Bidone, Juliet of the Spirits, Fellini's Roma), Paul Ronald (The Temptations of Doctor Antonio, Eight and a Half), Tazio Secchiaroli (Eight and a Half, Toby Dammitt, Fellini's Satyricon). In particular the photos on pages 90, 104 (below), 105, 106, 170, 171 are by Elisabetta Catalano; those on pages 162 (below), 163-166 are by Emilio Lai.
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Cover and back cover photographs:
Domenico Cattarich

Original title:
Federico Fellini

Translation from Italian:
Charles Nopar, with the collaboration of Sue Jones

Cover design:
Sergio Albertini

Phototypeset:
Graphic Art 6 s.r.l. - Rome
e-mail: dw@nuiri.net

GREMSE EDITORE s.r.l. - Rome
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Introduction

"Does the shadow die?" This is the splendidly rhetorical question that Federico Fellini poses in order to underscore the imminent character of the clown in contemporary society. It is a superfluous question, on a par with the one asked by his last clown, Ivo Benigni in The Voice of the Moon, about the destiny of sparks and of music when it ceases to play. And it is precisely this poetry of the useless exalting the apparently unessential that suffuses Fellini's great art: a fantastic universe that absorbs and reinterprets reality, an invented dream world that is mirrored in life, the image of the probable and the fictitious on film.

In short, the presence of an absolutely resilient persona, irreplaceable, incomparable in the artistic and cultural panorama of this century, aiming to prevent our society from losing its way. A presence that goes beyond the limits of more cinema, which has given us heart, soul and unforgettable images. A role of significance so wide and limitless as to make one think of Fellini as an alien author, a "magician of light" who has been touched by the same fire as his characters, whether they be clowns or other types. The more one tries to define, decipher, classify and file them away, the more they take flight, flee, reinvent, disappear, and return to the unknowable sphere of the music of sparks.

Much has been said about Fellini, often of a contradictory nature. Each of his movies (and the context within which they were produced), has left indelible critical traces, has moved people, divided and enthused generations of viewers, has provoked negative reactions and won prestigious international awards, has marked an epoch of Italian cinema and, like few others, has influenced its language at root level, freeing its esoteric imagination, its memory, its fantasizing about reality.

Much has been said about Fellini, but still not everything. And not only because of what has not been published or the interpretations that will continue to bud like the flowers of a kaleidoscopic rainbow, but because, together with Fellini the Director (the artist of Italian genius) and Fellini the Personality (exported and known throughout the world), there is still digging to be done into Fellini the Man, Fellini the Classic, Fellini the Shadow.

Fellini the Man is certainly still continually brought to the fore, from movie reviews—truly liberating psychoanalytical sessions—as well as statements and interviews from more than forty years in the business; but there are still rich, unexplored reserves to be tapped (his dreams and writings for the screen, his private life and his designs, his story-telling and the unforeseeable qualities of a visual and evocative creativity worthy of a raconteur of the printed page, Fellini the Classic .... And if, by chance, somebody's brow should suddenly furrow in perplexity or somebody else's nose should wrinkle, let them not fear: for the moment, there is no danger. Those like Federico Fellini who give voice to the imagination and to memory, to both presence and reality, open up new perspectives with every fresh viewing of their work, and make minds turn somersaults and tangle with merriment and sincere emotion. They do not disrupt orthodox beliefs, they are boisterous and deceitful to the insensitive, fascinating and shameless to those who completely accept them. Like clowns and their melacholy human shadows, they make one laugh and cry, because they are clowns and shadows, as evanescent and dense as air, cinematic phantoms and solid forms. But do shadows die?

f. b.
Fellini dressed as a walter on the set of the high society party in La Dolce Vita
Life is a Dream

Federico Fellini was born in Rimini on the stormy night of January 20, 1920. His father, Urbano, a salesman nicknamed ‘the prince of merchants’, came from Gambettola, an inland market town. His mother Ida came from an established Roman family on her mother's side. He inherited a number of characteristics from each of them which would have more than a little influence on his artistic future. As he grew up, he developed a unique sensitivity that was to make him stand out from other artists of the twentieth century.

Fellini, who was a solitary child and adolescent, has this to say about his own character: “Deep down within, some people cry, whilst others laugh. I was always inclined to keep my feelings private. I was happy to share joys and laughter with others, but I did not want them to know of my sadness and fears.” These simple words clarify the direction his movies would take when combined with the memories, the brilliant imagination and the mixture of true and completely fictional events they contain.

Many of these memories live on as images within his movies, whereas there are other scenarios for which Fellini cannot account, uncertain as he is whether they are memories of his own life or have been “borrowed from someone else, as is the case with many things we remember. All I know is that these memories belong to me and will exist as mine for as long as I live.”

This declaration ought to clear up, once and for all, the doubts regarding the biographical truth of the things Fellini recounted during his life. In other words, in this book we shall not be looking for deeply hidden motivations, nor hazard theories or far-fetched interpretations – something that the director always abhorred even while being amused by what others dug out of his movies concerning his life.

It will be enough if one is content to enjoy the feelings which Fellini succeeds in arousing within us, those same things which allow each of his admirers, as Bernardino Zapponi says, to find affinities for himself, be it in an image or a flash, a word, a laugh; and this not for a lack of philological scruple, but rather so as not to diminish Fellini's imaginative and visionary power, his universality, his simple and, at the same time, complex way of communicating with everyone, even in his less successful works. In short, that magic which only the great can handle when, with their mysterious alchemy, they illustrate life, real or dreamed, or, more precisely, really dreamed.

“We are such stuff as dreams are made on”, writes Shakespeare in Act IV of The Tempest. And no definition appears more appropriate than this when speaking of Fellini who, as has been said, one can easily imagine still intent on dreaming his veracious visions, his primary reality, perhaps his only reality, seeing with what rigor and insistence he has recalled those dreams ever since childhood, relived them with open eyes and presented them to us.

But Fellini the child is not only this. If his love of solitude makes him dream with eyes closed, half closed, or open, it also allows him to develop other attitudes, preferences, sudden loves, unrequited premonitions.
One example is the memory of running away with the circus, which paves the way for the future themes of travel and the love of that world which he immediately feels to be his own. It is an episode to which, in the course of time, the director adds new and sometimes incredible details, perhaps because it is a passage in which he wanted to believe and use to shape his sensibility.

On his first visit to the circus he was upset by the clowns – "I did not know if they were animals or ghosts" – but he had the distinct premonition that this was the world awaiting him. "At the time I did not know that my future was going to be in the circus... the cinema circus", but he dreamt of it by day and by night, convinced that he had discovered his rightful place. His encounter with Pierino, his first clown, is revealing: "I realized that he and I were one being. I sensed my immediate affinity with his lack of respectability. It had something to do with his carefully planned self-neglect, something that was both amusing and tragic."

And so, fascinated by that world, he "ran away" for an entire afternoon and bound himself forever to these people by helping out with washing a depressed zebra, a feeling that he would never forget. The adventure – described for many years in a wealth of detail as a genuine flight of varying duration – had in fact been an episode lasting just a few hours and interrupted by a family friend who brought him back home – a detail that is scarcely mentioned in the enlargement mode of the story by the adult Fellini's novel-producing memory. "I recounted the story of my desires rather than my actual experience. After many years spent retelling an ever more embellished version of the same story, this appeared to me more real than reality. Exaggeration had become so familiar to me that, by then, it had become part of my memories." The memories of an honest liar, the justification of his inventions in which we have no reason not to believe.

It is a bit harder to believe in his assertion of having been a very bad student. For a quiet kid – on the surface anyway, because it is clear just how tumultuous his inner life was – to advertise himself in adulthood as having been a good-for-nothing in a world as creative, chaotic and rather extraverted as the Italian cinema, can be considered a unique thing: the innocent lie that masks banal normalcy. But, reading between the lines, one gets the true picture: surely Federico was an intelligent but rather bored student who, not finding valid motivation in a Fascist school,
managed to just get by all right so as not to make his mother unhappy.

Conversations with Charlotte Chandler reveal a high school student who spent many hours doodling in class while pretending to take notes — another opportunity to live in his highly personal fantasy world which, having found expression in drawings ever since elementary school, opened up the world of comics to him and, above all, the adventures of Windsor McCay's 'Little Nemo', who was "someone like me who did fantastic things, a stimulus for my imagination", a twin brother

who, at the end of every adventure, realized he had been dreaming.

Federico spent many happy hours drawing, encouraged by his mother who taught him the basics in spite of opposition from the very energetic Urbano. He used his imagination a great deal in his little theater, constructing marionettes like Bergman — "one of my most tenacious memories." Thus he sharpened his dramatic sensibility by writing the scripts and acting out all the parts himself, a technique which he did not abandon when, as a director, he needed to show an actor his way of seeing the character.

What else is there to add to so 'complete' a biography, even if it is based on a flood of memories rather than on the punctilious checking of dates and events? Having fled, by way of the imagination, from one's family and a repressive/regressive Catholic and Fascist education, he now needs a pretext for attempting a real flight without disappointing anyone, without causing suffering, as was his disposition. Indelible formative years that will lead him to say: "I spent my life trying to recover from my upbringing".

How to undulate himself, to liberate himself from such limitations when the imagination no longer suffices? Only one thing remains: to leave Rimini as soon as possible, to get away from an unhappy and oppressive maternal figure, an inward-looking provincial town, a religion that operates solely on the sense of guilt, an unstimulating school, an absentee father. To find an excuse, some pretext to flee like his father — the father who remains a stranger to him "until after his death", when Federico will finally get to know him properly.

To find a motive for leaving Rimini, just like Moraldo in I Vitelloni. When only just twelve, Federico starts sending drawings, stories and illustrated anecdotes to several Roman and Florentine comic magazines. He uses various pseudonyms all beginning with 'F', such as Felisus, but is not taken seriously until one day he manages to place his first cartoon, and many others then follow on. The pay is laughable, but the pride in seeing himself published is boundless. By now, he is seventeen, and he finally finds a reason for leaving: he will go to Florence to work at 420, a satirical review for which he had worked as a freelance. "I stayed there for about four months. Rome is where I really wanted to go", and, having finished high school, the dream is about to come true.

From March 1939, Federico Fellini is officially registered as a resident of Rome, on the pretext of reading law. With him are his little sister and his mother, who has re-established the relations with her family interrupted after her marriage.

His experience of the city is wonderfully familiar: "No sooner had I arrived than I felt at home. This is the secret of
Rome's seductiveness. It is not like being in a city, but rather like being in one's own apartment. I was very pale and romantic-looking. My shirt was always dirty, my hair long." Confident that his mother will be apposed because he had promised to enroll at the university (but not to attend classes), he busies himself with earning money in the city which "totally exceeded anything my imagination could produce, a reality that far outran any fantasy", even if he discovers for the first time what means to go hungry.

Not knowing many people, he approaches the editors of humorous magazines, offering them stories, cartoons and vignettes, the only things in which he has considerable experience. He dreams of working for the legendary 'Marc'Aurelio', but must achieve this by working first of all for 'Il Piccolo' and 'Il Popolo di Roma', more in the role of a secretary than that of a journalist. He has a romantic concept of the latter, based on his adolescent infatuation with the tilt of Fred McMurray's hat and - a detail not to be underestimated - the fact that American newspapermen all have cars and glamorous girlfriends. "I had had no experience of the life of an Italian journalist. When I realized my dream and got a job on a daily paper, nothing was the way I had imagined it. It took quite a while before I could afford a trench coat."

Meanwhile, he is becoming more and more settled in the capitol. "Rome became my home at first sight. That was the moment of my birth. It is my real birthday. If I could remember the date, I would celebrate it." A friendly, magical city, where he begins to make his first acquaintances - with the painter Rinaldo Geleng for example, a friend from the very beginning and collaborator in many movies to come. Together they scrape a living doing portraits in restaurants and decorating shops, a job which is unsuitable for Federico, as he does not know how to use oil paints (and will never learn to).

Having got a feel for the place and experienced Roman life with other insignificant, temporary jobs, Fellini finally gets the chance to work for 'Marc'Aurelio', a biweekly comic paper with a large circulation. He shows up with a portfolio of vignettes, as Stefano Vanzina, secretary of the editorial department at that time and later film director going by the pseudonym Steno, recalls. "As soon as he spread them out on my table, I realized that they were an omen - they looked like drawings by Grosz. So I had him wait for the managing editor. At that time, Fellini was the figure he later portrayed in Fellini's Roma - tall, lean from hunger, with a wide-brimmed hat on his head and a white scarf. On a human level, I immediately recognized him as one of ours. And he stayed with us, starting to work for the publication straight away, because the managing editor, Vito De Bellis, who has always been a great talent scout, had no hesitation in employing him."

His circle of new acquaintances widens through working at 'Marc'Aurelio', a real storehouse of humorous minds, who were already partly working in theater and, later on, were loaned to the movie industry. Fellini draws numerous vignettes and writes about seven hundred articles, from his debut column Raccontino Pubblicitario to Ma tu mi stai a sentire?, a series of political attacks that will win him the hearts of the young readers. In these first attempts, he borrows the somewhat surrealist style of Cesare Zavattini, although he will soon abandon this for a more personal one based on autobiographical experiences.

Towards the end of 1939, and for the whole of the following year, he dedicates himself to the theater with a series of humorous sketches about vaudeville, depicting each of its components, from the comedians to the ventriloquists, dancers and magicians - all characters that he will transform into movie images in Variety Lights and later in the long episode dedicated to the Baronda theater in Fellini's Roma.

Autobiography and self-irony make up the quintessential nature of his columns and, in essence, the secret of their success. Seconda Liceo, the very popular Primo Amore and Oggi Spost introduce the figures of Cico and Bianchina - clearly they are Federico and Bianca Soriano of the
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Fellini and the best known variety actors drew more than a little from ‘Marc’Aurelio’ for their quips. Fellini begins to frequent this circle, first of all in the company of colleagues, and later on his own when writing for the weekly Cine Illustrato, Cinema Magazin and ‘Il Trovatore’. For Cinema Magazin, he is editor of ‘Che cos’è l’avanzettificio? (“What is vaudeville?”), a series of interviews with the leading stars of the moment: Anna Magnani, Totò, the De Sica, Nino Manfredi and many others, including Fabrizi, later to become his friend. A series of interviews that will win him the hearts of the young readers. In these early attempts, he borrows the somewhat surrealistic style of Cesare Zavattini, although he will soon abandon this for a more personal one based on autobiographical experiences.

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At this time, light theater was divided into two main types: the luxurious reviews of Macario, Dappporto, Wanda Osiris and the Zu-Bum Company; and then there is variety or vaudeville with Fanfulla, the Maggio family and Fabrizi, who appears as a special guest star in the finales of other people’s reviews. This genre, experimental and inventive, is aimed at the informal, working class public who would not accept the repetitious formulas of reviews which were the delight of the upper and lower middle classes attracted by the glittering sets. However, it is vaudeville...

Fellini first meets Fabrizi at the Cinema Corso, where he goes to hand in his new quips. He does not normally go into the auditorium, but one of the few occasions on which he decides to see the show is when the Roman comedian is appearing. The support between Fellini and Fabrizi is instant. Together with Ruggero Maccari, Fellini often goes to meet Fabrizi at the end of the show, and accompanies him home, walking through Rome in the hours when one feels “truly Roman”. During these encounters, Fabrizi recounts stories on which Fellini will draw to create characters and situations in his work as scriptwriter, gay writer, and later film director.

Over time, numerous disagreements of opinion will divide the friends, but Fellini always pays tribute to the influence of “the fabulous companion of my early days in Rome. A kind of Daddy Bear, a good-natured Demon Caron, a most valuable guide. It was through him that I began to truly get to know the Roman character, the lives of the people living on the outskirts of the city.”

The world of vaudeville furthermore leads him to write two reviews with his friend Maccari; Divagazioni and Hai visto corvo?, the rights to which he will code to the lead
comedian, as was customary at that time. Meanwhile, he continues his radio work and pursues his relationship with Giulietta Masina which, after the usual tack of an invitation to lunch, continues to develop, and ends in marriage after less than a year. Things are going better for him now. He is paid well for his contributions and a new, more lucrative kind of work is waiting for him: screenwriting. Fellini creates the comic tram conductor character for Aldo Fabrizi and puts him into the movie Avanti c'è posta. The actor is well-suited to the popular humor of this unlucky, comic figure who goes from one misadventure to another with the easygoing jocularity of the fat man from Rome.

This is the first script on which he works together with Piero Fellini, marking the beginning of a successful collaboration which will continue for at least ten projects. It is not always easy to trace Fellini during those years: the screenwriter works as a team, and their names do not always appear in the credits. On other occasions, they get credit for extremely limited contributions. Fellini's presence in Tarn as part of Nicola Morra's team for Quarta Pagina is highly controversial, as is the African adventure for Gli Ultimi Tuareg (or I Predoni del Deserto or I Cavalloni del Deserto) where, according to him, he risks his life aboard a German plane which comes under American fire.

Apart from his marriage to Giulietta, 1943 is not an easy year for people in show business. Although Rome is occupied by the Germans, there is plenty of desire for escapism, however, and the fatalistic, courageous Romans go to the theater in the afternoons. A little clandestine filming is carried out and the反馈s of St. Paul is the location for the shooting of La Porta del Cielo, a movie which lasts as long as the German occupation. Another interesting fact about this "ghost movie" (because it was never publicly released) is that an incredible three thousand people worked on it, many of whom escape the transfer of Cinecittà from Rome to Venice.

With the arrival of the allies, actors and technicians alike come out of hiding, including Fellini who, having made use of a mix-up about his place of residence in order to evade the draft, had concealed himself in Giulietta's aunt's house. On one of his rare sorties from the house, he is caught by the Germans and loaded onto a truck in Piazza di Spagna, destined God knows where. But he saves himself with an imaginative ruse that is worthy of a storyteller.

After nine months of occupation — which made one feel
At that time, Meanwhile, he pursues his relationship with the usual tactics of an artist, develops, and ends in.

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Vicodin character for the movie Avarizia e' posto.

Popular humor of this sort, one misadventure to another.

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After nine months of occupation – "which made one feel..."
constant terror every hour of every day, even if one were to stay in bed with closed eyes and ears stuffed with cotton"—he begins writing once more for Fabrizi, creating the movies Campo de' Fiori and L'Ultima Carrozze, which are considered to be minor works even though they are not lacking a certain primitive and ingenuous kind of neo-realist which, according to Fellini, is nothing more than a way of looking around at things without prejudice.

And he is an excellent observer, motivated by great curiosity about the world as well as the fascination of group writing and in the human fauna that populates the movies (extras, groupies, the art of making ends meet as practiced by so many poor wretches hoping for a part). At Alleanza Cinematografica Italiana, in the offices of Vittorio Mussolini, director of the 'Cinema' magazine, Fellini meets Roberto Rossellini, who he will meet again in 1944.

Rome is invaded by American soldiers and Fellini, together with his friends from 'Mae' Aurelio', runs the profitable Funny Face Shop, where they draw caricatures of customers in ancient Roman costumes—an enormous success based on a brainstorm idea which he had already tried out on tourists in Rimini and in the caricatures of famous actors commissioned by the owner of the Fulgor Movie Theater.

In what he remembers as a kind of Wild West, made up of fights and idiotic behavior among drunken soldiers, Rossellini approaches him and asks him if he will act as a go-between with Fabrizi—easygoing as an actor, but stubborn and touchy in person—whom he wants for a short on the life of Don Morosini. The subject, written by Alberto Consiglio, is incomplete, but the participation of Sergio Amidei and of Fellini himself, whose job is to concentrate exclusively on Fabrizi's character, will make Rome, Open City an unequivocal masterpiece.

The relationship between the two of them continues in the co-scripting of Paisà, where Fellini also works as assistant director. "It was a very important experience for me. Rossellini created movies shot outdoors among people under the most unpredictable conditions. It was in accompanying him on the shooting of Paisà that I discovered Italy. It was from him that I got the idea of a movie as a journey, an adventure, an odyssey. For me, he was an incomparable teacher and friend. He was inimitable." The movie turned out to be a revelation for him because it makes him realize that "film making was perhaps the most congenial form of expression for me, the most suitable one considering my laziness, my ignorance, my curiosity about life, my desire to poke my nose everywhere, to be independent, free from rules and regulations, and my incapacity for making any real sacrifices. This is the most
constant terror every hour of every day, even if one were to stay in bed with closed eyes and ears stuffed with cotton— he begins writing once more for Fabrizi, creating the movies Campo de’ Fiori and L’Ultima Canzone, which are considered to be minor works even though they are not lacking a certain primitive and ingenuous kind of neorealism which, according to Fellini, is nothing more than a way of looking around at things without prejudice.

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With Rossellini ill, the young assistant tries his hand at directing the demi-john scene in the Florence episode, but this is purely by chance. In 1946, he meets Giulio Pinelli, with whom he writes, among other things, Il Delitto di Giovanni Episcopo, directed by Alberto Lattuada, with Aldo Fabrizi, now well known following his appearance in Rossellini’s masterpiece. Next comes Il miracolo, a brief episode which, together with Jean Cocteau’s La Voce Umana, adapted for Anna Magnani, Rossellini’s companion at the time, makes up L’Amore. For this subject, Fellini delves into his childhood memories and comes up with the story of a pig castrator who passed through Gambettola, where it was said that he caused a woman to give birth to the devil. In this work, where Rossellini pays homage to Magnani, Fellini makes his acting debut as a St. Joseph with peroxide black hair.

Once again with the Roman director, he collaborates in Francesco Giullare di Dio, then writes other successful scripts like Senza Pietà and Il Malvagio del Po for Lattuada, and Il Cammino della Speranza, Il Brigante di Tacca del Lupo and La Città si Defonde per Pietro Germi. He also plays a part in writing Persiane Chiuse, which is supposed to mark the directing debut of Gianni Puccini. But Puccini has a breakdown and renounces the job. The producer, Roviere, suggests that Fellini direct the movie. Fellini, in turn, suggests Luigi Comencini. However, in order to keep the shooting on schedule, he directs a scene—the police finding the body in the river Po—which so favorably impresses the producer that he entrusts The White Sheik to Fellini’s direction some years later.

By now aware that directing may be his true vocation, Fellini gives it a go with Variety Lights (1950), co-directing with the more experienced Alberto Lattuada. In truth, although he puts his name to the movie, he is essentially
involved with the script (aided by Ennio Flaiano), while also undergoing a short, intense apprenticeship in the rudiments of the technical side of film making.

Variety Lights closes the chapter on his friend-father relationship with Fabrizi, who accuses him of having drawn too heavily on his (Fabrizi's) tales of vaudeville. Fellini always denied the charge, saying that he drew upon "memories from a tour I made around Italy with a stage review". It is probable that the subject had been written at an earlier date with and for Fabrizi who, out of spite, decided to make a 'counter movie', Vita da Cani, which the producers Ponti and De Laurentiis immediately shoot. The situation is more or less analogous to the one that will lead to the painful break in the long-standing friendship with Ennio Flaiano many years later.

Variety Lights tells the story of Checco Dallamorte and the actors of the ragtag "Star Dust" theater troupe, the Neapolitan singer, the foxy Edison Willy and his desk, the aging soprano Valeria del Sesto, and the younger Melina Amour, Checco's fiancée and daughter of sor Achille, the administrator.

In a small, anonymous town, the troupe's box office takings are confiscated, and they decide to sneak out of town. While at the station, they are approached by Liliana Antonelli, a lovely young country girl and an avid reader of romantic pulp fiction, who has decided to become an actress.

The first one she approaches is Checco who, misunderstanding, courts her cruelly and is rejected. When they reach their destination, Liliana gets her own back, as she is the only one who has money for a carriage. With calculated courtesy, she invites the others to share it, thus making the troupe accept her despite themselves.

Her new number in the review entitled 'Everyone to Bologna' is enjoying great success with the naïve public, who only want to see a bit of lag. The lawyer, Lo Rosso, has set his sights on the new girl, and invites the troupe to his large house on the outskirts of town, where they are at last able to eat their fill. During the night, Checco discovers the lawyer in Liliana's bedroom and, after a violent fight, their host throws the miserable players out of his house, and they start walking to the station as the sun sets down.

In Rome, the lead comedian introduces his new discovery at the Galleria Colonna, a meeting point for artists in search of employment. Counting on her beauty, he wants to stage a new show. He plans an evening at a nightclub in order to meet with the impresario Palmisano. Liliana orders lobster and champagne, creating havoc with Checco's finances, and then disappears with the impresario, leaving Checco to foot the bill. Offended, he waits for Liliana outside the house, intending to seduce her, but she outwits him.

Intoxicated with this new infatuation, Checco ignores all advice and gets Melina to lend him the money for the new show. 'Lightening Bolts and Sp项目的, a piece involving a black trumpeter player, an American gunman and a South American guitarist who all accidentally meet, as well as a so-called Hungarian choreographer, arrogant and completely inert. But Liliana has other plans. She moves into a hotel and hangs around with Adelmo, who gets Palmisano to take her on as a soprano in a sumptuous review.

One day, at Rome's Termini station, two trains are standing on either side of a single platform. Checco sees Liliana in a coughette on a train bound for Milan. The encounter is brief, just long enough for the most fleeting greeting between one who is heading for success, and the other who must accept the truth. The latter returns to Melina in their third class compartment and, while he is thinking of his missed opportunity, another girl tries to attract his attention. A new fantasy begins for Checco.

Up to now, following his brief adolescent attempts at one thing and another, Fellini's early career has demonstrated a passion for design, for concise comic writing, for the humorous annotation of scripts - all of them indispensable premises for the complex creative activity of directing. An essential apprenticeship for the one who is born Fellini, but who must become a director. A collection of premonitory signs which must inevitably lead into the spectacular and artificial world of the cinema from whose grip Fellini will never be able to free himself.
Fellini Sponge

The White Sheik • I Vitelloni • Marriage Agency • La Strada • Il Bidone

I make movies because I do not know how to do anything else, and it seems to me that events come together in a quite spontaneous and natural way in order to bring this about [...] I would never have expected to become a director, but from the very first time I shouted 'Camera! Action! Stop!', it felt like I had always been doing it, and that this was me and my life. Besides, by making movies, I am merely following my natural inclination, which is to tell stories by way of movies, stories that are congenial to me and that I enjoy telling in an inextricable tangle of truth and invention; the desire to astonish, to confound, to be absurd, the shameless desire to please, to interest, to be a moralist, a prophet, a witness, a clown... to make people laugh and to move them.

It is clearly not possible to summarize the entire life of a man with one detail, and yet, when presented with such an important detail that is somehow absolute, one can almost succeed in doing so. The movies learned this lesson once and for all from Orson Welles, and the sled called 'Rosebud' in Citizen Kane (1941), a crucial detail to know and hold on to, even if it does not reveal the soul of the byzantine Charles Foster Kane. The words of Federico Fellini – the grotesque Kane of the Italian cinema – will be our 'guiding sled', the chosen method of travelling the entire journey we could call...
The Journey of E. Fellini – paraphrasing the legendary, never undertaken journey of G. Maldona – around and within his unique world of fantasy. In an arbitrary manner, to be sure. In an incomplete way, certainly. In a way which will lead one to venture onto terrain that has been little explored, ignored up to now, such as the subject of his fictional personal history, the sense of his ‘Roman horror’, his memory, his phantasmagoric psychoanalysis and whatever else may present itself for examination in a spectacular, ordinary, gross, sublime, pathetic, decept or non-intellectual way.

All this while being fully aware that the contradictions and images which are shown by the distorted mirror of his cinema are the basic ingredients of a personal and artistic life, without which the architecture of the Fellini galaxy would be deprived of all function and meaning. And so, if the complete picture should, in the end, slip through one’s fingers, be impossible to grasp because it is deliberately hidden in a game of hide and seek between truth and fiction, one might just as well follow the false leads, the disconnected fragments, the traps and the smoke signals. And, as there are already innumerable fascinating biographical-critical incursions, one might as well let oneself be drawn into the magical realm where that creative
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On the other hand, how can one be surprised of someone who declares that it is his destiny to make movies because he does not know how to do anything else, and that, prior to those preliminary efforts to create caricatures, invent short stories, go, then, and sculpt, his whirlwind, childish imagination shot movies in his mind after naming the four corners of his bed after the Rimini movie theaters? And even if it were not true, as many of his declamations are not, how would one challenge the imaginative content of his movie sequences, or the audience's legacy? Not in the least. Most definitely not in the least. On the contrary, to know that Fellini is one who 'tells stories' with moving pictures increases the inventive quality of the oniric-poetic language, along with the felicitous ambiguity of his inspiration, which gives rise to the deliberate portrayal of that which is not true and the mechanisms which support it.

This inherent trait - the inclination towards 'fictional cinema' - comes to light on the very first day of shooting the first movie: "The first day of work on The White Sheik went badly, really badly. We were supposed to shoot outdoors. I left Rome at dawn, and, as I said goodbye to Giulietta, I felt as if I were on my way to sit an examination. I had a Cinquecento, and I parked in front of a church where I actually went in to pray. I thought I glimpsed a catalyst in the shadows, and I succumbed to the superstitious belief that this was a bad omen. But there was no catafalque, and there wasn't anybody, living or dead, in the church. There was only me, and I couldn't remember even a single prayer. I made a few vague promises of repentance and then left, feeling more than a little uneasy'. In the Intervista sui cinema, we find an exaggerated version of events as follows: "That morning (my first morning as a director), I said goodbye to Giulietta, and left the house at dawn. I was rather agitated, and the housekeeper stood at the door and skeptically wished me luck, commenting that: 'you are going to die of heat dressed like that'. Because, in spite of the fact that it was already summer, I had dressed up like a director in a sweater, boots, leggings, tinted glasses around my neck and a whistle like a soccer referee's. Rome was deserted. I scrutinized the streets, the houses, the trees, looking for a prophetic sign of a favorable omen. And, just then, a carabinieri opens a church door as if he were doing it just for me. I give in to an ancient impulse, get out of the car and enter. I wanted to summon up a prayer, try an invocation, make myself worthy of help - you never know. Strange, given the early hour, the church was all lit up and, in the center, a catafalque with
hundreds of candles, their flames standing straight and motionless. A bald man was kneeling in front of a casket, crying into a handkerchief. I ran back to the car, making a circle of good luck signs around myself from my feet to well above my head.*

Verification that this scene did in fact take place, that events really did unfold as he relates, and that there actually was a catastrophe, would be pointless and, above all, uncharacteristic. The existence of a Cinquantenario in 1952 is clearly complete fabrication (perhaps in order to explain his terrors because of a flat tire). From his earliest days, Fellini demonstrated an extraordinary capacity for description, accompanied by a lively disregard for the boring, constrictive space-time realities which would leave any real flights of fancy dead in the water. For Fellini, past and present are interchangeable whilst navigating through the higher ranges of cinematic fantasy, and it is difficult not to say futile and meaningless, to make the distinction between reality and imagination, between memory and its arbitrary reconstruction.

We will have to get used to his approximations of events which, he says, are always true when he himself relates them, confirming the Java paradox: because he is a known liar, no one ever believes him; and we never know if he is actually telling the truth, even if he solemnly swears that he is telling nothing but the truth. This is what we will discover in his movies, and is identical to what one finds with Orson Welles, another genius of the programmatic lie who is much closer to subject than the much proclaimed affinity with Ingmar Bergman's world.

The similarities between these two superb charlatans of the screen in their mastery of cinematic forgery are almost touching in their disarming, perceptive candour. The natural habitat of the Italian is the circus and the set, while the American feels at home somewhere between the stage and the historic sense of tragedy which he reinvents with the camera. If Fellini moves nonchalantly through the melancholy distortion of a reality which has been restructured within the world of dreams, Orson Welles, some ten or fifteen years earlier, lays the foundations of contemporary cinema, which Fellini will also indirectly pay tribute to. Both have an intuitive gift for spectacular narrative, the ability to recount movies through film. Both make their debuts by creating a dilemma within language: Welles by means of radio, and Fellini by making use of the photo-story. These will become exemplary because, after *Citizen Kane* and *Farewell to a Horse*, their imitators will be countless. The cinema within the cinema and all its variations - the movie within the cinema, the cinema within the movie, movie stories within movies, the lives and dilemmas of actors, of cineastes, producers, using a variety of contexts and metaphors of sight, vision, reflection, etc., in all their infinite, obsessive forms - all this will become the fabric of stories, and stories in themselves. But what counts most is the predisposition to lying which neither of them (in the company of many others within the movies) intends to abandon, as it is an integral part of their artistic nature.

Welles could not have escaped it even had he wanted to, because the duplicity of the mask, of the theater actor's fantasy and the magical power of the director, will mark him for the rest of his life. One need only think of the lies of the labyrinthine Kane, of the revealing title *It's All True* (1942), of the Nazi-transformer Franz Kindler in *The Stranger* (1946), of the traps and deceptions in *The Lady from Shanghai* (1948), of the spurious Shakespearean confrontations of Macbeth (1948) and Othello (1952), of the mad machinations of Don Quixote (1972), of Gregory Arkadin's murky, evasive past in *Mr. Arkadin* (1955) and Hank Quinan's diabolical one in *Touch of Evil* (1958), of the tangled web of Kafka's *The Trial* (1962), of the excessive posturing in *Chimes at Midnight* (1966), of the unreal obsession of *The Immortal History* (1968) - a legend brought to life, but never realistic. And to complete the circle, *For Fake* (1975) suffices or, to return to the beginning, the radio program *The War of the Worlds* (1938).

It was precisely during this great Martian landing in the States that an alien from Rimini landed in Rome. In this symbolic city of cinema mythology and the phantasmal immortality of the Church, he soon became known for famous caricatures - that is, distorted images - early预view of the animated caricatures in *The White Sheik*, a movie about the false illusions created by the brittle lies of the world of photo-story magazines.

Fellini's forgeries (as earlier with Welles) is now and completely valid, given the absence of an original within the invention of the motion picture. Lacking that generic human, that aura of a non-technically reproduced work of art, the motion picture does not actually feel this absence as something which diminishes. In effect, it is not a loss, but has instead the same structure as an identical copy. So then, if the motion picture is born and reproduced as a tracing, a duplicate, a replica/imitation of itself, it will not be able to exhibit the fascinating call of the 'here and now', nor for that matter the impossible nostalgia for the 'one and only'. Instead, it will exhibit with reckless urgency the irresistible attraction for the plural, only acknowledging the transparencies of the camera and technical replicability as its 'parent'.

However - and it is here that the names Welles and Fellini become most synonymous - cinematic reality is based on methods of manipulating and falsifying its unstable foundations even while trying to convince us that it is
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However, and it is here that the names Welles and Fellini become most synonymous—cinematic reality is based on methods of manipulating and falsifying its unstable foundations even while trying to convince us that it is reproducing and portraying reality, that it is able to restore real portions of space/time. When the falsehoods of the Dream Machine were hidden behind stories, this created what may be called a corrupt deception, where it came completely impossible to suggest taking the machine apart in order to see what was inside. As soon as the cinema starts telling lies, it is trying to fool itself (and others) into thinking that it is portraying the truth. So, then, in learning from our two directors, it portrays the makeup and decors as if they were the real origins of innovation. It is just as well, then, to open the mystery box, and to disclose the soul of the toy in order to see (as a director) and show (the spectator) what it contains. It will surely not lose any of its fascination but, on the contrary, will perpetuate the infantile magic behind the tricks of its creation. And so it will be able to portray what the technique of corrupt deception had so carefully hidden from ferocious adherence to the remains of idealism. Their gained satisfaction from the hidden contrivances of their priest-directors, actors, producers and workers, while the spectator, an economically important player, was kept out of the ritual, collaborating only in the role of an essential outsider.

Ever since the tricks of the cinema have been revealed, 'commendable deceit' has been in evidence, systematically creating falsity while openly declaring it at the same time, discarding the narrative representation of that falsity. This is the true significance of Welles and of Fellini, our native deceivers, within the panorama of contemporary cinema: that of making a significant contribution to the expansion of linguistic potential and, at the same time, creating a mosaic in which the pieces are the many directors who, following the Forties and Fifties, have found an appropriate place within it, not forgetting the principal intelligence of our two 'masters of ceremony'. In their hands, falsity assumes a truly unprecedented dignity of metacinematographic affirmation and fascinating display. Particularly in the case of Federico Fellini, the story-telling and manufactured out of the film illusionist is summarized in the catalogue incident described above, the prologue to a long voyage he is about to undertake. The following statement,
quoted by his biographer - Tullio Kezich - provides proof of this:

"My movies are complete inventions from the first to the last scene; they are not related to the truth. The Rimini I loved, as I have repeated ad nauseam, is the one I have reconstructed in the studio, the only true one. As for the rest, if you want to tell the truth, the word 'I' is already a misguided point of view. To reveal the truth, one would have to get rid of 'I'; instead, one cannot do without it. Not even to say 'I was not there'."

Knowing then, that Fellini's 'I', as well as being the distorted mirror of a macrscopic 'Self', transferred to the celluloid figures of others, is also the vehicle for his art of escapism (is not the 'I' perhaps someone else?): and realizing that, for Fellini the producer, the visionary is the only true realist, one can confidently raise the curtain on his inner screen, once more rejoining the plot of his initiation into directing.

Amoroso Menzogna represents Fellini's professional baptism, an authentic premonition, because it is, on the one hand, the title of Michelangelo Antonioni's study of the world of photo-story magazines but, on the other, it reveals the themes and characters of The White Sheik and all other future obsessions.

Credit must go to Luigi Rovere for his fortuitous decision to take a chance on a completely inexperienced director when Antonioni abandoned the project. Rovere was the last in a long line of producers who had turned him down because they were not convinced about the success of the project, refusing to give the leading role to Alberto Sordi, as they believed the public disliked him, and that he was therefore a guaranteed box office failure.

In The White Sheik (1952), the set plays an important role right from the first scene. The narrative setting, fundamental to Fellini's art of story-telling, had been traditionally omitted. Here it has been deliberately used as an ideal way to destroy the conventional relationship between truth and fiction, between the narrating machine and the story, by immediately putting on screen that which by definition should be behind camera. Chronologically, it is true that this was not a complete innovation, but Fellini uses it in a new way, in an anti-symbolic, meta-narrative format. Fellini works in his own down-to-earth manner: he places the set and its very human inhabitants in front of the line of demarcation ideally represented by the camera. Then, he intentionally mixes and confuses various roles, plots, settings and rhythms, giving them a very free, bi-frontal 'sponge' effect.

The liberating alienation of the 'sponge shot' will be developed to extremes during the two golden decades of Fellini's production, the Sixties and Seventies, and will be the reason for his style standing out from all the rest and becoming one of the principal phenomena of this century's art.
When they arrive at the beach, Wanda, realizing that she has gone off for too long, is trying to get back to Rome when she suddenly catches sight of her magnificent White Sheik on a high swing. The two introduce themselves, and Rivali (the actor who plays the part of the White Sheik), using her fascination with his character to his advantage, begins to court her in a way which is as clumsy as it is effective.

Amidst joking, problems, rowdiness, and sudden interruptions, they prepare the set, which is disrupted by a strong wind. After a few hours, they start shooting an action-packed sequence of love and death. Wanda, her head in a spin, is made up for the part of Fatma, the sheik's faithful slave.

Meanwhile, in Rome, the force of Ivan's restaurant meal with his uncles continues, while his wife, during lunch-break on the beach, goes off in a boat with Rivali, who is determined to bring his conquest to fruition. They return to shore only after a small mishap, amidst the shouts of the furious director and the anger of the wife of this coarse seducer, who is really only an unemployed butcher.

Ivan becomes more and more distressed. He goes to see Don Giovanni with his uncles and, swayed by the opera's theme, decides to go to the police. His erratic and somewhat bizarre behavior causes the police not to take him seriously and Ivan, afraid that his body has landed himself in trouble, runs out of the police station and wanders around the city.

Gigliola Maschi playing the role of Cabiria, an unlikely prostitute, a character first introduced by Fellini in The White Sheik.
Rival's wife makes a huge scene, and Wanda goes off into the pine woods, and manages to get a lift back to town. Once she gets to the hotel, however, she is afraid to go in. Meanwhile, Ivan meets two prostitutes, Silvana and Cabiria, in whom he confides his woes. He decides to spend the night with Silvana. In the meantime, Wanda, in order to make amends for her dishonorable actions, decides to drown herself in the river, but is prevented from doing so because it is too shallow.

The next morning, returning to the hotel, Ivan learns that his wife is in hospital. Determined to ignore his doubts, he rushes over to fetch her, as they have a rendezvous arranged with Ivan's relatives in St. Peter's Square. Having finely regained their roles of respectability, the couple hurry off for the papal audience.

This bridge between the imaginary and the real is the movie's opening motif. That childhood fantasizing is the point of suspension between real life and the future of the adult couple. The honeymoon in Rome is the ritual pretext for the start of the whole story in which the two, for different reasons, are caught up in events bigger than themselves, in the face of which Ivan's middle class mind means nothing, incapable as it is of comprehending the imaginative desires of the woman he thinks is his fragile and submissive little wife, an unremarkable woman and provincial dreamer, but who is determined to betray her husband/father for an apparently ingenue motive which is, in reality, more subtle: to lose herself fabulously in the arms of an exotic lover.

The main collaborators, Fellini, Tullio Pinelli and Ennio Guarnieri, emphasize the contradiction between appearance and real existence by placing the protagonists in a kind of hyper-realistic limbo between duty and desire, between real things and people, and between a different one from normal, everyday lives. This will make their existence (in the movie) very hard for both. Ivan has to defend his honor as a Southern male, and particularly his future 'career' as a civil servant, if his uncle's connections at the Vatican work. At the same time, he must preserve the social image of his wife who, by running off, has disrupted his carefully made plans and created turmoil with regard to the extremely punctual relatives, in particular the famous De Pisis cousins. To miss their dinner party could be interpreted not only as a failure of his organizational abilities, but also as an affront almost worse than missing the papal audience. Their sharp-sounding name magnifies the importance of a family most definitely of long-standing in the town, and thus made legendary by their status, which is reflected in that long 'De Pisis'.

Ivan's experiences with social commitments, his unfortunate visit to the police station, the gloomy performance of Don Giovanni, and his rendezvous with Silvana (Cabiria's friend — a prelude to the heroine portrayed in The Nights of Cabiria, played by Giulietta Masina) are contrasted with the misadventure of the 'Passionate Doll', allowing the director to smirk affectionately, and inciting the genuine anguish of the characters.

This realism will have a particular impetus in I Vitelloni and La Strada, and will cause inevitable comparisons with neo-realism, the great post-war theme for which Italian movies are renowned, esteemed and imitated throughout the world. And when one speaks of neo-realism with regard to Fellini, it is preferable, rather than mentioning De Sica, Zavattini or Visconti, to consider the way he wrote for the screen, and his relationship with Roberto Rossellini, of whom he is an admirer for three distinct reasons: for being his friend, for working with him as script writer and actor, and for giving Fellini a passion for cinema — and particularly for cinema reality, entirely autonomous, 'humanistic', non-ideological and apolitical.

"It seems to me that I learned from Rossellini [...] the possibility of keeping my balance in the most adverse conditions of conflict and, at the same time, the natural ability to turn those adversities and conflicts to my favor. I transform them into feelings, into emotional values, into a point of view. This is what Rossellini did: he lived the life of a movie, as a marvellous adventure to be experienced and simultaneously recounted. His self-abandonment to reality, always attentive, lucid, conveys the way he automatically placed himself in an impalpable and unmistakable position between the indifference of detachment and the clumsiness of union, allowed him to capture and fix reality in all its dimensions, to look at things from the outside and the inside at the same time, to photograph the air surrounding things, to reveal what life contains that surpasses understanding, that is arcane, magical. Is all of this not neo-realism?"

The magic of life attracts the young Fellini, together with everything that moves comically on the seaside set. What else is it that fascinates the fragile Wanda when she comes into contact with the stuff that her dreams are made of, if not an enchantment misguiding as a photo-story? She experiences it with the same unawareness as Ivan listening to Mozart's Don Giovanni. And while Wanda "would like to, but would not like to" accept the advances of her awkward suitor, she falls into a magical atmosphere when confronted with a very real world, of which she had only previously dreamed — an incongruous combination, which the director reveals as affectionate images of people in costume, speaking Roman dialect, who shout, wholeheartedly laugh, engage in repartee, eat. In short, they live and work as on any other crumby set.

With one difference: in The White Sheik Fellini instinctively
and Wanda goes off into the pine back to town. Once she gets to the town, meanwhile, Ivan meets two men toward whom he confesses his love: his son. In the meantime, Wanda, in her actions, decides to drown from doing so because it is too he hotel, Ivan learns that his wife is in love, he rushes away to fetch Wanda with Ivan's relatives in St. ated their roles of responsibility for the next.

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With one difference: In The White Sheik Fellini instinctively distances himself from extra-Rossellini neo-realism, because "the neo-realist never laughs" — and serious analysis would stifle his movie — whereas he is not yet ready for the cinema-set of Eight and a Half. In order to create his esthetic of crisis, he will first have to experiment with the destruction / recreation of the narrative, alternating the separate stories of the couple, often for analogy and sometimes for contrast. Furthermore, he adds to the atmosphere on element that will be frequently present from now on in his director's bag of tricks, an element ostensibly removed from the visual options that movies impose: the wind.

To ride with the wind from one event to another allows one to carry the echo of the dream when it touches reality. The background to the opening titles, the deserted beach at sunset, shows the tent blown away by the wind in the foreground and, below, a kind of turret with the camera mounted on a tripod, while in the distance there is the White Sheik on a horse to complete the picture, and the wind that whistles as we hear the theme tune by Nino Rota — musical scores that form a single entity with Fellini's images. And the wind, this element that one cannot see and cannot photograph (but which can contribute to the creation of the story by disarticulating it), ensures that Rossellini's wager is achieved because, in the words of the St. John's Gospel, and as will be remembered at Fellini's funeral: "the wind blows wherever it pleases; we hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from nor where it is going.

The director instinctively understands the cinematic quality of the wind, at one and the same time a threshold leading to a fantastic universe and an invisible special effect, the harbinger of the irrational and the unknowable, of a world of surprises, of subconscious invention and the undeniable texture of dreams. Fellini learns to film the wind in order to make something impalpable visible and, by showing the invisible — that is, what for him is not yet visible and may, in fact, never entirely become so — he will create his movies in a pure state, in his mind, using the imagination.

For the little provincial lady, the mischievous wind that reveals her shiek on a swing may be sufficient. An irksome wind disrupts the 'posing' on the beach, or another sudden gust thwarts Fernando Rivoli's conquest. The wind, once again, leaves the mind in a whirl, but creates a strong impression of action by the simplest of production techniques, an impression of movement, when one captures a snapshot of a false action only just hinted at by the actors' caricatured posture.

With a motley crew of workers, extras, curiosity seekers,
animals, odalisques and characters such as Feiga and Oscar, the cruel Bedouin, the atmosphere surrounding the set seems to move as lightly as a camera: how can one fail to remember Rossellini and his ability to "photograph the air surrounding things"? The overpowering wind of adventure and Wanda's unconscious desire to actually participate in the events she so avidly reads about alone in her little room - while she is made up as Fata Morgana, we imagine Ivan intent on sniffing around the drawers of their dining room - bring about a 'blessed forgetfulness' that causes her to utter the excruciating phrase "Oh, I am not in the least calm" with regard to an unstable situation about which Wanda ought to feel very agitated. But Fellini's wind, which will later set in motion the ghosts of memory and the dreams of time-paused phantoms, prevent the bayadere, for the moment, from continuing to live irrationally. She will return to her senses outside the hotel.

Humanized grotesqueness reaches its peak in her attempts to drown herself in a shallow stretch of water, whilst Ivan is spending the night with a prostitute. At the apex of their crises, the spouses each feel 'quitting' which, for Wanda, is a dreamy but stupidly honest folly (she reveals the nonsense about a magic filter to Rivoli's wife, and this will steer the story towards its conclusion), while, for Ivan, who always has the initiative, it represents self-absolute for his 'little adventure', his farewell to celibacy.

In the end, it is a grotesque of physical features bathed in dazzling light, of close-ups of extras resembling ink stains, the faces of waiters, doormen, workers and all the other species of humanity which populate Fellini's movies, faces on which one can perceive the special attention he gives them, his sharp sense of the photogenic, his extraordinary ability to hit on the stories behind these faces and make them emerge, to transform them into phrases, anecdotes, stories.

It is a grotesque which is dissolved by the couple's hurried confession under the sanctification of St. Peter's cupola, and during the race to the papal audience: "Ivan, I didn't do anything bad, you know. Really, it was doomed. I am pure and innocent." "So am I, you know". Not, however, before Wanda has told her husband, who is emotional and willing to be understanding, that public properties and private tears are under control: "Ivan, you are my White Sheik". With which one realizes that, from the first night of their
acters such as Felgo and atmosphere surrounding the camera: how can one fail to "photograph the overwhelming wind of subconscious desire to actually vividly read about alone in bed up as Fattma, we enjoy gazing around the drawers of their latest forgetfulness" that phrase "Oh, I am not in the unstable situation about agitated. But Fellini's wind, the ghosts of memory and the prevented the Buyaider, for to live irrationally. She will host aches its peak in her shallow stretch of water, hit with a prostitute. At the each feel 'guilt' which, for they honest folly (she reveals the nonsense about a magic filter to Rivoli's wife, and this will steer the story towards its conclusion), while, for Ivan, who always has the initiative, it represents self-absolution for his 'little adventures', his farewell to celibacy. In the end, it is a grotesque of physical features bathed in dazzling light, of close-ups of extras resembling ink stains, the faces of waiters, doormen, workers and all the other species of humanity which populate Fellini's movies, faces on which one can perceive the special attention he gives them. His sharp sense of the photogenic, his extraordinary ability to hit on the stories behind these faces and make them emerge, to transform them into phrases, anecdotes, stories.

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Variety Lights, with its shabby theatrical company, and The White Sheik, with its ramshackle photo-story set, as well as being part of the minor show business world, both exhibit in reverse the attitudes and vices of a vast provincial Italy, where the city artists go off to the country, and the country couple come to the capital. A round trip that allows Fellini to goad-humorlessly mock that world not far removed from his own origins.

Fellini (1955), on the other hand, takes the provinces by the scruff of the neck and, for the first time, creates something clearly autobiographical from it, and thus clearly exposed to falsification because it is absorbed by the sponge of artistic invention and distortion.

As has been mentioned, the personal, private aspects of the director, the element that reflects on his past, is to be understood as self-reference, when put into cinematic form, only with great caution, especially as critical analysis has shed light upon what could be called, without any irony at all, 'participatory detachment', the languid disenchantment of time revisited. One could easily fall into the trap of attributing direct autobiographical and chronological intentions to Fellini, or feelings and fears of long ago, but traceable in episodes deliberately dispersed, confused and falsified, the fruit of the development of the imagination and observation of reality.

At most, Fellini's form, the most successful of the frescos of that generation. It is almost as if the direction in which his inspiration progresses were inversely proportional to the passing of time. In terms of Fellini, the 'first' comes after the movies interpreted by his alter ego. Marcello Rubini's agitation and dissatisfaction (La Dolce Vita), and the first bursting within film director Guido Anselmi (Eight and a Half) come forth only after the door of the imagination is actualized once again – could Fellini really deny that there
are no traces of himself in Wanda, the photo-story addict — and thus after the memories of the places and people of his sleepy Rimini years in I Vitelloni.

To get to Rome, he must leave Rimini. To descend the dream slide that is City of Women, he must first climb up the steps of his obsessive origins, and pace the length and breadth of the premises of his movie world, from La Strada to Satyricon, from Il Bidone to Orchestra Rehearsal, from The Nights of Cabiria to Intervista to The Voice of the Moon. In saying that in order to arrive, one must depart; to slide down, one must first have climbed up, is not just to make witty remarks like the impish ‘Snopas’ (the nickname exchanged by Fellini and Mastroianni, and also a character in City of Women. Instead, it brings less obvious evidence into focus, the preliminary movements of an impending journey, prior to the official arrival in Rome.

Thus, before arriving, or, having arrived fourteen years earlier, Fellini now decides to tell how and why he left Rimini, to recount what happened beforehand through the portrayal of the false life of the ‘vitelloni’ (shirkers) of his home town. “I was never a ‘vitellone’, and I didn’t even know that the ones I saw were shirkers. I regarded them with admiration: one because he was skillful with a billiard cue, another because he wore beautiful scarves, and yet another because women liked him. But the whole time I lived in Rimini, I never mixed with them. They would not even have deigned to greet me, they wouldn’t.”

The benefit of the doubt that we grant the magnificent liar cannot prevent us from pausing a moment to consider that ‘they wouldn’t’ as if, after such a long time, he could still maintain his interest in lives so different from his, and the almost jealous pain of an ironic and affectionate eye cast over people who had already become personages.

‘Vitelloni’ are louts who, for as long as they can get away with it, avoid any sort of commitment to work or relationships; non-enrolled students who hang around the coffee bar or roam around in groups without being completely ostracized from society like Pasolini’s Ragazzi di Vita or Lina Wertmüller’s I Basilischi. The ‘vitelloni’ are the archetype national average, boys who will move to the city when they grow up, fill government offices and the streets of the Italian comedy, carrying with them all the stereotype qualities of their origins.

The nickname ‘vitelloni’, together with all the other pet names, diminutives and augmentatives that Fellini affectionately invents throughout his life, are analogical, tell their own stories and are symptomatic examples of his contradictions, ranging from the serious to the grotesque, exaggeration and subtle understatement. In short, they range from the quest for poetry to the fear of all-too-human perceptions, from conspiratorial affection to little artistic
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lessons, polite but scathing. Just consider ‘Marcellina’ (little Marcello Mastroianni) and ‘Anitona’ (Big Anita Ekberg) — all the ‘...ino’ and ‘...ona’ added to the names of his troupe, and an incredible number of other inventions, until we get to the world famous ‘Papparazzo’. It is a language entirely of his own, invented in order to ensure an exclusive complicity, but also a very precise distinction between the roles played out in his movies and his real life, which should never be forgotten; mix them together, perhaps, but always with great clarity.

The ‘...ino’ part of Italy of the Fifties and, just like those in America, are sons of his land, Romagna: “A mixture of marine adventure and Catholic church. A land with this misty, towering mountain of San Marino. A strange, arrogant and blasphemous psychology where superstition mixes with a challenging attitude toward God. Humorous, and hence defenseless people, but with a sense of mockery and a taste for swaggering. One man says: I can eat eight meters of sausage, three chickens and a candle. A candle as well. Circus stuff. Then he dies it. Immediately afterwards, they take him away on a motorcycle. He has gone puce, and the whites of his eyes are showing. And everyone has a good laugh over this atrocious event, death from gluttony [...].” And yet, there are also infinitely sweet rhythms in this land, that come perhaps from the sea.” A native and symbolic sea, very little loved, hostile in certain aspects, on which Fellini works progressive transformations to the point of denying it as a natural liquid element, and falsifying and circumscribing it so as to control it and thus be able to relate it.

Rimini 1953. A society evening on the terrace of the Kursaal for the Miss Mermaid beauty competition is ruined by a sudden rainstorm, and the discovery that the winner, Sandra, is pregnant. The culprit is Fausto, the head and spiritual leader of a group of friends, among whom are the Roman Alberto, the intellectual Leopoldo, the young Moraldo and the robust Riccardino. Called to account, Fausto tries to flee, and only reluctantly allows himself to be persuaded to start a family by marrying Sandra and going to live with his in-laws after a honeymoon in Rome.

The friends continue to spend their evenings in the coffee bar playing billiards, joking around and recounting their unattainable dreams as they roam the deserted streets before going back to their homes. Alberto lives with his anxious mother who waits up for him every night, and his sister Olga, the family breadwinner. Riccardo lives with his parents and checks every evening how much weight he has gained, while Leopoldo, having eaten the dinner his aunts have prepared for him, spends the night writing his new play and counting the maid from the house across the way. Only Moraldo does not return...
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Life continues in its lazy way when, one Sunday, the group goes to look at the winter sea. Alberto discovers that his sister is still in a relationship with a married man. Fausto and Sandrina, who have returned from their honeymoon with all the latest gossip from Rome, begin a turbulent married life. Fausto is now working as a clerk in the respectable haberdashery owned by Michele and his wife, Giulia. Obstetrician preoccupied about assuming responsibility, bored with his job and family life, he ends up picking up a woman he does not know and leaving his wife in the movie theater.

Carnival time comes along with its jovial annual fancy dress party. Moraldo accompanies Alberto home at dawn, drunk and dressed up like a woman, just in time to run into Olga, who has decided to escape with her lover.

During the festivities, Fausto makes a pass at his boss's wife, and begins to flirt with her outrageously the following day, thus getting himself fired. He decides to seek revenge and pretending that he is the victim of a tyrannical boss, he gets Moraldo to help him steal a carved wooden angel which he says is just about worth half of what he is owed as severance pay. The two of them, together with the idiotic Giudizio, try in vain to sell it to various religious institutions and get caught. Sandro is frantic because of her husband's infidelity, but allows himself to be reconciled once more, because their child, Moraldino, has just been born.

The evenings become more balmy, Moraldo continues to meet the little railway worker, and spends an evening with his friends at the theater, where Leopoldo is going to meet the great actor, Sergio Natali, who has been reading his last play.

After the show, the "Veliotta" are enjoying themselves in a restaurant with the dancers, while the intellectual reads his play to Natali who, just to make him smile, and possibly with other, more ambiguous motives, invites him out to the dark, wind swept beach. Fausto is unfriendly to his wife once again with the southerner. This time, however, Sandra is not inclined to forgive him, and she runs away to her father-in-law's house. He is a simple working man and a widower, who lives alone with his little daughter in a dignified manner.

Desperate, Fausto and his friends look for her everywhere. On returning to town in the car, they encounter some road workers, where Alberto affords and taunts, making the others laugh. Suddenly, the car runs out of gas and stops, and the road workers come after them, determined to wreak revenge. Fausto finally finds Sandra at his father's house, where he is given a sound lesson with blows from his father's belt.

The next day, at dawn, Moraldo gets on a train without telling anyone, possibly without even having an exact destination in mind. Little Guido sees him and, after a brief goodbye, he walks off, balancing himself along the railway track.

In this movie, too, the wind has a fundamental, evocative role. Gusts of wind accompany the changes of scene, and bring with them the spirit of unseen places beyond the horizon; sudden breezes emphasize the lazy awareness that those regions of infancy are not going to be abandoned.
and cares the ears of the characters, making them dream of, and awaken to, unforeseen events. From the very start, the ordinary pleasures of the party are interrupted by a summer storm brought on by a change of weather that, just in a few shots, sets the action, and Fausto’s anxiety, into motion. Like the circus director he always dreamed of being, Fellini precipitates a static action, augments the rhythm of the characters’ movements, alternates up and back in the shots, in the music, in the composition of the gestures, the dialog, and the acceleration of the editing. It is a way of conveying confusion and uncertainty, creating passages and impressions of interlinking fade-outs, which are often present within his vision of the real and the cinematic imaginary. These circus sequences, reproducing the spectacular dilation of the simultaneous presence of two apparently opposing contexts, aim to dislocate and surprise. In the realism of the opening shots of I Vitelloni, one already recognizes, for example, the finale of The Nights of Cabiria, the aristocrats’ party in La Dolce Vita, and the memorable line dance at the end of Eight and a Half.

Equally involved is the famous shot of the friends standing before a winter sea agitated by a cold breeze, lazily hinting at the suggestion of the summer months lurking beyond the horizon, which will change the face of that sleepy Rimini. Riccardo keeps his hand on his hat, Leopoldo’s bohemian scarf blows in the wind, and the motionless profiles, stark against the gray of the lowering sky and the sucking sound of the surf, just barely work as a counterpoint to Riccardo’s typical ‘viletone’ comment: “If someone came along and offered you 10,000 lire, would you go in for a dip? I would!” Meanwhile, they continue walking along apathetically until Alberto’s chance meeting with his sister.

Once again, the metaphysical wind blows change into the carnival sequences, along with the music, costumes, and the characters, all captured in moments of ephemeral quiet, which will soon leave a bitter taste in the mouth of those who do not know how to restrict the amount of enjoyment – such as Fausto who, dazzled by Giulio’s unusual vivacity, deludes himself into thinking that he can exploit the spirit of mirth of Mardi Gras in order to make a new conquest, without understanding that, on Ash Wednesday, there is to be no more joking around in the decent housekeeping.

And, in fact, Giulio’s husband, Michele, does not joke around. Before firing Fausto, he gives him a lesson about contented conjugal love that Fausto will hardly be able to share with Sandra, considering the squalls of betrayal he
slyly commits (one example will suffice: the case of the unknown woman in the movie theater, an episode connected to the emotional wind of Sandra's fear as she waits for her husband out in the cold until the end of the movie).

Masks and disguises, as in The White Sheik, anticipate a change of direction in behavior: Leopoldo courts the maid, but goes off with another girl; Fausto is ashamed of his wife because she eats a sandwich; Alberto, drunk as a lord, in fancy dress, carrying an enormous papier-mâché head, is caused to reflect on his life by the repulsive greeting of the carnival puppets, and also the lack of a woman. Compelled by Moraldo and the morning air, he goes to the real women in his life. The exhortation of the impenitent bachelor— "we must get married"— is obliterated by the storm that is about to break over his head when Olga goes off with her lover. The drunkenness and the careless gaiety of the festivities give way to inherent melancholy and the first ever verbal acceptance of responsibility when he tearfully tells his mother: "I'll stay with you, I won't go away. But you'll see that she'll come back. And if she doesn't, better still! What does she think? For the lousy pittance she provided us... let her go, let her go away! I'll find a job... I'll find..." And the mother, with hope even in her pain: "Really Alberto? Have you found something?" He: "No...?" And so, the dramatic, bitterly ironic lines are

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resolved in just a few words, almost an anticipation of the mockery against the "Workers!"
Events and people mature in unforeseeable ways, in which solitude plays various roles. Fausto is terrified of it, whereas Moraldo reacts by deciding to leave so that, in solitude, he can find the courage to make the big leap. Moraldo in Città (Moraldo in the City) will be the title of this subject, written in 1954 with Pianaro and Pinelli. And, even if it was never shot, it became the indirect inspiration for La Dolce Vita. Nocturnal meanderings, in the style of Cesare Pavesse, through deserted streets or to the railway station, at a time when everyone else is already back home and there is nothing to do other than the nothing they have already been doing, conclude with the friendly soughing of the little railway worker, who starts his job when Moraldo goes to bed.

The accumulation of memories etched in his mind, and the premonitory whistle of the unseen train impel this hero, in some positive way, to leave his boring adolescence behind. "Where are you going?" the railway kid asks him. "How come? Didn't you like it here?" And Moraldo/Fellini replies: "I don't know. I'm leaving. I don't know. I have to go. I'm going away".

The definitive question about his departure should not be played down, as Fellini himself has always tended to do, nor over-generalized: "I don't seem to have anything to say. I was born in Rimini. I come to Rome, I got married. I got into Cinecittà. Nor should it be mythicized in relation to the countless cinematic 'departures': "Making a movie is like going on a trip, but what interests me about travel is the departure, not the arrival. My dream is to take a trip without knowing where to go, maybe even without arriving anywhere, but it is difficult to convince banks and producers of this idea". The departure, an answer to loneliness and monotony, is the impetus for getting us on the move, setting things in motion, for discovering and recognizing something we have carried inside ourselves for a long time and that, even including the waiting, manages to overcome it.

From one season to the next — as in Amarcord — one expects, who knows what, perhaps nothing in particular, one lives, one sees oneself living in an intrepid, but squalid, adventure, in the vindictive theft of a sculpture, in an actor's wind-swept homosexual/theatrical joke, or in the rebellious lesson of Sandra and the working class father. But also in the piercing work of a director counteracting the risk of making an entirely male friendship too sentimental, as when Alberto, more concerned about eating than about Sandra's disappearance, makes light of it, saying: "Listen, Fausto, Sandra is at home. Sandra is at home, I'll bet you anything she has come back", and Fausto (impatiently), ready to go looking for her on his bicycle, says: "Let me go, come on", Alberto: "Now you are letting yourself get scared. You should have thought of it sooner". And here, as in Olga's departure, comes the strong part. Fausto (pushing Alberto roughly aside and starting to peddle): "Come on, let me go, idiot! Worry about your sister who never came back". A dialog displaying realistic cynicism about existence, which Fellini follows up with the farm woman's invitation to taste a bacon omelet.

"They always talked about going away, but only one of them, one morning, without saying anything to anybody, actually left." And so, for the time being, the parable of the 'vitelloni' comes to an end: the off-screen voice that had marked the narrative sections, functioning as the watershed between representation and reality, is, like the wind, the invisible sixth 'vitellone' — possibly the director himself. It departs with Moraldo, leaving the other four to stay put and to grow old in a deep sleep of expectation and remorse, of time lost and never regained, except as figures in the little world of Amarcord.

In the meantime, Fellini's sponge has given back a part of his consuming vital juices, and the director has, in truth, put his film world into motion: fantastic images and
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In the meantime, Fellini's sponge has given back a part of his consuming vital juices, and the director has, in truth, put his film world into motion: fantastic images and intuitions, prophetic openings based on a minimal and eccentric reality, decisively non-political in the banal, traditional sense. An exercise in 'clairvoyance of the ordinary', the product of an acute eye focused on the present and the future in order to disappoint all those who want, now and forever, a Fellini outside of society and its collective and cultural implications.

Fellini enters into society, in his own way of course, with the Marriage Agency episode of the movie Love in the City (1953). After I Vitelloni, which had won the Leone d'Argento prize at the Venice Film Festival, he is secure in the knowledge that his career, endangered by the failure (from the producers' point of view) of his first two movies, has now been safeguarded.

Cesare Zavattini, the man who discovered the film-quest and the device of 'spying', asks him to shoot this episode in "the most journalistic way possible," in order to increase the realism of dramatic documentaries that were, in actuality, complete inventions. "Because Zavattini gave me this opportunity, I decided to shoot a short in the most neo-realistic way possible, with a story that could in no way be real, not even neo-real. I asked myself: 'What would James Whale or Tod Browning do if they had to shoot Frankenstein or Dracula in a neo-realistic style?' And thus Marriage Agency was created."

To recount "the incredible in a straightforward way" was also a real and exciting challenge for Tullio Pinelli, and the two authors, probably with a great deal of fun, sat down to write the story of a girl so keen to get married that she even accepts a werewolf.

A journalist, in order to get a story, goes to a matrimonial agency in the working class district of town and, concealing his true identity, asks the proprietor to find a wife for his friend, who suffers from lycanthropy. The woman, not at all dumbfounded by this, suggests Rossana who, in order to escape from a large, poverty-stricken family, accepts all things considered, a werewolf might give her less trouble than her terrible relatives.

The neo-realistic intentions found at the start of the movie, and entrusted to the popular actor, Antonio Cifariello, soon mutate during this short story, and reveal Marriage Agency to be not in the least neo-realistic, but simply a true horror story. Ironically, the critics accepted it as neo-realism — but one does not know to what extent — thus allowing Fellini a perversity revenge for the misunderstood realism of his previous movies. Apart from the already dated misunderstanding between modern gothic and neo-realism, there remains the fact that even this little diversion contains hints of things that the director will later transfer to the character of Gelsomina. In fact, Rossana...
can adapt to anything, even to a werewolf, because she is
someone who “gets bored of people”. And, with this, the
director proves that his sponge has not dried out at all, but
is ready to piece together the fragments of another story.

“Why am I shooting this movie, this one rather than
another? I don’t want to know the reason why. Reasons are
obscure, inextricable, confused. The only reason that one
can honestly cite is that I have signed a contract to make it,
have received an advance, and so, since I don’t want to give
the money back, I am obliged to make the movie. And I am
trying to make it in the way that I believe the movie wants
to be made.”

The declarations in inverted commas, taken from
statements made in Faire un Film, a true mine of
contradictory information, inadvertently provide an
essential clue for any study of Fellini’s cinema. A lead that
is relevant to his destiny because, as Fulvio Lucchini writes,
“La Strada is the project in which Federico Fellini’s
cinematic vocation emerges, his ‘kinematacchische Sendung’—
the visual-poetic predestination that is etched into his very
existence.

Zampanto, a gypsy street entertainer, arrives at Gelsomina’s house
in order to take her on as his assistant in place of her sister
Rosa, who died. Gelsomina is a young girl who lives in poverty with
her mother and four younger sisters.

As they travel along in his caravan, Gelsomina watches his
strongman act in amazement as he breaks an iron bar in half with
his bare chest. Then, under duress, she gradually begins to learn the skill
for his miserable show by heart, and to put up with sleeping in the
back of the wagon with this brawny, rude man without making a fuss.

Made up as a clown, funny little Gelsomina begins to practise,
playing a drum and reciting farcical, disjointed pieces about sunny
squares in isolated villages. She imitates his every little gesture, keen to
learn everything. When Zampanto goes off with a prostitute and leaves
her all alone after a hearty meal at a trattoria, Gelsomina is bitterly
dispersed, and sits on the pavement and sadly waits for him all
eight long. She finally finds him in a drunken sleep on the outskirts of
the village. While she patiently waits for him to wake up, she discovers
the possibilities within the surrounding terrain, and plants some
tomatoes, in an unspoken desire to settle down somewhere.

Her destiny, however, is a vagabond life, wandering the world with
an ill-tempered, taciturn master, which leads them into discourse with
guests at a rural wedding banquet organized by a trusting widow.

While Zampanto goes off with her under the pretext of fetching the
clothes belonging to her deceased first husband, the women take
Gelsomina to the bedroom of Lella Oswald, who is ill and bedridden,
so that she can make him laugh with some funny faces.

An insatiable, habitual creature who lives only for the moment,
Zampanto does not understand how the poetic soul of his assistant can
be moved to emotion by a short burst of song heard from an open
window. Hunt by such an unfeeling response, she decides to leave. She
puts on her threadbare cape and canvas shoes, and leaves the stable

where they are bedded down to follow the lure of three ‘magic pipes’
heading for the fair in the next town.

After fulfilling the promise, Gelsomina assists Matto (‘the
Fool’), a strange tightrope walker who performs forty feet up in the air,
with his acrobatic act in the midst of a large crowd who are all
looking up at him. After the entertainment is over, she finds herself
alone once again. Zampanto finds her at two o’clock in the morning
and, feeling sorry, takes her back to their caravan.

And so to the Circo delle donne of Rome where
Zampanto can perform his act. Here, Gelsomina sees Matto once
again, playing his favorite tune on his fiddle. The letter, for some
unknown reason, takes fun at Zampanto once he is dressed again,
who, completely immersed to singing and interruptions, chases him
among the caravans. But the mischievous agent manages to
make himself scarce.

The vendetta continues the following day when Zampanto catches
him trying out a new act with Gelsomina. Zampanto objects to this,
and Matto throws a bucket of water over his head. The gypsy runs
after him with a knife to kill him. Rescued by the police, the acrobat
convinces Gelsomina and reveals that he no longer wants to wander
around after the circus. He takes her in his van back to the barracks,
where Zampanto is released the following morning.

The two of them resume their wandering. They offer a lift to a nun
returning to the convent, and are offered a bed for the night. In the
middle of the night, the strongman steals some former offerings of
gold, after Gelsomina refuses to do so.
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After following the procession, Gelsomina assists il Matto (‘the Fool’), a strange tightrope walker who performs forty feet up in the air, with his acrobatic act, in the midst of a large crowd who are all looking up at him. After the entertainment is over, she finds herself alone once again. Zampanò finds her at two a.m. in the morning, and, with hefty slaps, takes her back to their caravan.

And so to the Circo del Sole, the circus on the outskirts of Rome, where Zampanò can perform his act. Here, Gelsomina sees Il Matto once again, playing his favorite tune on his fiddles. The latter, for some unknown reason, pokes fun at Zampanò once he is dressed again, who, completely impervious to jeering and interruptions, chases him away the carnivales. But the mischievous acrobat manages to make himself scarce.

The vendetta continues the following day when Zampanò catches him trying out a new act with Gelsomina. Zampanò objects to this, and Il Matto throws a bucket of water over his head. The gypsy runs after him with a knife to kill him. Rescued by the police, the acrobat confides in Gelsomina and reveals that he no longer wants to wander around after the circus. He takes her in his van back to the barracks, where Zampanò is released the following morning.

The two of them resume their wandering. They offer a lift to a runaway returning to the convent, and are offered a bed for the night. In the middle of the night, the strongman steals some farmer offerings of gold, after Gelsomina refuses to do so.
In the morning, the girl cries as she takes leave of the sisters with whom they are staying, but sets off again, believing that there is no one else who could possibly put up with Zamparò, as Ill Matta so correctly perceived when he confided in her.

An accidental meeting with the acrobat, who had pulled over because of a flat tire, turns into tragedy as Zamparò lays into him with powerful fists. He punches him in the head and Ill Matta, after a short fit, dies. As Gelosmina watches on in terror, Zamparò hides the body and tries to make it look like an accident by trashing the acrobat's vehicle.

Nobody witnessed this incident, but Gelosmina, still in shock, feels that she is to blame. During the cold winter months, she becomes delirious, falls ill and seems to lose all reason, not wanting her master to sleep anywhere near her in the wagen. After ten days or so, on a sunny morning, Gelosmina goes out into the snow, apparently better, but still thinking that Ill Matta is hurt... then she lays down on a blanket and goes to sleep. Zamparò doesn't know what to do for the best. He covers her up and quietly departs, leaving her some money and her beloved trumpet.

Some time passes, at least four or five years. It is summertime, and Zamparò has a new assistant, and is performing in a small circus near the coast. He goes for a short walk before the show and, whilst eating an ice cream, he hears a female voice singing Gelosmina's song. When questioned, the girl confirms that Gelosmina was there: a stranger who played the trumpet, sat out in the sun, and just didn't wake up one morning.

Shaken, Zamparò goes through his act like a zombie. That evening, he gets drunk and is thrown out of the tavern. He goes to the beach, and walks into the sea. He washes his face, goes back to the shoreline and appears to be dozed. He looks up at the sky and, for the first time, he bursts into sobs as he stands there alone.

"At the beginning of La Strada, I only had a muddled perception of the movie, a sustained note that filled me with an undefined melancholy, a diffused sense of guilt like a shadow, vague and consuming, made up of memories and portents. This feeling insistently suggested a journey taken by two creatures who are fatally united without knowing why."

The feelings that move Fellini come from the desire of the two characters to establish a relationship where there is real communication, a true problem of modern society. Fellini and Pinelli had already talked about making a movie about ramblers, and Pinelli had begun to write a piece while Fellini was still completing The White Sheik. They present it in vain to Luigi Rovere who, too devastated by the previous disaster, passes it from person to person in the so-called "dance of the producers", skeptical about the choice of Masina as the leading role. The piece ends up on the desk of Lorenzo Poggiaro, who provides financial backing only in exchange for more scripts (one of which is Moraldo in Città, the other I Vitelloni, the only one to be actually filmed). It is a never-ending story, the first of so many of Fellini's never-ending stories involving producers, beginning in 1951 and concluding in 1953 (the movie will be released in 1954), because Fellini holds fast to his conviction that this movie has to be made with these particular actors and, more specifically, with that particular beginning and that melancholy ending. Two years go by since its initial conception, a period of maturation that, together with Florindo's valuable contribution, was of great benefit to the final result. An excellent example of the exhausting refinements and modifications, the passing of the work from person to person that invariably happens with all his projects, and which he seems determined to mention during interviews and statements.

With so exhaustive a background contributing to the project, the incommensurable sum of thoughts and feelings coalesces first into a series of drawings for Gelosmina — his old habit of drawing pictures of the characters before going on to the written text. The synthesizing of the character of Gelosmina is connected to an appreciation of the expressive medium and accuracy of the direction, attained from editing The White Sheik. The director probably had to go
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Perhaps it is being too rhetorical to recall that Fellini is both the amazed Wanda and the wrathful photo-story director of The White Sheik. Now he is preparing to be Gelsomina and Zampanò and also, in his own way, ‘il Motto’ (‘the Fool’). In the final analysis, it would be enough to get up onto the precarious turret mounted on the beach in The White Sheik and look down in order to recognize the final shot of La Strada, where Zampanò cries for the first time in his life as the camera pulls back. And so Fellini does away with the initial image, and closes the circle by returning to the opening, with Gelsomina among the sand dunes.

Created for Giulietta Masina, Gelsomina is a “creature who lives in a world too hard and brutal for her temperament”. An allegory of the victim of violence, she loves and wants to be loved with that unnatural candor that the world reveals to her when causing her to suddenly discover that she, too, is of some use. “If I don’t stay with you, who else is going to?” she repeats, somewhere between comedy and tragedy, adopting the Fool’s opinion: “But... if you don’t stay with him, who else is going to?” And she says it with conviction to that brutal and distracted great beast of a Zampanò, that creature who, like dogs, “look at us, and it seems they want to speak, but instead they only bark.”

The Fool’s reasoning strikes home with the little clown lady. Even if he did compare her to an inert pebble, he gave her the courage to defend, in a fit of anger, her role and, above all, her woman’s reasons for continuing to love even in the midst of brutality. “I’m going to burn everything, mattresses, blankets — everything. That will teach you. I never said I didn’t want to go with him. He paid 10,000 lire, and I’ll knock down work to. And he beats me.” Vengeance and rage give rise to feelings: “Is that how to behave? He doesn’t use his head (she taps her forehead). I tell him, and what does he care? So what’s the use? So, I’m finally going to put poison in his soup. You think I won’t? And I’m going to burn everything. If I don’t stay with him, who else is going to?”

And the last time this simple truth is spoken, Zampanò “doesn’t really understand it, and that frightens him even more. He scrutinizes her silently for an instant, then exclaims aggressively, with genuine, subconscious despair: “But I can’t
The title La Strada was not translated, thus retaining its sense of pointless love and desperate hope, portrayed by the expressive intensity of the "female Charlie" of Fellini's circus.
go on like this! I have to earn a living! You are sick... You are sick here! (and he strikes his forehead furiously).

Gelsomina turns to stare at him in silence, strangely, then, slowly, calmly, she starts to arrange her rags as if she intended to lie down and sleep against the wall. "We are at the conclusion. The Fool is dead; Gelsomina, even though she is ill, has remained with Zampone and, in spite of the anguish which has caused her to lose control of herself over a guilt which is not hers, she saves her man's life by making him abandon her in the snow; and the little warmth found between the stones of the wall and the tiny pebbles on the ground, serves as a basis for the end of the movie, before the epilogue: "It feels good in the sun... We need a little wood. The fire is going out..."

The fire, primary element of nature and of a child's amazement, is no longer burning; it is slowly going out before our eyes, just like the life of the heroine, as the small truck rolls away with the motor switched off. Zampone, the brave Zampone, is an emotional coward. Only a summer sea breeze will accompany his memories, bringing with it the notes of the clown Lady's sad song - notes which will cause his remorseful tears on the beach, in the loneliness of his human condition.

It almost seems to be a paradox, but La Strada, which will have more than a little influence on some American 'road movies' (which mark the departure from Hollywood studios), is based not only on the phenomenon of nomadism, but on the visceral element in considering 'off beat' types like Zampone, rather than normal people. A double-edged concept/journey already seen in the figure of the railway kid: when Moraldo, leaving for an imaginary future, observes with us what the poet Andrea Zanzotto calls Fellini's continuous creation: "something that is simultaneously magical and commonplace."

The overwhelming effect of the movie lies precisely in the conflicting co-existence: it creates between heedless reality and frenzied fable, the cruel magic of an existence without ideas (Zampone) and an artistic idea without real existence (Gelsomina and the Fool). Ever since she left her mother and her numerous siblings, Gelsomina is content to take the place of her sister Rosa and go wondering as she learns her 'art' of singing and dancing. But, unexpectedly, she becomes sad. Zampone's only solo act is one using his 'pectoral muscles or chest', while she seated in the truck looks on in amazement. It is one of the few times we will see Gelsomina inside the mobile home, and Zampone will be seen there even less often.

It is a tunnel, an open double window from which one can look out in two different directions. Two privileged observation points which, by connecting the two sides of the truck, allows Gelsomina to comfortably watch the road...
behind (the past, the farewell to the family, etc.) and Zampano who, driving, is obliged to look ahead (but without awareness). This emphasizes the two opposite directions in which the characters can see their world.

The camera, which is to say the camera, by focusing on the two open ends of the track, lifts that hard curtain, reduces the lack of communication and is able to rely on the camera's movements without having to cut very often. A good example would be the first notable narrowing of the field. The grumpy, having eaten the soup, "fit for pigs", forces Gelsomina to lie down with him. The two sub-frames reduce the volume of physical space therein practically to zero, and allow the director to show the characters as if somehow, they were always inside the vehicle, prisoners of that rickety truck, even when they are on the outside.

The difference between the two of them is made clear. Gelsomina has to beat the drum in a certain way, and solemnly announce that "Zampano is here". But, having decided to have fun whilst she is looing, she makes her boss angry, because he is opposed to the playful side of life, and has the right to impose his will because he bought that damned 'scatter brain'.

Gelsomina, however, just like her creator/husband, is naturally talented, a born artist, and she has fun playing the part of a clown, because the instinct for clowning is within her like song is in a bird. Only for this reason does she fail to obey orders, and Zampano trains her by cracking the whip. The Fool, for his part, will lose his life for having indulged in the sheer pleasure of seeing Zampano angry. Insurmountable by nature, Zampano fears spontaneous harmony, observes how irrational it is and defends himself through brute force, while the two congenital imps are unaware that they have asked the impossible of him. Zampano's truck is not the circus, but the symbol of a creative block, as Via Veneto will be in La Dolce Vita, the spa in Eight and a Half, the concert hall in Orchestra Rehearsal, the television studio in Ginger and Fred and The Voice of the Moon...

When Gelsomina discovers the little treasure trove of the charlatan's art, she puts on the derby hat and the makeup, and takes up the trumpet and the drum, which make her euphoric in a way she must hide from her intolerant, gloomy mate. And so the apprentice clown girl learns by imitation, performs according to orders and quickly finds her place in the theater of the road, achieving great personal success among both children and adults who instinctively love her. And, in the trattoria, it is equally marvelous when, following orders "to learn to keep her mouth shut", she opens it with great gravity and consuming talent of an untrained Pygmalion.

During the journey undertaken by these two creatures who stay together without knowing why", Gelsomina appears to Fellini "in the guise of a clown, with a massive dark shadow - Zampano - right alongside her for contrast."

She is a character who is modeled, as has been said, on Giulietta Masina, who her husband finds "singularly gifted to express the astonishment, the dismay, the frenetic quiet and the sudden comical gloom of a clown, [because] the clowning talent of an actor is his most precious gift and the sign of an aristocratic vocation for the theater."

Gelsomina sees what she has left behind her, but she can also see, wide eyed, that which never even crosses Zampano's mind. And, above all, she thinks. She thinks about the future, of filling the emptiness within a violent man with a horde of feelings she believes she can just glimpse. The source of her optimism lies in the art of masquerade, honest fiction, the opposite of Zampano's way, which is to act just as he lives, entirely without taking the soul into account. Someone who asks himself no questions, perhaps because he does not think it possible to do so, he lives by his instincts, using what nature has provided him with: healthy lungs, muscles of iron and a voracious physical and sexual appetite.

But on this shared journey among the villages, countryside and valleys of the Apennines, these two lives cannot be joined, and in the pre-finale, the protagonists, each accusing the other of not thinking (the one because she is mentally ill, the other because he is instinctive), both use the same gesture: the grumpy furiously beats his forefoot with the impossibility of becoming human as long as there is this 'dog-like' attachment for his clown who, in turn, puts his hand to her forehead and, with all the strength he can muster in light of her physical weakness, expresses her feelings by caressing her in her mind.

As the drama moves towards its conclusion, the switching of strong and weak roles is more evident than at the beginning or middle of the movie. Gelsomina's progressive growth has, as a counterpart, the primitive mediocrity of Zampano, satisfied at having taught everything to an assistant "who didn't even know how to open her mouth." Obedient fidelity, the only way of being accepted, comes to the surface the first time she is briefly abandoned, when Zampano goes off with a redhead. Gelsomina waits on the sidewalk like an abandoned dog, and does not even eat until a woman tells her where the truck and her man have gone. Her apparent dependence masks an act of emancipation, the readiness to wait without being resigned, and to enjoy the little things. Gelsomina plants tomato seeds even if she will never see them grow because the trip will continue into uncharted areas where not even the unfordable itinerants of Variety Lights had ever set foot.
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But on this shared journey among the villages, countryside and valleys of the instinct for clowning is suspended. Only for this reason does Zampanò suffer the blows to his life for having of seeing Zampanò's destiny. Therefore, Zampanò fears how irrational it is and force, while the two that they have asked the truck is not the circus, but the Via Veneto will be in La Dolce Vita, the concert hall in Ortigia in Ginger and Fred and The".

The little treasure trove of the eagle hat and the makeup, the drum, which makes her de from her intolerant, teen clown girl learns by orders and quickly finds road, achieving great children and adults, who the trattoria, it is equally ordiers "to learn to keep her a great gravity and obthpick into it in imitation of

And this might suffice, if destiny had not set new trop in an attempt to break her fragile equilibium. One of these is the show put on for a country wedding party. To the tune of La colpa è del bambi, the rooms and corridors of a farmhouse open up before us, the places of childhood memory which has been offered several times before. Rooms, stairs, hiding places inhabited by strange, sequined, phantasmatic creatures, both the old and the ill, like the little macrocephalous Osvaldo, from whom Gelsominia tries to wrest a smile.

This sequence contains a truly typical element of Fellini's cinema: a suspension of time between the certainty of the narration and the uncertainty of which direction to take, almost a fear of opening the next door. It is a gay melancholy mood, similar to the carnival festivities in I Vitelloni, and the finale of Amarcord. A moment that is just barely sketched, but with the same bitter taste of so many collective ritual occasions: restos, dinners, processions, pilgrimages, automobile and motorcycle parades, people coming and going in compromising places, when the litter tables are full of leftovers, the light fades, it sometimes rains and the usual latecomer fills the screen. What is it, if not the volating of something which has been and is about to end? The world gets on track, the sudden agitated pressure of fellini's action is in the hands of diverse characters who come on and go off camera, to create confusion with the intention of re-establishing order, and allowing their director time to think.

Within such a context, her first attempt to leave Zampanò takes place - "not because of the work, because I like it, I like being an artist. It's you I don't like" - either because he does not answer her questions, or because he "goes with women". The man, with the excuse of fetching some costumes, goes off with the widow. And it is these costumes which mark the beginning of a new phase: when she reappears in a double-breasted jacket, wearing white makeup and the derby hat, Gelsominia once again, conversely, puts on the military cloak of the first encounter. Having returned to the initial stage, she is once again prey to her infantile curiosity and, as in all fairy tales, follows the pipe to the town square, where the tightrope walker is performing. The wind shaking the rope is the same wind, only worse, that surrounds her when Zampanò goes to fetch her after her rebellious gesture. It is her first encounter with the Fool, someone like herself, whom she will find again at the Girafta Circus opened outside the walls of Rome.

With Fellini, one always goes to Rome; and should one already be there, one stays put. In this story about the great emargined, one necessarily remains on the outskirts of the city. While the Fool plays Gelsominia's song, the wind, messenger and shaper of events, shakes the tent and creates
sparks between the mocking of the spiteful acrobat and the violent outbursts of his rival.

In the circus ring, there are strong men, animal tamers, trapeze artists, acrobats, tight-ropewalkers with wings, clowns, the Fool and Gelsomina — a sharp contrast between two realities that, in *La Strada*, show themselves only in a few images. The distinction between the gypsy and the Fool/Gelsomina comes to the fore when, in Zampanò’s absence, they rehearse a new comic number. Zampanò opposes it and, not being able to come up with any good reason, capriciously says “because that’s how I want it, that’s the way I want it.” And when his rival reacts yet again by throwing water in his face, he goes after him with a knife. The night he spends in a cell will seal the friendship between the two ‘angels of the circus’, who sit on the pebbled beach and discuss, semi-seriously, the universe and Gelsomina’s role in life.

The movie takes a dramatic turn with the incident involving the pail of water, an object analogous to the tools used for Gelsomina’s first lesson as a clown. Both incidents come about because of the unexpressed jealousy felt by instinctive Zampanò, not so much for the woman — she is no use for taking to bed, she makes no gifts of clothes, she has no ex votos to steal — but for himself, his intense ego. Gelsomina is his, and he wants no changes to his one and only, monotonous number; but most of all, he does not want her to work with the Fool, because the Fool mocks him. Being someone like Gelsomina, the Fool does what she does not want and cannot ethically do: he takes revenge. First with the water, and then dying a senseless death that
paves the way for Gelsomina's madness and death, a necessary condition for the sense of the ridiculous to be transformed into the liberating tears of the finale.

"If I don't stay with you, who else is going to?" is not a distorted repetition dictated by a liking for one of Fellini's poetic output. It is that the movies - sometimes an industrial bulk in a cinema shop - can also move with the lightness of a butterfly in a flowering field, and is full of lines which have become proverbial. The sensory visual emblem of La Strada is a high point of the potency of feelings of union between two halves of a world, overturned yet resplendent. It is an invitation to look into the other levels of the movie, and what it has inspired in broader, more symbolic and actual terms.

In short, the comic figure, the benefactor of humanity, is presented in the guise of a Fellini clown, one of acting's highest and most difficult expressions that, on the occasion of the Oscar award for La Strada, won for Giulietta Masini the accolade of female Chaplin, because she is, in Fellini's words: "simply gifted to express the astonishment, the dismay, the frenetic gaiety and the sudden comical gloom of a clown. That's exactly what Giulietta is - an clown actress, an authentic 'clowness'. This definition, a magnificent one in my eyes, initiates other actors, who suspect it may diminish them, mar their dignity, indicate something crude. They are mistaken: to my mind, the clowning talent of an actor is his most precious gift and the sign of an aristocratic vocation for the theater." An art which can only express itself in the circus, in street theater at country fairs and festivities. As he had already done in The White Sheik, the director continues his expansion into the noble, plebeian ancestry of the cinema, which he has already discovered - in its spectacular embryonic forms - in his first love, the circus.

Finally, in that you, there is hospitality to be found for the after ego, still a little concealed, a will in development - Zampano, and also Federico - in whose womb a conflict is established, an insidious fight for identity which can only be opposed by Fellini the artist, the only one adapted to coexist with the many facets of the other Fellini, the one who, three weeks before finishing the movie, will be struck by a sudden depression, a kind of 'psychic Chernobyl'. But that plural 'you' is also that which can accommodate future characters, who only have to emerge one at a time, or else in a closely knit cortège.

"The cinema of truth? I am more in favor of the cinema of lies. Lies are always more interesting than the truth. The lie is the heart and soul of a show, and I love a show." A useful remark to use as a Dantesque device to introduce Il Bidone, a highly falsified work, inasmuch as it deals with trickery and swindle. In fact, to tell of trickery, of falsification, is an upside-down device, an alibi for the desire to intensively practice, not so much the small details of the plot, as the scenic tricks which are perfected in all Fellini's subsequent work. The end of the director's declaration now states: "It is not necessary that the things one shows be authentic. In general, it is better if they are not. What must be authentic are the feelings one has in seeing and giving expression." And what else are his shows.
other than the glorification of the Fellini Lie, of which II Bidone (1955) is the dress rehearsal?

Baron Vargaz is awaiting the trio of swindlers, Augusto, Picasso and Roberto, in order to give them final instructions with regard to the buried treasure swindle. Disguised as priests, Augusto and Picasso, with Roberto's help, easily manage to cheat two ingenious peasants who, in exchange for a treasure-trove of rubbish, obtain a wad of banknotes which, according to them, are intended as payment for masses for the dead. Another successful pose is the false assignment of public housing to the Roman hut dwellers. The three go to the outskirts of the city, where whole families of poor wretches, invalids, and unemployed struggle to pay the 'quota', without once suspecting anything from the inconsiderate behavior of the three pretending to be officials from the institution.

The reality of their private lives is altogether a different thing. The angel face, Picasso, is a painter, possibly a forger. In order to keep his wife, Iris, and his daughter, he has given up his art and joined with Augusto, the elder of the three. Roberto, who has the ideal countenance for the role, with a perfect cynical, intransigent soundrail's face, aims to break into the big time, and is just learning the trade while waiting for his big break.

During a New Year's Eve party at Rinaldo's house, a con man who has made it big, Augusto offers his services to the host, but is rudely put down, while Roberto is publicly exposed and humiliated when he tries to steal a gold cigarette case. For his part, Picasso cannot keep his wife from discovering the source of the dirty money he earns.

After one of numerous trips into the countryside to sell old, reconditioned overcoats, the squawk and distress of that unpredictable life cause a crisis for the painter, who gets drunk and finds the courage to give it all up and return to his painting and tranquil family life. By chance, Augusto meets his daughter, Patrizia, who is living with her mother, from whom he separated in order to be free for his new job. Augusto invites her to spend a whole day with him. During lunch, the girl explains her plans to her father, and he promises her the security money she needs in order to get a job as a cashier, which will in turn allow her to pay for her university studies. Father and daughter go to the movie theater, but a former victim recognizes Augusto, and he is arrested.

When he is released from prison, he learns that Roberto has set himself up well in Milan, and he goes back to work for Vargaz in the old buried treasure gambit, at the expense of a peasant with a paralyzed daughter. As usual, Augusto is very credible, perhaps too credible, because the handicapped girl thinks he really is a magnifier, and asks to speak with him. The conversation bothers him, partly because of the girl's ingenuous faith in him, but also because the loot corresponds to the amount of money he has promised to give Patrizia.

After the swindle, when the two fake priests are changing their clothes, Augusto confessions that he has given the money back to the girl because he was touched by her situation. When the rest of the gang do not believe him, he runs away, but the others throw stones at him.
One strikes him and he falls, breaking his back, and his accomplice finds the money hidden in his shoe. At daybreak, after a night ofergency, Augusto rises in vain to find help, and dies alone just as he has almost reached the roadside.

After La Strada's touching journey through the contradictions of the soul, the study of human nature in Fellini's movies is reflected in the story of the hideout (con men), and the character of Augusto, played by the American actor Broderick Crawford, whereas Zamparò was the bully; evil shadow lurking over Calabria who, not fearing him as a man, was animated by an innate perversity, a new kind of fear manifests itself in Il Bidone, which fluctuates between the tender anxieties of Wanda, the immaturity of the vitellone Fausto, and the failling emansin of Montaldo as he leaves his provincial Heimat.

The fake priest begins to feel some remorse when faced with the pain and suffering for which he is held responsible shown by the young cripple (Sue Ellen Hake).
attention to the stronger element, the shot and the sequence, adapting the contribution of the music to that of following the narrative. But, in the case of Rota and Fellini, a magical interplay takes place, an enveloping hypnosis which allows the maestro at the piano to extract from the keyboard – on the basis of the director’s confused, or vague, or quite precise solicitations – a little motif, possibly only just glimpsed, but immediately accentuated, with no direct connection to the story, the characters, the narrative blocks or even the overall theme. In short, Rota had the miraculous gift of being the reflection, if not the unique image, of that moment, that episode, that character, even while having no direct cognition (despite the minutely timed notations that exist in his tightly-packed notebooks). The underscored insistence of that intuition, and no other, coincides with the incomprehensible and magnetic attraction of these two ‘great distracted ones’ of the artistic imagination. The result is an enrichment of Fellini’s movies with unforgettable melodies which, in turn, are nourished by the identification/memory which the impact on the eye can impose on the ear, until the ‘cinemusical pendulum moves from mental vision to ‘visual listening’ in a continuous interchange.

In this regard, Nicoletti Piovani, who wrote the scores for Ginger and Fred, Intervista and The Voice of the Moon, recalls: “What we might call the poetics of the Memory of the Motif prevails over the whole span of the sixteen works of genius that Fellini and Rota produced. A constantly displacing sound montage, music that rarely presents itself with real and true comments, but as echoes of fragments—become-objects, and brought back into an elsewhere that, little by little, is shocking, consuming, pungent, demystifying or mystifying, but always strongly involved in a dialectic with the editing of the images, thanks, of course, to the genius of a musician capable of infusing sublime soul into whatever the current material, the basic clay used may be.”

Let Fellini himself describe Nino Rota: “Between the two of us there was immediately a complete, a total understanding beginning with The White Sheik, our first movie collaboration. We did not need any breaking in to understand each other. I had decided to become a director and Nino was there as a premise for my continuing to do so. He had an imagination, a celestial musical vision, which made it unnecessary for him to see the film images. When I asked him what motifs he had in mind as musical comments for this or that sequence, I clearly saw that the images did not concern him. His was an inner world to which reality had scarce possibilities of access. He lived music with the liberty and spontaneity of a creature in its natural element. He was a creature with a rare quality, that precious quality which belongs to intuition. This was the gift that kept him so innocent, so light-footed, so happy. But don’t misunderstand me. When the occasion presented itself, or even when it did not present itself, he made very acute comments, deep and impressively precise on people and things. Like children, like simple people, like some psychics, like certain innocent and candid people, he suddenly said things of dazzling brilliance.”

If one should try to understand his working ‘method’ in these musical collaborations, one would be astonished to discover that contrary to what usually happens, Rota composed on the scenes already shot. Certainly there were no questions of “priority” inasmuch as Rota neither wanted
while having no direct cognition (despite the minutely timed notations that exist in his tightly-packed notebooks). The underscored insistence of that intuition, and no other, coincides with the incomprehensible and magnetic attraction of these two ‘great distanced ones’ of the artistic imagination. The result is an enrichment of Fellini’s movies with unforgettable melodies which, in turn, are nourished by the identification/memory which the impact on the eye can impose on the ear, until the ‘cinemasculine’ pendulum moves from mental vision to ‘visual listening’ in a continuous interchange.

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another. But he did not listen, he was distracted even if he nodded or said yes with broad gestures of assent. In reality he was establishing contact with himself, with the musical motifs inside himself. And when he had made contact he did not follow you anymore, did not listen. He put his hands on the keyboard and started off in a kind of trance like a true artist. When he had finished I said: "That's beautiful!" But he replied: 'I have forgotten it already'. These were disasters which we remedied by the use of tape recorders, but it was necessary to turn them on without his noticing or else the contact with the celestial sphere was broken..."

In his "diary" of La Dolce Vita, Rota himself, asked by Tulio Kezich, summarized better than any paraphrase could do the essential aspects of that alchemy between music and image: "We go to the piano and make music, as always. I give him the gist of some theme, serve it up to him if I have something ready. At times we actually compose together. Fellini gives me a hint, not as a musician would, but always with a firm rhythmic idea and maybe with a snatch of melody. In short he suggests a musical expression in an embryonic form. Perhaps this time too, as for The Nights of Cubita, we will look at the moviola and sketch out a musical comment to the silent images, once we have established the 'contacts'. [Fellini] is not a director that the musician has to worry about. He gives more importance to the music than I would myself. It often happens that he tells the sound technicians by eliminating all the natural sounds, all the realism of the scene that carries a musical comment". And he ends with a compliment to his friend's sensibility who "believes that the cinema has not yet expressed everything it is capable of expressing. He has the true director's sensibility that coordinates all the elements into a whole. He is not a man of letters, but he knows how to make use of a literary expression with the utmost security. He does the same with music. This is a gift that other directors, who may be very fine musical connoisseurs or even good musicians, do not have at all."

Thus with Rota's music Fellini's films become something really special in artistic and evocative memory, doubtless more than either of the two would have been able to do without the other. (Naturally this does not refer to music apart from films). Something light and phantasmagorical while at the same time melancholy, grotesque or even downright gloomy. An ambiguity and a premonitory duplicity that could easily have delighted Luigi Pirandello when at the end of the Twenties he hoped for "cinematography, the pure expression of the two major senses, the eye and the ear, turned onto the cinematography