

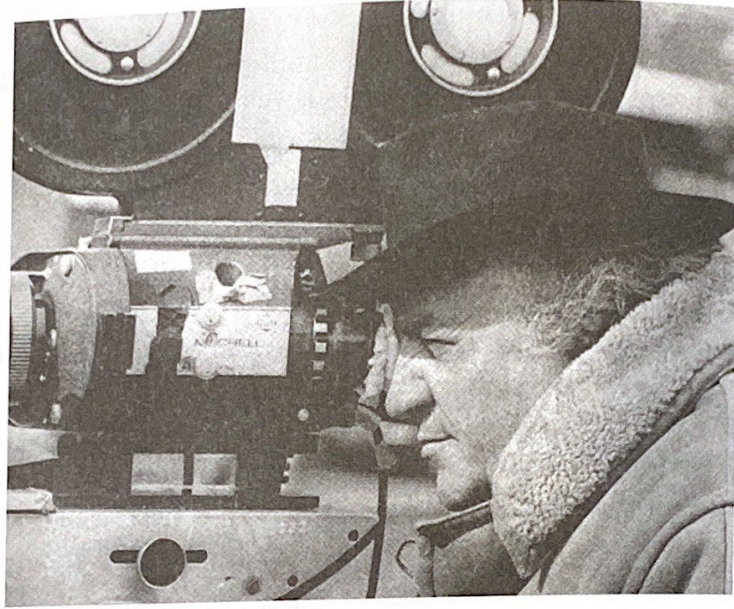
Writing Assignments: You are required to write a three pages research paper for each movie presented. Papers shall be handed in on the dates posted in this syllabus.

The papers are to be research papers. They must have documentation, i.e. material must be footnoted. The style is up to the student but footnote style must be consistent. Papers must also have an introduction that outlines the main points to be covered in the paper and references to film reviews.

tuberculosis and goes to recuperate in a convalescent hospital in the Italian Alps (her ironically named "brief vacation"). There, she encounters entirely new experiences, including members of the upper class, and falls in love with Luigi (Daniel Quenau). Her married life has been miserable, but ironically her time spent in the hospital is a liberating experience. In De Sica's scenes of Milan, the romantic, soft-focus shots of *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* shift to the gritty, industrial colors of northern Italy, reminiscent of Antonioni's *Red Desert*. Clara's brief vacation ends with her return to her boorish husband (Renato Salvatori), but now her plight seems even more miserable, since her eyes have been opened to the myriad possibilities that are closed to her. *A Brief Vacation* is a small jewel of a film, a reminder that the playboy and gambler De Sica, who had no particular political ideology (and certainly no leftist sympathies), could make films that said more about social class in Italy than all of the more politically engaged directors of his generation.

Fellini, the Director as Superstar: *La Dolce Vita*

The dominant figure of the golden age of Italian cinema is clearly Federico Fellini. His career during the 1960s and 1970s was marked by a very complicated stylistic and thematic evolution beyond neorealism that began with the international blockbuster *La Dolce Vita* and continued with his masterpiece *8½*. Inspired by psychoanalysis, Fellini's interest in incorporating dreams into his cinematic narratives influences the bulk of his later works, including *Juliet of the Spirits*, *Fellini Satyricon*, *The Clowns* (*I Clowns*, 1970), *Fellini's Roma* (*Roma*, 1972), *Amarcord*, and *Fellini's Casanova* (*Il Casanova di Federico Fellini*, 1976). His later works until his death include *Orchestra Rehearsal* (*Prova d'orchestra*, 1979); *City of Women* (*La città delle donne*, 1980); *And the Ship Sails On* (*E la nave va*, 1983); *Ginger and Fred* (*Ginger e Fred*, 1985); *Interview* (*Intervista*, 1987); and his final feature film, *The Voice of the Moon*. Fellini also made a number of brilliant television commercials—one for Campari liquor, another for Barilla pasta, and three for the Bank of Rome. In addition, he made a number of imaginary commercials in *Ginger and Fred*. Although he hated the commercial interruptions of feature films on Italian television, his commercials offer splendid examples of his cinematography and embodied his infectious sense of humor.¹⁹ During the course of his late career, Fellini moved from autobiographical themes to political ones, and from subjective visions of the world informed by his dream life to metacinematic considerations of cinema itself. No other Italian director ever dominated the industry so completely as Fellini did during the 1960s and the 1970s; but his persistent (and often brilliant) search for a dreamlike cinema met the opposition of a new kind of popular audience, one addicted to action films, and Fellini's box-office returns thus diminished



Federico Fellini—the director as superstar—behind his beloved Mitchell camera at the height of his success during the 1960s. Credit: MOMA

after the international success of *Amarcord*—though his critical importance continued to grow after his premature death, in 1993.

After the international notoriety of *La Strada* and *The Nights of Cabiria*—two works from the “trilogy of grace or salvation” that won Oscars for Best Foreign Language Film, not to mention numerous other international awards—Federico Fellini’s international reputation as one of Europe’s most brilliant young superstar directors who could also deliver at the box office was firmly established. In the uproar and moralistic protest that greeted the first screenings of *La Dolce Vita* in Italy, however, the political or cultural affiliations of those who either attacked or defended Fellini changed entirely. Before *La Dolce Vita*, Italian Catholics and French existentialist film critics had been Fellini’s champions, while Italian Marxists attacked him. With *La Dolce Vita*, Fellini became the target of outraged moralists from the Right as well as from the Catholic Church, who regarded the work as pornographic and insulting to the best Italian traditions, while the Marxist Left defended Fellini for what it regarded as a courageous dissection of bourgeois decadence and moral corruption. Furthermore, whereas the conflict over the earlier *La Strada* had largely been restricted to film buffs and critics, *La Dolce Vita* became a cause célèbre that had an enormous impact upon Italian popular culture and was a major topic in the national press for some time.

La Dolce Vita represents more than just a significant step in the evolution of Fellini’s cinematic style. Like such films in America as *Gone with the Wind*, *Casablanca*, or *The Godfather*, *La Dolce Vita* transcended its meaning as a work of art and came to be regarded as a landmark pointing to important

changes in Italian and European society. In 1960, it received the Golden Palm at the Cannes Film Festival, given unanimously by a jury that included the French mystery writer Georges Simenon and the American novelist Henry Miller. Its commercial success represented the triumph of the serious art film at the box office, and although it was a relatively expensive film to produce (600 million lire), it grossed over 2.2 billion lire in only a few years, at a time when tickets in Italy cost only 500–1,000 lire. For more than two decades, it held the European record for highest box-office grosses. Its importance can be defined as the junction of the blockbuster and the European art film, and its success helped to define a cinema of authorship that would influence even the manner in which Hollywood produced films.

Enormous social and economic changes in Italy paved the way for the film's reception. As the film was being prepared in 1958 and shot in 1959, Italy was in the midst of what would eventually be called the "economic miracle." Italy leaped from being almost an underdeveloped country into an age of rapid and unparalleled economic growth fueled by massive increases in exports of such popular products as Vespa motor scooters, Fiat automobiles, Necchi sewing machines, Olivetti typewriters, and home appliances. The rapid rise in the country's standard of living took place as vast numbers of southern Italians migrated from the impoverished areas in the Italian Mezzogiorno to the industrial zones of the North, as well as to other European countries, especially Switzerland and Germany. One of the immediate results of this new social mobility was an almost instantaneous drop of interest in religious sentiment in Italy. Thus while many conservative opponents of *La Dolce Vita* called for censorship of the film, believing it was an attack upon Italian culture in general, others even suggested that Fellini be arrested for "outrage or derision of the Catholic religion" (technically a crime listed in the Penal Code at the time). Meanwhile, supporters of the film on the Left saw the decadent lifestyle portrayed in the film (the "sweet life" of the title) as an accurate assessment of upper-middle-class and aristocratic corruption even though nothing could be further from Fellini's mind than a Marxist denunciation of class conflict.

Production on *La Dolce Vita* began on March 16, 1959. The first scene was the ascent of Sylvia (Anita Ekberg) to the top of Saint Peter's dome on a circular staircase, which was reconstructed in Cinecittà's Theater 14. Immediately following this, from April 1 to April 3, was Sylvia's famous bath in the Trevi Fountain (referenced by Scola's *We All Loved Each Other So Much*; see chapter 7); this was shot at the actual fountain, not a studio reconstruction. Thus Fellini and his brilliant set designer, Piero Gherardi, who would deservedly win an Oscar for his costume design and also be nominated (unsuccessfully) for his set design, alternated real locations (a heritage of Italian neorealism, a decisive moment in Italian film history to which Fellini had made major contributions as a scriptwriter) with stupendous studio

creations. Like the staircase in Saint Peter's, the famous Via Veneto too was rebuilt, in Cinecittà's Teatro (Theater) 5—since renamed the Teatro Fellini because the director's work was so closely identified with it. The viewer may not notice, but the street in the film is completely flat, whereas Via Veneto actually runs up a relatively steep hill. Other sets that were real include the castle outside Rome where the world-weary aristocrats gather, a genuine palace in Bassano di Sutri belonging to the Odescalchi, one of Rome's oldest noble families. Shooting was wrapped on August 27, 1959, and the film premiered in Rome on February 3, 1960, opening in Milan two days later.

Guaranteeing its role as a symbol of the times, *La Dolce Vita* also reflected other events related to changes in mores and popular culture. Rome had come to be the focus of international cinema, even for Hollywood, after American studios set up shop in Italy (known as "Hollywood on the Tiber"; see chapter 6) to take advantage of good weather, cheap labor, and capital derived from their Italian profits, which they were prohibited from exporting back home to California. The kind of gossip column and tabloid reporting associated with the worst kind of celebrity journalist grew into a cottage industry in Rome with its center on the Via Veneto, where American and European actresses and actors came to see and to be seen. Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* captured the spirit of this tabloid sensationalism. Tabloid photography became one of the most popular means of chronicling this kind of Roman movie-star personality cult, and the age gave birth to the now-familiar phenomenon known as the paparazzi. The name of one of the photographers in this film, Walter Paparazzo, is actually the origin of the word. In fact, a number of the famous sequences in the film were based on actual events, published in the tabloid press of 1958 with photographs by the prototypical paparazzo Tazio Secchiaroli (of a striptease dance in a Roman restaurant) and Pierluigi Praturlon (of Ekberg's real-life wade into the Trevi Fountain in the heat of August). Thus, along with many scenes created by his own vivid imagination, or written by the gifted scriptwriters Ennio Flaiano, Tullio Pinelli, and Brunello Rondi and superbly set to music by Nino Rota, Fellini lifted these tabloid moments from the scandal magazines and immortalized them in a brilliant work of art. (In 1962, the world of Via Veneto as reported by the paparazzi and the tabloids would reach the heights of notoriety with the shockingly public love affair between Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton during the Roman production of *Cleopatra*.)

The production of *La Dolce Vita* was so complex and involved such an investment of resources that it must be defined as an "art film colossal." At 175 minutes in length, the film boasts over eighty different locations and a cast of hundreds. The Italian script lists four full pages of actors playing more than 120 different speaking parts, with an original screenplay divided into 104 separate scenes. *La Dolce Vita* avoids traditional dramatic plotting, relying instead on the power of visual images to draw the spectator's attention

along a vast journey through what might well be described as a modern-day version of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, where Marcello Rubini (a journalist with serious literary ambitions, played brilliantly by Marcello Mastroianni) wanders through a Roman urban landscape and has a number of adventures. Thus, the overall structure of *La Dolce Vita*, like *La Strada*, may be said to be a picaresque adventure, where the journey has been transferred from the provincial towns and villages of Italy to the salons, cafés, and hotels of the glitterati of Italy's capital city during the height of the economic boom.

Fellini selected Anita Ekberg (Miss Sweden of 1951) for the role of Sylvia in *La Dolce Vita* not because of her acting talents, which she certainly had not displayed previously, but for her particular personification of the Nordic beauty that Italians usually identified with actresses from Hollywood, where she had spent five years in the business. Her "talent," as Fellini had her admit in the film's press conference, was her bust. She was the ultimate expression of what Italians called the *maggiorata* ("sweater girl," or buxom woman; see chapter 4) that was the rage in the cinema during the period and that produced such stars as Sophia Loren, Sylva Koscina, Gina Lollobrigida, and Silvana Mangano. As noted above, Ekberg had already waded into the Trevi Fountain and been photographed by Pierluigi Praturion, who had sold the images for a substantial sum of money. Yet, Fellini's version of the event—shot in the icy waters of a January night, as opposed to the original hot August one—was not a simple case of art imitating life. Set within a complex series of images and visual ideas in a masterpiece, this banal, tabloid "photo opportunity" was transformed by the power of Fellini's fantasy into a symbol for feminine purity and innocence juxtaposed



Perhaps the most famous scene in postwar European cinema—Marcello and Sylvia wade into the Trevi Fountain in Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*. Credit: MOMA

against a world of corruption and decadence, which has quite rightly been called the symbolic image of postwar cinema—just what the “Odessa Steps” sequence in *The Battleship Potemkin* was to silent films. Thus Sylvia, *La Dolce Vita*’s blond bombshell and the ultimate symbol of sex appeal in the *maggiorate* style of the late 1950s, is paradoxically memorable as an image of innocence and purity—as is Paola (Valeria Ciangottini), the little Umbrian angel whose smile concludes the film.

Fellini creates his fantasy world *without* rigorous moralistic judgments. He presents his Roman metaphor for the contemporary world of image making, public relations, movie stardom, and the glamorous lifestyles of the “rich and famous” with bemused detachment, and most certainly as if the director were an accomplice, not a judge. Since Fellini is ultimately a great *comic* genius, and comedy is always an art of acceptance, even when he seems to denounce a condition or a character for some presumed moral failing, Fellini inevitably, before the “trial” ends, becomes a witness for the defense. This dual perspective informs his portrait of Marcello Rubini in *La Dolce Vita*. What redeems the sublunary, graceless world of Via Veneto in Fellini’s film is poetry: vibrant images that unexpectedly are so full of life that they overwhelm any sense of futility, corruption, and despair.

After the international success of the film, Fellini was convinced that cinema should abandon traditional storylines and attempt something closer to poetry with meter and cadence. When he adopted a modernist approach to film plot with *La Dolce Vita*, Fellini himself compared it to Picasso’s cubist revolution that had transformed modern art from representational to abstract artistic expression:

So I said: let’s invent episodes, let’s not worry for now about the logic or the narrative. We have to make a statue, break it, and recompose the pieces. Or better yet, try decomposition in the manner of Picasso. The cinema is narrative in the nineteenth-century sense: now let’s try to do something different.²⁰

La Strada had moved beyond a traditional notion of the realistic representation of reality with a realistic protagonist, and image would henceforth be more important than storyline—the reversal of the traditional Hollywood reliance upon a well-made plot. *La Dolce Vita* continued Fellini’s search for a new and contemporary twentieth-century means of cinematic expression, a poetic cinema on the Picassoesque model. It was a bold venture but one that made cinematic history. Rather than use conventional cinematic narrative, which aims at telling a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end, Fellini wanted to construct a film around numerous sequences, each dominated by key images, much as one might construct a poem. Such key images would provide objective correlatives, in good modernist fashion, for a number of themes, ideas, and notions that interested the director.

Fellini had reportedly considered calling the film *2000 Years after Jesus Christ*, or perhaps *Babylon 2000*. Whether these apocryphal titles were ever actually considered, they point to the fact that Fellini wished to show in *La Dolce Vita* a contemporary world cut adrift from traditional values and symbols, especially those of Christianity, and bereft of any dominant cultural center. Fellini's Rome is a world of public relations, press conferences, paparazzi, empty religious rites, meaningless intellectual debates, and unrewarding love affairs. Yet Fellini does not simply denounce the decadence and corruption he sees before him: he is actually much more interested in the potential for rebirth that such a situation offers the artist. As he once stated:

I feel that decadence is indispensable to rebirth. . . . So I am happy to be living at a time when everything is capsizing. It's a marvelous time, for the very reason that a whole series of ideologies, concepts and conventions is being wrecked. . . . I don't see it as a sign of the death of civilization but, on the contrary, as a sign of life.²¹

The real energy in *La Dolce Vita* resides not in the jaded Marcello, nor in the beautiful but shallow Sylvia, but in the director's camera, as Fellini transforms this fresco of decadence into a vibrant portrait that intrigues viewers without necessarily drawing them into the world that passes quickly before them. He accomplishes this miracle in a number of ways. In the first place, every sequence of *La Dolce Vita* is teeming with characters. Almost every character has an unusual or interesting face, a testament to the hours that Fellini spent in the preparation of each of his films, examining folder after folder of still photographs of actors and amateurs whose physical appearance struck him for some particular reason. The Fellini cast represents a cross section of humanity that could be found in no other director's work. The director skillfully choreographs these sometimes grotesque figures, and their movements are constantly captured by masterful photography, alternating long tracking shots and traveling shots. In order to avoid distortions of the characters' background during the rapid motion of the camera in such tracking or traveling shots, Fellini instructed his director of photography, Otello Martelli, to use 75- 100- or 150mm lenses instead of the normal 50mm lens that most directors used at the time for wide-screen photography. Martelli objected, but as he noted years later, Fellini's intuition was a stroke of genius, for the particular visual style it invented for *La Dolce Vita* resulted in the highlighting of figures inside a frescolike framework with only a slight distortion of their surroundings.²² Adding to the visual appeal of each sequence were the stupendous sets designed by Piero Gherardi. As Gherardi has testified, he and Fellini would go through a ritual that was repeated throughout the production of *La Dolce Vita*. They would first attempt to find an authentic location in Rome or on its outskirts

for a scene, but this search would always end in Fellini's rejection of "reality" for an artificially re-created location in the studios.²³ This rejection of specific locations occurred not only in the famous reconstruction of Via Veneto but also with the Baths of Caracalla and the aforementioned stairs of Saint Peter's. When Fellini did employ authentic locations—the Trevi Fountain, for example, or the ancient castle in Bassano di Sutri—it could be argued that these were already sufficiently "Fellinian" to need no touch of the master's fantasy.

Certainly, the world he presented in *La Dolce Vita* is a world without God. Yet Fellini's last word is not delivered by the image of the monster fish, (a traditional symbol for Christianity, once vital but now as dead as the animal itself), or the image of the jaded Marcello, (a lost soul in a Dantesque inferno of false values and spent illusions), *La Dolce Vita* ends on the close-up of Paola's beautiful smile, an image of purity and innocence that is juxtaposed (but not necessarily triumphantly) against the corruption that has preceded it. Like *La Strada*, *La Dolce Vita* ends on a poetic note of ambiguity. We leave the theater with an impression of utter hopelessness from the vast kaleidoscope of fallen humanity we have encountered during the film. Yet, the images we have seen embody such an outsized love and zest for life, with which each and every frame has been imbued by the film's creator, that we do not completely abandon all hope.

Fellini and Dreams: *8½* and *Juliet of the Spirits*

Federico Fellini's *8½* is his benchmark film, the work that confirms his status as a master and had a profound influence upon other filmmakers all over the world, including Martin Scorsese, Woody Allen, François Truffaut, Lina Wertmüller, Giuseppe Tornatore, Peter Greenaway, Terry Gilliam, Joel Schumacher, Bob Fosse, Paul Mazursky, and Spike Jonze.²⁴ Besides a host of awards, including an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film in 1964, a group of thirty European intellectuals and filmmakers voted *8½* the most important European film ever made, and on the basis of this work also named Fellini as the European cinema's most important director.²⁵ The film occupies an important role in the director's complete works, not only because of its obvious autobiographical links to Fellini's own life but also because it focuses upon the very nature of artistic creation in the cinema.

Fellini's *8½* explores a personal fantasy world that deals self-reflexively with cinema itself. Created by one of the greatest directors of photography of the period (Gianni Di Venanzo), the black-and-white photography in *8½* is an expressionistic black and white that manages even without color to capture the essence of the irrational quality of the dream state. The protagonist, a film director named Guido Anselmi (Marcello Mastroianni), has obvious affinities to Fellini himself. The film's narrative focuses upon the

extremely complex fantasy life of a film director who is in the midst of a crisis of inspiration and creativity, not unlike one Fellini himself experienced at the beginning of work on the film. Fellini has described the gestation of *8½* as a series of false starts, culminating in his writing of a letter to his producer to call off the entire project even while actors had been selected and crew members were constructing the sets. At that precise moment, one of the crew invited Fellini to share a bottle of champagne to celebrate the creation of what he predicted will become a "masterpiece." Embarrassed by his insecurity and the responsibility of putting all the men working in the studio out of a job, Fellini thought of himself as a ship's captain abandoning his crew. Suddenly, the inspiration for the film's subject came to him in a flash: the film would focus upon a director who no longer knows what film he is making.

Like *La Dolce Vita*, *8½* may accurately be described as an "art film colossal." It contains approximately forty major episodes, numerous sequences, and more than fifty-three major characters, not counting the many, many minor figures, including the entire crew shooting the film that appears in the film's celebrated ending. Shot almost entirely inside a studio on huge and imaginative set constructions, *8½* combines innumerable particular episodes with a marvelously strict control of the overall narrative. Everything in the work avoids the traditional seamless storyline of the classic Hollywood film. The mass of visual images Fellini creates is held together in an almost miraculous state of grace by the use of dream and fantasy sequences. The result is one of the most convincing stream-of-consciousness narratives ever created, a storyline controlled by the subjective perspective of its director-protagonist that jumps quickly from the "real" world of a spa, where Guido has gone to take the cure for a failing inspiration, to his dreams, to waking fantasies, and to memories of his past all the way back to his childhood, an infancy characterized by a strict Catholic upbringing and a repression of sexual desire. It is most certainly not a film based upon improvisation. Only an ironclad script, as the scriptwriter Tullio Pinelli once described it, could have brought such magnificent artistic order out of such a chaotic mix of diverse materials.

The picture Guido seems unable to make is a science-fiction film about the launching of a rocket ship from Earth after a thermonuclear holocaust destroys civilization. A huge launchpad that seems to have no purpose provides a concrete metaphor of Guido's creative impasse. During the many encounters at a spa resort Guido has with his producer, his potential actors, and his production staff, he also finds time for a tryst with his mistress, Carla (Sandro Milo), a marital crisis with his estranged wife (Anouk Aimée), and a number of embarrassing exchanges with a French intellectual named Daumier (Jean Rougeul)—intended as an Italian, Carini, in the shooting script—who mercilessly attacks Guido for his artistic confusion, his puerile



In Fellini's *8½*, the film director Guido summarizes the meaning of his life and of art in general in the famous circular procession where all the characters from his life and his art intermingle. Credit: MOMA

symbolism, his ideological incoherence, and the lack of any intellectual structure in the film Guido has proposed to make.

In *8½*, Fellini makes no pronouncements, presents no theories about art, and avoids the heavy intellectualizing about the nature of the cinema that characterizes so much academic discussion in recent years. As Fellini stated in an interview given in 1963, *8½* is "extremely simple: it puts forth nothing that needs to be understood or interpreted."²⁶ In light of the tremendous amount of critical exegesis on this work, Fellini's statement is extraordinary, but he means something rather straightforward. For Fellini, the cinema is primarily a visual medium whose emotive power moves through light, not words. The unforgettable circular dance that concludes *8½* is the perfect modernist image for Fellini's major preoccupation: free artistic creativity. If the audience is open to such poetic moments, no theoretical preparation is required to appreciate such a scene. Fellini wants his audience to experience an image designed to produce an emotion, not to analyze an idea designed to make an intellectual argument.

Between *La Dolce Vita* and the making of *8½*, Fellini encountered Jungian psychoanalysis and began seeing a Jungian analyst named Ernst Bernhard (1896–1965), an experience that he described as "like the sight of unknown landscapes, like the discovery of a new way of looking at life."²⁷ With Bernhard's encouragement, Fellini began to record his extremely active dream life, compiling large notebooks with colorful sketches made with felt-tip markers that would become the inspiration for the works shot

over the rest of his life.²⁸ Fellini's encounter with psychoanalysis, his dream notebook, and his own predilection for a cinema of poetic inspiration all conspired together in *8½* to produce a masterpiece about artistic creativity. The domain of the dream, the irrational, is for Fellini the ultimate source of artistic inspiration and creation. In *8½*, Fellini shows (not argues) that art has its own imperatives and that it communicates a very real kind of special knowledge, aesthetically and therefore emotionally rather than logically, and that this form of knowledge has its proper and rightful place in human culture. As Fellini—who often called himself an “honest liar”—once declared, “nothing is more honest than a dream.”²⁹ It would be an oneiric universe that concerned Fellini for the rest of his career, as *8½* bade farewell once and for all to the privileging of external reality characteristic of his neorealist origins.

Juliet of the Spirits is Fellini's first feature film in color, and this move to color also provided the director with the opportunity to test his new interest in his dream life on the silver screen. Whereas in *8½* Fellini focused on the dream visions of a creative artist like himself, in *Juliet* he cast his wife, Giulietta Masina, as a demure housewife with an unfaithful husband named Giorgio (Mario Pisu), and the film recounts her discovery of her husband's infidelities, her confused attempts to deal with her own sexuality, and her eventual emancipation and maturity. Fellini's film probably mirrors his own marriage to Masina, and it is a remarkably honest and unflattering portrait of the husband. It may well be one of the first “feminist” films shot in Italy, because it argues for women to take up what Fellini calls the woman's struggle “against certain monsters in herself, which are certain psychic components in her deformed by educational taboos, moral conventions, false idealisms. . . .”³⁰ *Juliet* continues *8½*'s view that childhood memories and traumatic experiences shape adult life and must be confronted to be overcome. The past is not merely a source of psychological neurosis; it is also a potential source of freedom and liberation. The healthy individual, as Guido becomes by the finale of *8½*, can be redeemed by acceptance, but *Juliet* demonstrates just how much more difficult this kind of personal liberation is for an ordinary Italian housewife in the 1960s.

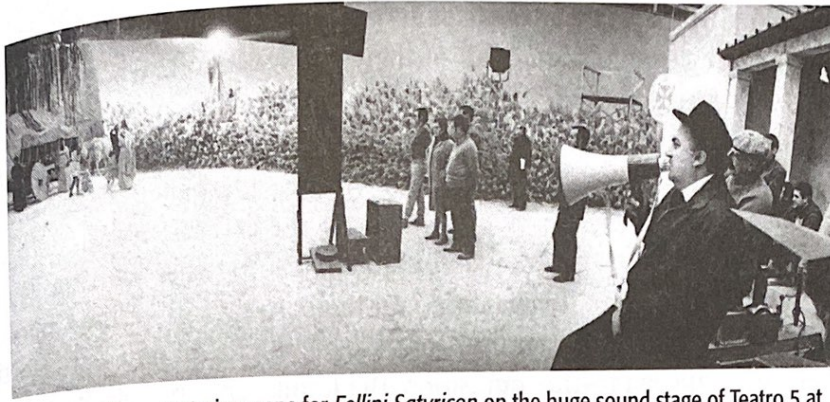
Juliet's unhappy marriage appears in the very opening scene of the film. Her home resembles a doll's house, and her costume reminds us of a coolie's outfit—drab and unexciting—whereas the other female characters, particularly her sensual mother and sister, display outlandish and fashionable clothes, thus setting her apart. The picture of a desperate housewife is completed when Giorgio forgets her wedding anniversary. Juliet's life is assaulted by outside forces, her “spirits.” Dreaming on the beach, Juliet experiences a surrealistic vision with obvious psychoanalytic implications: a man pulls a rope ashore and hands it to Juliet (later we learn he is the detective Juliet has hired to investigate Giorgio's philandering). As Juliet

pulls the rope and brings a raft to shore, a boatload of strange savages armed with swords and horses lands on the beach just before a passing jet awakens her back to reality. Later another flashback to a dream reveals that these savages are circus characters and that her grandfather once ran off with a circus ballerina. Elsewhere in yet another flashback, we discover that Juliet suffers from a traumatic experience during a class play at Catholic school: the nuns told her that as she played the part of a Christian martyr, she would see a vision of God, but that vision was interrupted. In general, Juliet's Catholic upbringing provides the explanation for her repressed sexuality. Only after she rejects her outmoded morality does she manage to free herself from the past. The final shot of the film shows a liberated Juliet free to leave her prisonlike home, advancing in harmony toward the future without the burden of a cold husband's lack of attention or guilt. By her act of self-understanding (as Fellini understood, the goal of every psychoanalysis), Juliet now has a new future ahead of her.

Rome as Metaphor: *Fellini Satyricon* and *Fellini's Roma*

La Dolce Vita uses the Rome of public relations and the cinema to underline how much of the past Rome we have lost. *Fellini Satyricon* employs a free adaptation of the classic novel by Petronius (the very incompleteness of which forced the director to give vent to his fantasy). Since Fellini felt pre-Christian Rome was as unfamiliar to contemporary audiences as a distant planet or a dream world, he reconstructed ancient Rome in the studios of Cinecittà, just as he had done earlier with the streets and squares of the modern city. At the same time, he changed his camera style radically, seeking alienation and distance rather than identification from the characters, with the result that his characteristically mobile camera often provides extremely static shots. Indeed, the extraordinary tracking shot opening the film and following Gitone (Max Born) and Encolpio (Martin Potter) through a Roman brothel seems uniquely anomalous in this contemplative, dreamlike film. The controlling vision linking the film's many disparate episodes together is a vision of a dehumanized, chaotic, disintegrating, pagan world with important analogies to our own times.

The sequence in the comic theater of Vernacchio (Fanfulla) shows Roman literary culture to have degenerated into breaking wind onstage just as the theater of Seneca and Terence has fallen to the level of the blood-letting in the Colosseum. The poverty of Eumolpo (Salvo Randone), the unappreciated poet, emphasizes the disregard for literature and poets. Ancient myth and ancient pagan religion are equally corrupt, and Fellini's characters are clearly seeking something that is yet to come (Christianity). The episode of the Villa of the Suicides, placed roughly in the middle of the



Fellini shooting an exterior scene for *Fellini Satyricon* on the huge sound stage of Teatro 5 at Cinecittà. By the time this extraordinarily original film was made, Fellini and Cinecittà's dream factory had become synonymous. Credit: MOMA

film, illuminates the themes of decadence and corruption that precede and follow it. A noble republican couple, fatally out of step with the evil Roman emperor, kill themselves rather than live as slaves.

The last sequence in the film reflects the unfinished nature of Petronius' masterpiece: the young men Fellini presents as the ancient ancestors of the hippies of the day set sail for new lands and new adventures—and, presumably, new religious and moral principles that have not yet been codified and calcified into dead or degenerate forms. In no other of Fellini's films does the analogy between the corruption of the past and our own present become so manifest. The contemporary viewer can recognize himself easily in the surrealistic images, the stylized makeup, the rhetorical flourishes, and the discontinuous, fragmented narrative. Paradoxically, the frightening, nightmare universe conjured up by Fellini's fertile imagination resembles the present more closely than the Rome of the Silver Age of Latin literature.

Fellini's Roma views Rome not through the lens of past history but from Fellini's own biography. It is a completely discontinuous narrative held together only by Fellini's recollections of Rome from three different perspectives: the Rome he remembered as a young schoolboy in provincial Rimini and at the cinema, the Rome he discovered when he moved there in 1939, and the "objective" picture of the Rome of Fellini's own time when the director shoots a documentary on the Eternal City. *Fellini's Roma*, like *Fellini: A Director's Notebook* (*Block-notes di un regista*, 1969), is not really a documentary but a "mockumentary"—to employ the term used by the director Spike Jonze's *Adaptation* (2002), itself an ingenious imitation of Fellini's *8½* from the perspective of the scriptwriter rather than the film director. In *Adaptation*, one of Jonze's characters correctly credits Fellini with the invention, or at least the popularizing, of false documentaries that purport to reflect reality but that actually only mirror a subjective or autobiographical point of view.