

Peter Bondanella, The Films of Federico Fellini
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La dolce vita

The Art Film Spectacular

La dolce vita (1959) 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 society as well. It received the Grand Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival, given by a jury that included the French mystery writer Georges Simenon¹ 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 (six hundred million lire), it grossed over 2.2 billion lire in only a few years at a time when tickets in Italy cost only between five hundred and one thousand lire.² However, Fellini himself did not become a wealthy man as a result, for as the price of the artistic freedom he required to reconstruct most of the film's sets inside the huge studios of Teatro 5 at Cinecittà when he might well have employed on-location shooting throughout the city of Rome, Fellini ultimately renounced the percentage of the profits his original contract specified.³ Fellini was never much of a businessman, and the loss of a percentage of what became a colossal return would probably not have bothered him a great deal, for his main concern was the film itself. Without the stupendous sets for which Piero Gherardi quite deservedly won an Oscar, *La dolce vita* would not have been such a smashing hit.

The film's success abroad probably accounted for the popularity of the Via Veneto among tourists in Rome for at least a decade, since this particular location was identified with the locus of Rome's "sweet life" of the title. Of course, after the international notoriety of *La strada* and *Le notti di Cabiria*, Fellini's international reputation was firmly established as one of Europe's most brilliant young superstar directors who could also deliver at the box office. However, in the uproar and moralistic protest that greeted the first screenings of *La dolce vita* in Italy, the political or cultural affiliations of those who either attacked or defended Fellini changed entirely from his earlier experience with *La strada* and *Le notti di Cabiria*, two successful works from the earlier "trilogy of grace or salvation." Before *La dolce vita*, Italian Catholics and French existentialist film critics were Fellini's champions, while Italian Marxists (led by Aristarco) 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, whereas the Marxist Left defended Fellini for what it now regarded as a courageous dissection of bourgeois decadence and moral corruption!

Enormous social and economic changes in Italy prepared the way for the film's reception. As the film was being prepared in 1958, Italy was in the midst of what would eventually be called the "economic miracle."⁴ Italy leapt from being almost an undeveloped 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, Olivetti typewriters, and (at least within Europe) extremely popular home appliances. The rapid growth in the Italian economy and 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. This may explain, at least in part, why so many of the Catholic clerical hierarchy reacted so violently against *La dolce vita* when it first appeared, since they regarded it as a film that not only reflected a decline of religious fervor in Italy but as a work of art that was actually instrumental in pulling the faithful away from the church. Besides being caught up in

a fundamental shift in religious values in Italy, *La dolce vita* also became a battleground between the Right and the Left, much as *La strada* had become a few years earlier; but whereas the conflict over the earlier film 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 press of the nation for some time. Many conservative opponents called for censorship of the film, believing it was an attack upon Italian culture in general, while 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).⁵ Supporters of the film on the Left saw the decadent lifestyle (that is, the so-called sweet life of the title) as an accurate and damning portrait of upper-middle-class and aristocratic corruption, and while nothing could be further from Fellini's mind than a Marxist denunciation of class conflict, *La dolce vita* certainly lends itself to this kind of interpretation.

Perhaps a more specific event was also influential in this ideological debate over *La dolce vita*, for the most famous criminal case of the decade, the Montesi Case, had just come to trial in 1957. The Montesi Case began in 1953 with the discovery of the body of twenty-one-year-old Wilma Montesi on the Ostia beach. It was believed that she had been killed during an orgy on an aristocratic estate nearby. The prime suspect was the son of Italy's Foreign Minister, who had apparently confessed his guilt to Rome's Chief of Police before the affair was swept under the rug by embarrassed Christian Democratic politicians. During the coverage of the trial, lurid descriptions of drugs, parties, and sexual escapades filled the Italian press, and the trial's publicity was increased when it became apparent that some of the suspects under investigation had connections to the Italian film industry. Precisely because the accused were finally acquitted, many Italians were convinced that high-level corruption among the rich, powerful, and famous (the same ambience pictured in *La dolce vita*) was responsible for a cover-up of epic proportions. As one of Fellini's biographers notes, memories of the Montesi Case were still fresh as Fellini began shooting *La dolce vita*, and a number of scenes in the final film seemed to recall this epic sex scandal.⁶

Other events related less to large macroeconomic shifts or ideological conflicts than to changes in mores and popular culture were also

reflected in *La dolce vita*, guaranteeing its role as a symbol of the times. Rome had come to be the focus of international cinema, including Hollywood, after American studios came to Italy to take advantage of good weather, cheap labor, and capital derived from their Italian profits; they were prohibited from exporting back home to California. In fact, during the period, Rome became known as "Hollywood on the Tiber," and with the production of William Wyler's *Ben-Hur* (1959), the winner of eleven Oscars, or Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra* (1963) – not to mention dozens of films of lesser fame – for a brief time the focus of international cinema was as much upon the Eternal City as on Los Angeles.⁷ 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. 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 phenomenon known as the paparazzi. Fellini's *La dolce vita* captured the spirit of this tabloid sensationalism; the name of one of the photographers in his film (Walter Paparazzo) is actually the origin of the English word "paparazzi." A number of the famous sequences from the film (the "orgy" sequence at the beach, the scene in which Anita Ekberg wades into the Trevi Fountain) actually were chronicled by such paparazzi as Pierluigi Praturlon and Tazio Secchiari, both of whom became Fellini's set photographers on a number of his works.⁸ The world of the Via Veneto as reported by the paparazzi and the tabloids reached the heights of notoriety during the notoriously public love affair between Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton during the Roman filming of *Cleopatra* in 1962.

The production of *La dolce vita* was so complex and involved such an investment of resources that it can easily be termed an art film colossal or spectacular. In the first place, it was an extremely lengthy film (175 min.). Over eighty different locations were employed in it, and the cast was enormous, the number of actors and bit-part players running into the hundreds. The Italian script includes four full pages of actor credits, listing over 120 different speaking parts. Fellini's original screenplay divided the script into 104 separate scenes. Many critics have attempted to shuffle this vast kaleidoscope of characters and sets into some

tidier organization, hoping to discover the film's "meaning" through such a search for structure. However, it is part of its originality that *La dolce vita* avoids traditional dramatic plotting and relies, instead, upon the power of visual images to move the spectator's attention along a vast journey through what might well be described as a modern-day version of Dante's *Divine Comedy*,⁹ 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 that of *La strada*, may be said to be a picaresque adventure – but one in which 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. Wealth, luxury, huge American cars covered with chrome, movie stars, and café-society life offer a fresco of existence that is at once luxurious and, at its core, without a soul.

A prologue introduces Marcello in a helicopter that is carrying a statue of Christ over an ancient Roman aqueduct. The journalist meets Maddalena (Anouk Aimée) at a fancy nightclub and makes love to her in a prostitute's home. Subsequently, he meets Sylvia (Anita Ekberg), a blond-bombshell American actress, takes her to visit Saint Peter's and another nightclub (one supposedly fashioned from the ancient ruins of the Baths of Caracalla). In the wee hours of dawn, Sylvia wades into the Trevi Fountain, followed by a mesmerized Marcello. Marcello then encounters an intellectual friend named Steiner (Alain Cuny) and accompanies his fiancée Emma (Yvonne Founneaux) and the photographer Paparazzo (Walter Santesso) to the outskirts of town, where two small children claim they have seen the Madonna. In an age where image is everything and substance counts for little, the event is captured live on television before being interrupted by a driving rain. Marcello subsequently takes Emma to Steiner's home, where a group of ridiculous intellectuals chat. Marcello meets a beautifully innocent young girl named Paola (Valeria Ciangottini), who seems to be an angel from an Umbrian painting. He then meets his father (Annibale Ninchi) on the Via Veneto and goes with Paparazzo to another nightclub, the Cha-Cha Club, where they meet Fanny (Magali Noël). His father seems to have a slight heart attack after Fanny takes him to her apartment, where she has obviously been engaged by Marcello to make love to his

father. Marcello then joins with a large group of rich and/or beautiful partygoers who drive outside Rome to Bassano di Sturti, where a collection of Roman aristocrats have a world-weary revel at an ancient castle. Shortly thereafter, Marcello learns that Steiner has committed suicide after killing his two children. He then presides over what passed for an "orgy" in 1959 at Fregene, which includes a mild striptease that seemed extremely risqué at the time. As dawn breaks, the group discovers a monster fish on the beach, while Marcello tries but fails to communicate with Paola nearby. The film concludes with a close-up of Paola's smiling face.

La strada had abandoned a quest for social realism and the notion of a socially determined film character for a fablelike fairy tale of Beauty and the Beast based upon a secular notion of Christian conversion and grace. *La dolce vita* abandons the traditional notion of dramatic development for a dizzying ride through the present seen through the eyes of a director who examines a world without grace – a decadent, even corrupt world without God. If Fellini's trilogy of grace or salvation, the high point of which was certainly *La strada*, presupposed the possibility of some transcendence, some escape from the bounds of reality and quotidian existence, *La dolce vita* chronicles what amounts to a major shift in Fellini's personal view of the world, for it underlines just how nearly impossible such transcendence can be to achieve, how difficult it is to receive the kind of grace that characters such as Gelsomina or Cabiria in Fellini's earlier films effortlessly enjoyed.

It was Marxist poet, critic, and director, Pier Paolo Pasolini, who saw beneath Fellini's chronicles of social decadence to note that even while *La dolce vita* embodied what he called a "non-dialectical relationship between sin and innocence," the film nevertheless represented "the highest and most absolute product of Catholicism" of the recent past because Fellini's characters are "so full of the joy of being."¹⁰ In fact, the paradoxical aspect of the world of *La dolce vita* is that Fellini presents his fantasy world *without* rigorous moralistic judgments. His Roman metaphor for the contemporary world of image making, public relations, movie stardom, and the glamorous life-styles of the "rich and famous" is presented with bemused detachment and is most certainly viewed "not as a trial seen by a judge but rather by an accomplice."¹¹ As Fellini is ultimately a great comic genius, and comedy is always an art of acceptance, even when Fellini seems to denounce a condition or a character for some presumed moral failing, as he appar-



Steiner (Alain Cuny), the world-weary intellectual and friend of Marcello, commits suicide after killing his children. [Photo: The Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive]

ently does in such works as *Il Casanova di Fellini*, before the "trial" ends, Fellini inevitably becomes a witness for the defense as well. This is exactly what occurs in his portrait of Marcello Rubini in *La dolce vita*.

What redeems the sublunary, graceless world of the Via Veneto in Fellini's film is poetry, vibrant images that paradoxically, as Pasolini perceptively argued, were so full of life that they overwhelm any sense of futility, corruption, and despair. A few years after the international success of *La dolce vita*, Fellini told a writer for *The New Yorker*: "Movies now have gone past the phase of prose narrative and are coming nearer and nearer to poetry. I am trying to free my work from certain constructions – a story with a beginning, a development, an ending. It should be more like a poem with meter and cadence."¹² In fact, what Fellini was attempting with *La dolce vita* was a modernist ap-

proach to film plot that he himself compared to Picasso's cubist revolution that transformed modern art from a representational to an 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. Of better yet, try a decomposition in the manner of Picasso. The cinema is narrative in the nineteenth-century sense: now let's try to do something different."¹³ *La strada* had moved beyond a traditional notion of realistic representation of reality with a realistic protagonist. 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 model of Picasso's abstract decomposition of realism. It was a bold venture but one that made cinematic history.

Unlike conventional cinematic narrative, which aims at telling a story with a beginning, middle, and ending, 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. We have already noted in discussing *La strada* how Fellini privileges processions, parades, and an organization of plot not unlike a collection of variety-hall or circus acts. Stuart Rosenthal has noted that as a result, Fellini's cinematic narrative may be compared to the structure of music-hall shows or even acts in a circus:

Variety shows consist of many acts, one on the heels of the next. The circus not only presents its attractions in rapid fire order, but frequently has several in progress simultaneously. The result is a dense, variegated program that moves rapidly through a number of different moods and is constantly stimulating. That last line could serve equally well as a description of any of Fellini's films. The key to the breathtaking pace of Fellini's work is its density – the packing of a wealth of detail and event into the shortest reasonable time span. The films themselves are episodic – the episode being the structural equivalent of a music-hall act. Each episode is internally cohesive, almost a short, self-contained movie. With respect to the narrative, the episodes often have only casual interconnections. They come together in a given film because they have a direct bearing upon the characters.¹⁴

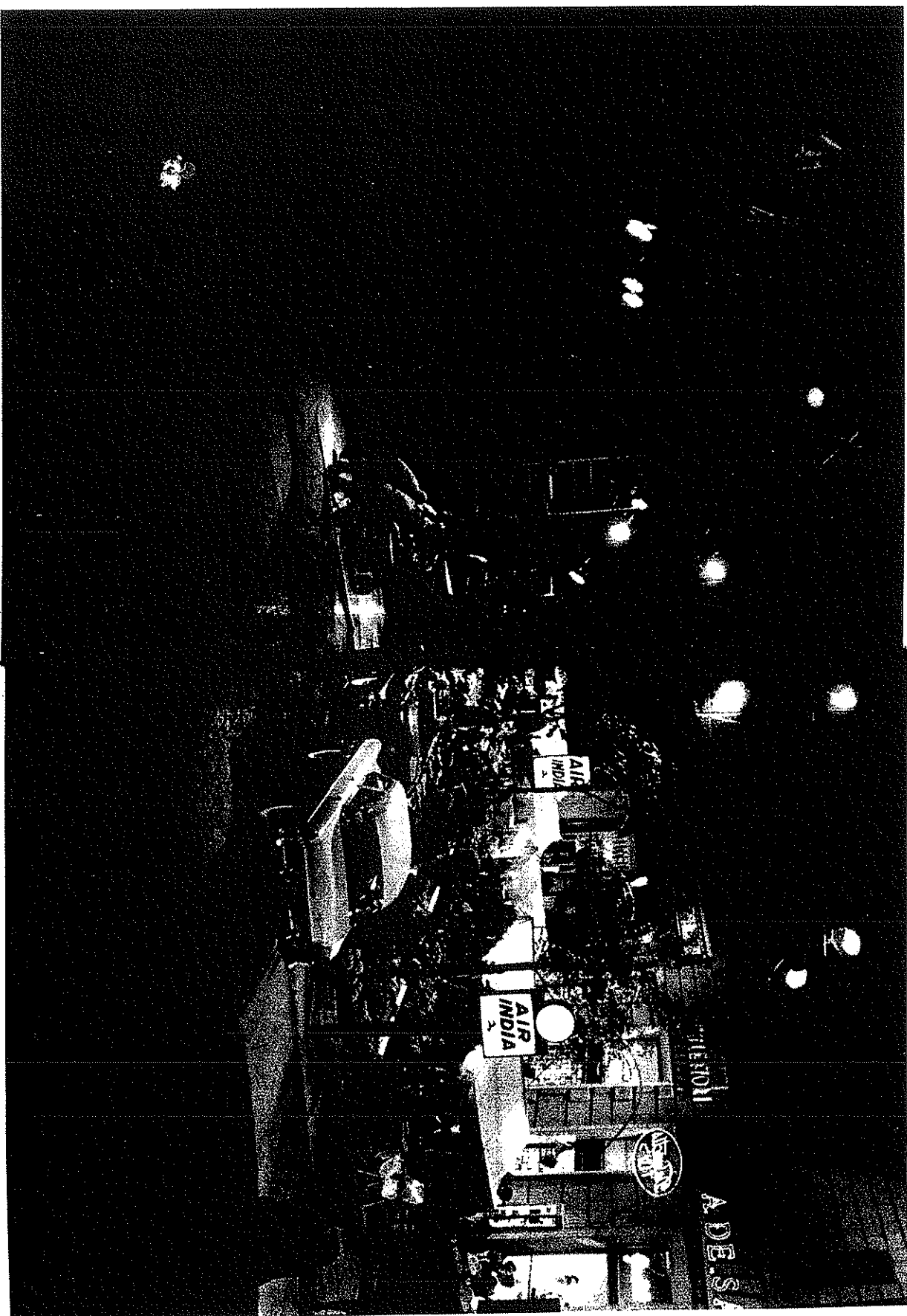
Fellini had reportedly considered calling the film *2000 Years after Jesus Christ* or perhaps *Babylon 2000*. Whether these apocryphal titles were ever actually considered or not, they point to the fact that Fellini wished to show in *La dolce vita* a contemporary world that has been cut adrift from traditional values and symbols, especially those of Christianity, and has been 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, but Fellini does not only 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: "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."¹⁵

It would be impossible to analyze all of *La dolce vita* in this chapter, but a selection of several key sequences will underline Fellini's characteristic narrative style and the way he employs one or several startling poetic images to focus our attention upon each individual episode in his picaresque narrative as Marcello wanders through Rome. The sequences that open and conclude the film are excellent examples to demonstrate Fellini's style. Both provide unforgettable visual images that incorporate a number of Fellini's themes. The opening sequence of the film is justly famous: It features a helicopter carrying a statue of Jesus (called Christ the Laborer in the script) with its outstretched arms giving an ironic benediction to the city underneath. Immediately following the opening credits, we see this statue passing over an ancient Roman aqueduct, and the imaginative shot manages to combine Rome's present (the helicopter), Rome's ancient Roman legacy (the imposing aqueduct structure), and Rome's Christian identity as the seat of the Roman Catholic Church (the statue). One of Fellini's major themes in the film is the juxtaposition of Rome's heroic past with its more prosaic present, and this opening image captures this idea without even the necessity of dialogue. After Marcello and Paparazzo (who follow the helicopter with the statue in another helicopter) dally over one of the high-rise buildings in Rome to buzz several women sunbathing and attempt, without success, to obtain their telephone numbers, we are

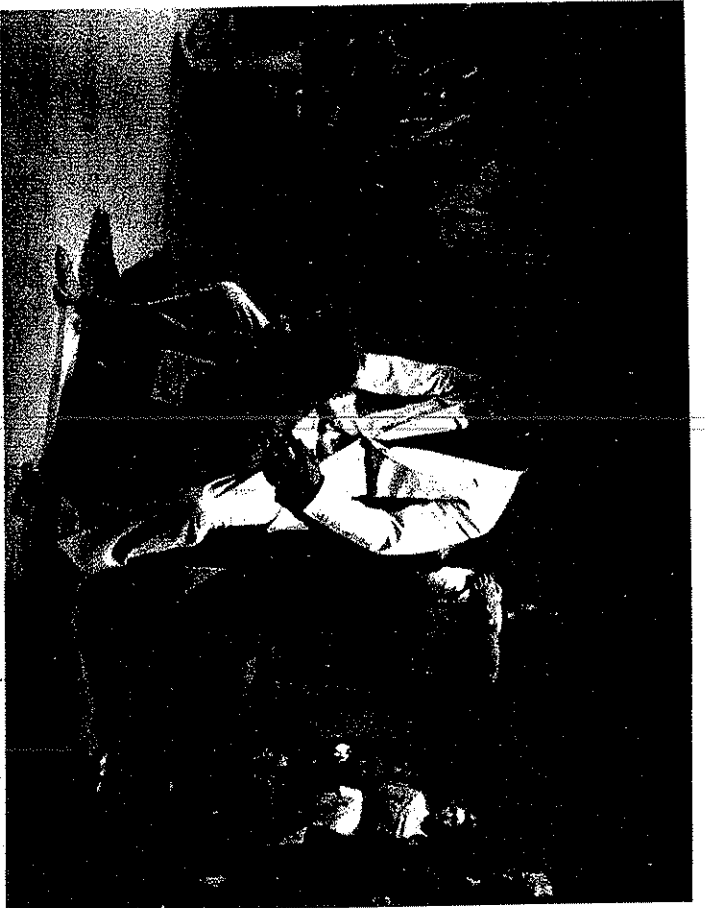
shown the dome of Saint Peter's Cathedral, the statue's destination, and a frontal shot of the statue with the smiling face of Jesus, while church bells peal on the sound track. The shift to a second major sequence is effected with an abrupt and even shocking cut from the figure of Christ to that of a masked Siamese dancer wearing a fantastic oriental costume and entertaining a world-weary crowd of the rich in one of the many nightclubs that *La dolce vita* visits. Marcello, the gossip-column journalist now at work, busily asks the waiters serving the celebrities and decadent Roman aristocrats what the most famous had for supper: After a discussion of whether a prince had white wine or champagne with his snails, Marcello encounters a friend, a wealthy Roman woman named Maddalena. Maddalena is wearing a pair of dark sunglasses, which she removes for just an instant to reveal a black eye, obviously given to her by one of her lovers. Marcello puts on an equally dark pair of sunglasses. Of course, sunglasses in the evening in a nightclub are totally unnecessary, but Fellini employs them to show that the characters are playing roles and are avoiding the discovery of their real faces and thoughts. Like the masked Siamese dancer, they are essentially unknowable. Like a matched pair of night owls, Maddalena and Marcello go off together, their sunglasses intact. We then cut to the third sequence on the Via Veneto. That this is not the actual street but a set completely reconstructed inside the studios of Cinecittà is evident because the scene is shot on a flat street, whereas the real Via Veneto is a long, sloping and curving street. Maddalena and Marcello jump into her 1958 Cadillac convertible – which in the Roman street constructed inside the studio seems larger than a tank – and they drive off to what will eventually end in their lovenaking in a prostitute's apartment. In each segment of this relatively brief series of sequences, there is a dominant image: Christ the Laborer juxtaposed against the aqueduct; the masked Siamese dancer juxtaposed to the pair of lovers wearing sunglasses; a huge American car completely out of place in Roman traffic; and finally a leaky basement in a prostitute's apartment where Maddalena goes to make love because she implicitly needs the excitement of pretending to be a prostitute in order to receive pleasure from her tryst with Marcello. With these few sequences, presented to the spectator in only a few minutes and brilliantly edited and photographed, Fellini has unveiled the basic themes of *La dolce vita*: contemporary life defined as all façade and masquerade and set against the backdrop of the an-

cient and Christian past. It is a moment of cultural confusion but one that is visually extremely rich and satisfying. It is possible for the spectator to forget completely that such a world may also be that of decadent gossip columnists, promiscuous society women, jaded aristocrats, and avaricious paparazzi. We have been taken for a brief journey through four entirely different locations by a master showman, whose poetic powers cause us to suspend our judgment in wonder at his skill.

Fellini's conclusion to *La dolce vita* is no less impressive than are his opening sequences. At the break of dawn after an all-night party on the beach at Fregene on the coast near Rome, where Nadia (Nadia Gray) does a striptease (one very timid by today's standards) to celebrate her divorce, the revelers are called outside by a commotion on the beach. Some fishermen have drawn in their nets with a dead monster fish, resembling a huge mania ray with an enormous eye that seems to stare directly at the partygoers and toward the camera as well. Marcello is clearly drunk, and in the previous sequence, we have learned that he has abandoned his ambitious plans to write serious literature. Now, he has given himself over to the worst kind of society parties and gossip reporting, and his fall from grace is evident in his world-weary expression and his lackluster movements. He hears a voice calling from across an inlet, turns, and sees a young girl he met earlier at a beach restaurant – Paola, the girl he had described as looking as lovely and as innocent as an angel in an Umbrian painting. She waves at Marcello and speaks to him but her words are drowned out by the sea. One of the women at the party calls for Marcello to leave with her, but he is still drawn to Paola's innocence and freshness. She gestures to him and smiles, and her eyes follow Marcello as he disappears into the distance. The last shot of the film is not of Marcello but of Paola's enigmatic smile. We must place this series of brief shots in its proper context. Before we see it, we have been taken through a dizzying tour of Roman corruption and decadence, but Marcello's desire to change his life and to make something of his talents as a real writer, as well as Paola's appearance in the film as a symbol of purity and innocence, were elements in the narrative that held out the hope of change, of embracing what Dante had called centuries earlier *la vita nuova*, a "new life." We are once again, as in the conclusion of *La strada*, on the shores of the sea. At the end of that earlier film, Zampanò was forced to face the emptiness of his life without Gelsomina by the emotive power of the music that



The enormous set re-creating Rome's Via Veneto inside the studios of Cinecittà for *La dolce vita*. [Photo: The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive]



(above) A scene from the famous "orgy" sequence of *La dolce vita*: Marcello (Marcello Mastroianni) humiliates a drunken woman while the revelers dance and watch. [Photo: The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive]

(facing, top) The conclusion of the "orgy" sequence in *La dolce vita* with a striptease by Nadia (Nadia Gray) to celebrate her divorce. [Photo: The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive]

(facing, bottom) Marcello Mastroianni, Fellini, and one of his crew examine the monster fish created for the conclusion of *La dolce vita*. [Photo: The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive]

had become Gelsomina's theme song. His inarticulate, animallike cry and his tears embodied in cinematic terms – sound track and image but essentially no wordy dialogue – Fellini's belief that even into such a brute's life, a form of secular grace could descend. There was always hope for *la vita nuova*. Only a few years later, Fellini's perspective seems to have become gloomier. The death of the monster fish, which



glares at both the partygoers and at us with an opaque and accusing eye, may well be Fellini's way of saying that he no longer believes in the possibility of conversion, no longer holds out the hope of grace for Marcello in the same way he had for Zamparò. Certainly, the world he has presented during *La dolce vita* is a world without God. Nevertheless, 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 triumphant) over 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, as Pasolini has argued, contain such a love and zest for life, embodied by the film's creator in each and every frame of the film, that we do not completely abandon all hope.

No matter how *La dolce vita* is interpreted, there is little question that the film moves along a trajectory of imagery exploiting the themes of corruption and decadence versus innocent and purity. Moreover, viewed against the backdrop of Fellini's earlier works, which were not only about these themes but also projected an essentially optimistic perspective, it is tempting to see *La dolce vita* as the work of a Catholic moralist and to react to it much as Fellini's outraged critics did when it first appeared. However, if there is anything morally objectionable about the film, it is surely not the fresco of the emptiness in contemporary life many critics believe it paints for us, which by now has become a standard critique of late-twentieth-century culture. Perhaps the most original aspect of *La dolce vita* is that its creator is absolutely not morally outraged by the world he depicts and finds it incomprehensible that others are. Fellini really never understood the harsh attacks upon his work, and he was always unable to comprehend a judgmental view of life in general. What intrigues him about the world he has created is its vivacity, its energy, the power of its imagery, and the last thing in his mind was a denunciation or a jeremiad of the world in which he was perfectly comfortable. As Fellini told Giovanni Grazzini:

I have always said that the Rome of *La dolce vita* was an internal city and that the title of the film had no moral or denigrating purpose. It simply meant to say that in spite of everything life had its profound undeniable sweetness. I quite agree with those who maintain that the author is the last to talk knowledgeably about his work. And I don't want to appear to be someone who tends, through coquetry or exhibitionism, to demystify or diminish what he has done. But I believe I never had any specific intention to denounce, criticize, scourge, or satirize. I don't strew over protests, angers, things I can't tolerate. I'm not out to accuse anyone.¹⁶

Fellini's unique approach to his material is evident not only in the conclusion of the film but also in the most important sequences preceding Marcello's encounter with Sylvia, the sex goddess and Swedish movie star who comes to Rome from Hollywood, accompanied by her drunken scriptwriter lover Robert (Lex Barker). Fellini certainly did not invent the fact that Italian men have long been attracted to blondes, since this has been the case as long as Italy has been a favorite spot for northern visitors. Certainly one of the most vivid memories Fellini retained from his childhood in Rimini, where the Italian men would engage in contests during the tourist season to see who could seduce the most foreigners, was the mysterious Nordic beauties who inhabited the Grand Hotel there. The kind of sexual frenzy Italian males could undergo in the presence of a beautiful woman is underscored by a famous scene in Michelangelo Antonioni's *L'avventura*, the other significant film released during the year of *La dolce vita*. In that much more sober film, Southern Italian men nearly cause a riot over their sexual attentions to a lovely woman in a small Sicilian town. It would be difficult to overestimate the impact that the physical beauty of Anita Ekberg had on Fellini or the Italians who lined up for hours to see the film when it was first released. In fact, when journalists mention *La dolce vita* to Fellini, the director has remarked:

I answer right away, as in word association tests: Anita Ekberg! Twenty-five years after the film, its title, its image are still inseparable from Anita. I saw her for the first time in a full page photograph in an American magazine: a powerful panther playing the mischievous young girl, astride the banister of a stairway. "My god" – I thought – "don't ever let me meet her!" That sense of the marvelous,

of a hypnotic stupor of the disbelief one feels confronting exceptional creatures like the giraffe, the elephant, the baobab tree I felt again several years later when I saw her coming toward me in the garden of the Hôtel de la Ville... I seemed to be discovering the platonic reality of things, of elements, and in a total stupor I murmured to myself: "Ah, these are ear lobes, there are gums, this is human skin."¹⁷

Fellini devotes a number of key sequences of the first half of *La dolce vita* to Sylvia. In rapid succession, his narrative unfolds the following events:

1. Sylvia's dramatic arrival at Ciampino Airport, where she is assailed by paparazzi and journalists;
2. her drive into the center of Rome in an American car, a 1958 Ford Fairlane convertible;
3. her press conference in her suite at the Hotel Excelsior on the Via Veneto (in which her hilarious answers to the press corps of Rome are cross-cut with a telephone conversation between Marcello, who is covering the conference, and his fiancée Emma, who is having a fit of jealousy over Marcello's attention to Sylvia);
4. Sylvia's climb to the dome of Saint Peter's, followed by Marcello joining her on the top of the church;
5. Sylvia's visit to a Roman nightclub, supposedly built into the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla;
6. Sylvia's drive around Rome with Marcello in a Triumph convertible;
7. the visit to the Trevi Fountain in the wee hours of the morning;
8. Sylvia's return with Marcello to the Hotel Excelsior at dawn and their confrontation with Robert, her husband.

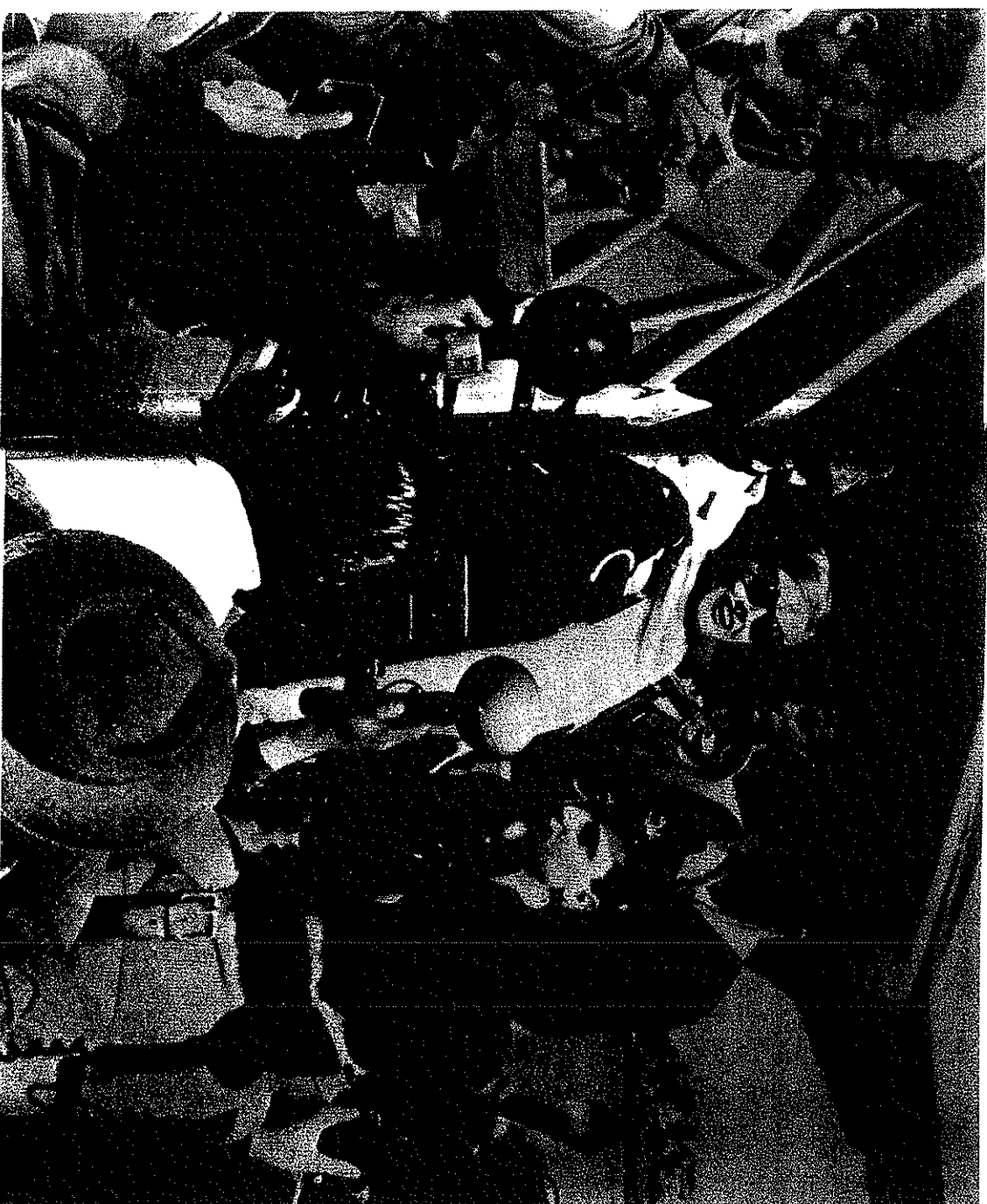
The manner in which Fellini moves rapidly from one sequence about Sylvia to another, building, as he goes, an intricate series of images around her character, presents his mature directorial style in as forceful a manner as possible. The portion of *La dolce vita* devoted to Sylvia not only reveals much about Fellini's style but also underscores something that is often lost in discussions of Fellini's symbolic or poetic imagery – the comic framework within which the entire series of sequences takes place. During the shooting of his next film, 8½, Fellini had attached a note to his camera which read: "Remember that this is

a comic film."¹⁸ In fact, this note might well be the leitmotif for all of Fellini's works, *La dolce vita* included. It is an indispensable aspect of Fellini's perspective on the subject matter he treats that it be viewed through a comic lens. It is precisely because Fellini's works are fundamentally comic that he takes no moral stands and pronounces no jeremiads against the figures he has created: Where others see corruption and decadence in the world of *La dolce vita*, Fellini sees a kind of animalistic and vital energy that fascinates him and absolves his weak protagonists of any ultimate blame for their misfortunes.

Thus, the paradoxical nature of Sylvia's role in *La dolce vita* is that she serves both a highly symbolic function in the film, bearing the weight of a number of key ideas that inform the entire work, and she is also a shallow figure, a bubble-head actress whose interviews underscore her ignorance and her complete naïveté. No director better than Fellini has chronicled the empty rituals and the inane press conferences associated with the industry of the cinema itself, and on one level, Sylvia allows Fellini to use his own artistic medium as a metaphor for false communication, one of his favorite themes. Thus, the endless flashing of the paparazzi's cameras that occurs through the Sylvia routine, both day and night, are meant to emphasize just how little light these predatory photographers shed on anything of any real importance.

The sequence identified as Sylvia no. 1 above is a wonderful example of how Fellini skillfully creates a comic mood. As Sylvia arrives and the paparazzi explode their cameras toward the Alitalia plane that has stopped on the Ciampino runway, Sylvia starts down the ladder, her eyes hidden by a pair of dark sunglasses (as we have already seen, one of Fellini's favorite props). She descends but some of the photographers need more pictures, so she repeats her entrance, blowing kisses to the crowd of men practically in heat until they request that she remove her sunglasses. Suddenly her expression changes to a stern rebuke and she refuses. Her producer arrives with a man carrying a Neapolitan pizza, and the radio announcer declares: "The beautiful Sylvia bites into a typical and tasty Italian product. And with her vivacious coloring and her perfume, she really seems to symbolize the gaiety and the happiness of our country."¹⁹ The sequence quickly turns to a procession of cars, including the Ford convertible carrying Sylvia, which moves up the old Appian Way into the city of Rome. Sylvia's only comment on this historic spot is the ludicrous remark to her secretary: "Oh Edna, look at

Sylvia (Anita Ekberg) arrives at Rome's airport. [Photo: The Museum of Modern Art / Film Stills Archive]



all the chickens!" An abrupt cut takes us into Sylvia's suite in the Hotel Excelsior in the third sequence, where the sex queen, with the assistance of an interpreter and prompter, is responding to a series of inane questions. Her conversation is actually a parody of the kinds of press conferences Marilyn Monroe was reputed to give. For example, when

asked if she sleeps in pajamas or a nightgown, her response ("I sleep in only two drops of French perfume") obviously repeats one of the remarks attributed to the American actress. Fellini cannot resist a poke at his Marxist detractors from the past, for one of the questions, delivered in a pretentious and professorial manner, asks Sylvia if Italian

neorealism is dead for the modern cinema, and before she can reply, revealing what is most likely a complete lack of interest or information on Italian neorealism, her interpreter barks "Say alive," and Sylvia dutifully says "Alive," which is followed by enthusiastic applause from the press corps. Other clichés follow in rapid succession: The happiest day of Sylvia's life is defined as "it was a night, dear," and her secretary even delivers the answer before Sylvia can repeat it; when asked what she likes best, she says three things – love, love, love; finally, when asked why she works in pictures, Fellini focuses upon her ample cleavage as Sylvia wiggles her torso and replies: "Because they discovered I have a *big talent*."

This hilarious conversation and parody of celebrity interviews moves quickly to a large set that simulates a winding staircase up to the dome of Saint Peter's. This was actually the first scene filmed during the production of *La dolce vita*: Sylvia has donned a costume that represents a parody of a provincial priest – round, broad-brimmed black hat, a black dress, and a white collar. Continuing the insider jokes about Marilyn Monroe, Sylvia remarks as she climbs: "This is the right way to lose weight. I must remember to tell Marilyn." At the top of the balcony, alone with Marcello, she gazes out enraptured at Saint Peter's Square and innocently asks him where Giotto's Campanile is. Of course, it is in Florence, not Rome! Suddenly, she realizes that Marcello is a handsome man and removes his dark glasses as her hat blows off and floats down to the square.

We once again cut abruptly to one of the two most impressive sequences in the film, the dance party in a nightclub supposedly built in the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla. Marcello is now completely taken with Sylvia, and as he dances with her, he delivers a speech in Italian (incomprehensible, of course, to Sylvia, who does not speak a word of Italian) that is a delightful parody of the kind of Latin-lover pick-up lines every female tourist has heard a dozen times every day on the Italian streets:

You are everything, Sylvia . . . don't you know that you are everything, everything. . . . You are the first woman on the first day of creation. You are the mother, the sister, the lover, the friend . . . an angel, a devil, the earth, the home. . . . Yes, that's what you are. Sylvia, the home.²⁰

The arrival of an American actor named Frankie Stout who knows Sylvia immediately changes the atmosphere of the party into a frenzied revel. Frankie's face – backlit carefully to emphasize his unusual features – recalls the classical satyrs found on antique Roman statues. (The English script even provides a photograph of one of them to underline the tie between the character and such Roman statues.) Sylvia and Frankie, followed by an active camera that is extremely mobile throughout the entire sequence, begin what can only be called a Baccic celebration of erotic energy that is dampened only by Robert's drunken insults to Sylvia and Frankie after they return to the table. Racing off in tears, Sylvia is followed by Marcello who, after two brief intermediary sequences in his car, finds himself with Sylvia in the heart of Rome late at night. In one of them, Sylvia howls like an animal in answer to a barking dog, and her howls ignite a chorus of barking dogs whose enthusiasm certainly reflects that of the men in pursuit of her (Marcello in particular): Like the dogs, she seems to possess a natural energy that stands in opposition to the enervated and world-weary character of all those around her.

Seeing a tiny kitten abandoned on the street, Sylvia immediately picks it up and sends Marcello off to a bar for milk. When he returns with a saucer for the kitten, he sees an apparition: Sylvia wading in the middle of the Trevi Fountain. It is one of the most unforgettable moments in Fellini's cinema or in any films of the period. As the English script describes it, Marcello is captivated by the sight of this figure of exquisite beauty in the fountain: "He would like to enter her mood, yet he feels absurd. But her naturalness, her total abandon to sensual delight, pulls on him. He sees her as the figure of Eve, fresh and unspoiled in a decadent and sophisticated world."²¹ As Sylvia lifts her hand from the water and holds it over Marcello's head as if to baptize or bless him, he leans toward her to give her a kiss, mesmerized by her innocence and beauty. At that moment, in an ironic comment on his own capacity for spiritual renewal, the Trevi Fountain ceases cascading its water supply as dawn breaks. Marcello's adventure with this water nymph ends abruptly here and even more comically at the entrance to the Hotel Excelsior, where he returns Sylvia to her celebrity world. Waiting for Marcello is Robert who, as the predatory paparazzi ready to snap the scene point out, once played Tarzan. Lex Barker (1919–73)

Marcello (Marcello Mastroianni) and Sylvia (Anita Ekberg) during their historic wade into the Trevi Fountain, a scene still remembered by countless tourists to the Eternal City. [Photo: The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive]



did, in fact, play Tarzan in five films between 1949 and 1953 and was always identified with that particularly successful role. At the time he appeared in *La dolce vita*, Barker had begun a European career, starring in Italian and German westerns. While his character Robert may be a drunk, he is more than a match for the effete Marcello, and he

knocks him down to the sidewalk as Marcello's paparazzi colleagues turn the event into a tabloid photograph.

The sequences tracking Sylvia's arrival in Rome to her return to the Hotel Excelsior and Marcello's disgraceful performance in the face of an outraged Tarzan represent some of Fellini's most imaginative and

comic scenes. He manages to capture the shallowness and lack of cultural depth of Sylvia as well as the self-delusion of a famous and frivolous Marcello. These characters from the world of the cinema (Fellini's own world, it must be remembered) are projected against the backdrop of some of the most celebrated of historical signifiers that represent various highpoints of Western civilization: the Appian Way (republican Rome), the Baths of Caracalla (imperial Rome), Saint Peter's (Christian Rome), the Trevi Fountain (papal Rome). Naturally, poor Marcello and Sylvia do not quite measure up; and, in fact, it is not Fellini's intention that they should. The energy in *La dolce vita* does not reside in either the jaded Marcello or the beautiful but shallow Sylvia. The real energy of *La dolce vita* resides in the director's camera, as Fellini transforms this fresco of decadence into a vibrant portrait that intrigues the spectator without necessarily drawing him or her into that evanescent world.

Fellini accomplishes this miracle in a number of ways. In the first place, every sequence of *La dolce vita* is literally teeming with characters. Almost every one 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. These sometimes grotesque figures are skillfully choreographed by the director, and their movements are constantly captured by a masterful photography, alternating long tracking shots and traveling shots. Rather than employing the normal lens that most directors employed at the time for wide-screen photography – 50mm, 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. 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 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 constantly during the production of *La dolce vita*: First they would attempt to find an authentic location in Rome or 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 occurred not only in the famous reconstruction of the Via Veneto but also with the Baths of Caracalla or the stairs of Saint Peter's. In the instances where Fellini employed authentic locations – the Trevi Fountain sequence, for example, or the sequences shot at the ancient castle in Bassano di Sturti – it could be argued that the real locations were already sufficiently "Fellinian" to need no touch of the master's fantasy.

I have focused upon Fellini's treatment of Sylvia in *La dolce vita* because I believe these sequences reflect most fully Fellini's powerful imagination, his comic conception of character, his narrative techniques, and his visual style. Sylvia is continuously transformed in these scenes: The sex kitten and buxom movie star thrusting her "talent" toward the press corps becomes an incredulous little girl in awe of Saint Peter's (although confusing Rome with Florence); then she is the frenzied dancer cavorting with a Roman satyr in a bacchanal worthy of the classical tradition, complete with an Italian rock 'n' roll singer imitating Elvis Presley; after howling at the moon with the dogs of the Roman countryside, she is once again metamorphosed into an innocent little schoolgirl who is trying to save a stray kitten and then, and most brilliantly, into a water nymph emerging from the miraculous waters of the Trevi Fountain. After these many metamorphoses of her personality that would require a modern Ovid to chronicle their symbolic content, Fellini brings her back to the real world she has only momentarily left – the Hotel Excelsior, her drunken Tarzan lover – and the final image we see of her is as a woman in love with a scoundrel and willing to suffer public humiliation from him to avoid losing him.

Anita Ekberg (Miss Sweden in 1951) was, as a history of Italian actresses put it, "maxfactored in Hollywood where she established herself in a series of comedies as a big, blonde, rather silly woman of the early Marilyn Monroe type."²⁴ Fellini selected her for the role of Sylvia in *La dolce vita* not because of her acting talents, which she certainly had not displayed previously, but for the particular personification of the Nordic beauty that Italians usually identified with Hollywood actresses. Her "talent," as Fellini has her admit in the press conference, was her bust. She was the ultimate expression of what Italians called the *maggiorata* ("sweater girl" or buxom woman) 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. In fact, Ekberg had already waded into the Trevi Fountain before Fellini shot *La dolce vita*: She was photographed by the paparazzo Pierluigi Praturion, who sold the images for a substantial sum of money.²⁵ Still, Fellini's version of the event, shot in the icy waters of a January night and not in the heat of August when Pierluigi shot the original photos, 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 to a world of corruption and decadence that has quite rightly been called "the symbolic image of postwar cinema, just what the Odesa Steps sequence in *The Battleship Potemkin* [*Bronenosets Potemkin*] (1926) was to silent films."²⁶ The paradox of Sylva's role in *La dolce vita* is that this blond bombshell, this ultimate symbol of sex appeal in the *maggiorata* style of the late 1950s, eventually becomes as memorable an image of innocence and purity in Fellini's world as does Paola, the little Umbrian angel whose smile concludes the film.

La dolce vita may be said to represent both a break with Fellini's early works and a stepping-stone to an entirely different kind of cinema. The films before *La dolce vita* focus upon a recognizably real world, although this recognizably real world is depicted in a poetic and lyrical manner by Fellini. As one French critic put it quite accurately, Fellini will now move from the world of the Lumière brothers to that much more fanciful universe of Méliès to create a cinema based upon the spectacular, dream, imagination, and memory.²⁷ With an international reputation after *La dolce vita* far surpassing any of his European and most of his Hollywood colleagues, Fellini was now ready to turn his camera's eye upon himself to examine the very nature of artistic creativity in the cinema.

of the final work and does not contain a number of major revisions that became part of the completed film during shooting and editing. In fact, very few of the published Fellini scripts in Italian are continuity scripts based upon the final cut. "*La strada*": *Federico Fellini, Director*, is an accurate continuity script in English yet also reprints a number of variants. In citing from *La strada*, I shall refer only to shot numbers taken from this continuity script, since it numbers each and every shot in the final version of the film.

18. Fellini, "Genesis of *La strada*," p. 184.
19. Marcus, "Fellini's *La strada*: Transcending Neorealism," at 94.
20. For the translation of the passage from the original shooting script that was modified in the final version of the film, see note 9 in the section entitled "Notes on the Continuity Script" in Fellini, "*La strada*": *Federico Fellini, Director*, pp. 165-75, at 169-70.
21. The best treatment of Fellini's poetic imagery in his early films is to be found in Gilbert Salachas, "Fellini's Imagery from *Variety Lights to Juliet of the Spirits*," in Bondanella, ed., *Federico Fellini: Essays in Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 205-19; another important discussion of Fellini's themes that takes into account works from his mature career may be found in Stuart Rosenthal, "Spectacle: Magnifying the Personal Vision," in *ibid.*, pp. 289-302.
22. See Peter Harcourt, "The Secret Life of Federico Fellini," in *ibid.*, pp. 239-53, at p. 242; rpt. in Fellini, "*La strada*": *Federico Fellini, Director*, pp. 239-52, at 242.
23. For a discussion of how Fellini came to invent the image of the horse, see Moraldo Rossi, "Fellini and the Phantom Horse" in Fellini, "*La strada*": *Federico Fellini, Director*, pp. 188-9.
24. Guido Aristarco, "Guido Aristarco Answers Fellini," in *ibid.*, pp. 208-10, at 209.
25. Peter Harcourt, "Secret Life of Federico Fellini," p. 250-1; also in Bondanella, ed., *Federico Fellini: Essays in Criticism*, p. 251.

Chapter 3. *La dolce vita*: The Art Film Spectacular

1. For a collection of the letters exchanged between Simenon and Fellini after a friendship between them emerged from the Cannes experience, see *Carissimo Simenon - Mon Cher Fellini: Carteggio di Federico Fellini e Georges Simenon*, eds. Claude Gauteur and Silvia Sager (Milan: Adelphi Edizioni, 1998). Tullio Kezich, *Su "La dolce vita" con Federico Fellini: Giorno per giorno la storia di un film che ha fatto epoca* (Venice: Marsilio Editori, 1996), provides a diary of the making of the film. For the Italian script, see Federico Fellini, *La dolce vita* (Milan: Garzanti, 1981), a large section of which (pp. 161-220) contains an appendix reprinting many of

the scandalized, negative, or hysterical reactions against the film; an abbreviated English version is published in Federico Fellini, *La dolce vita*, trans. Oscar Deliso and Bernard Shir-Cliff (New York: Ballantine, 1961). For a photographic history of the infamous paparazzi, the photographers whose very name is derived from Fellini's film, see Andrea Nemiz, *Vita, dolce vita* (Rome: Network Edizioni, 1983); for hundreds of beautiful photographs shot on the set of the film, see Gianfranco Angelucci, ed., "*La dolce vita*": *un film di Federico Fellini* (Rome: Editalia, 1989).

2. The figure is given in American billions. The box-office success of *La dolce vita* is discussed by Tullio Kezich in Fellini (Milan: Camunia Editrice, 1987), pp. 292-3.
3. John Baxter, *Fellini* (New York: St. Martin's, 1993), p. 164, reports that Fellini received fifty thousand dollars in cash plus a gold watch from his producer, Angelo Rizzoli.
4. See Paul Ginsborg's *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics 1943-1988* (New York: Penguin, 1990), especially chap. 7 ("The 'Economic Miracle,' Rural Exodus and Social Transformation, 1958-1963"), to which I am indebted for his excellent discussion of the rapid social and economic changes that took place while *La dolce vita* was being made and that eventually came to be symbolized by the film itself.
5. Fellini, *La dolce vita* (Italian ed.), p. 206, reports a letter published by the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* on 5 March 1960 that calls attention to the fact that a number of the most famous scenes in the film could be grounds for prosecution under this law. It must also be recorded that not all Catholics or priests rejected the film. Padre Angelo Arpa, a Jesuit who had befriended Fellini and had assisted him when he ran into censorship problems with *Le notti di Cabiria*, recounts the history of his relationship with Fellini concerning the film in "*La dolce vita*": *cronaca di una passione* (Naples: Parrella Editori, 1996).
6. For information on the Montesi Case, see Baxter, *Fellini*, pp. 143-4.
7. For a history of this phenomenon, see Hank Kaufman and Gene Lerner, *Hollywood sul Tevere* (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer Editori, 1982).
8. See Nemiz, *Vita, dolce vita*, for a collection of the most famous of the paparazzi photographs from the period.
9. The influence of Dante in *La dolce vita* is perceptively treated in John Welle's "Fellini's Use of Dante in *La dolce vita*," rpt. in Peter Bondanella and Cristina Degli-Esposti, eds., *Perspectives on Federico Fellini* (New York: G. K. Hall/Maxwell Macmillan Intl., 1993), pp. 110-18. Fellini's indebtedness to Dante is also treated by Barbara Lewalski in "Federico Fellini's *Purgatory*," *Massachusetts Review* 5 (1964): 567-73, rpt. in Bondanella, ed., *Federico Fellini: Essays in Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 113-20. Jacqueline Risset, the French translator of Dante and also a Fellini scholar, discusses the link between Dante

- and Fellini in "Appunti II: Fellini e Dante" in *L'incantatore: Scritti su Fellini* (Milan: Libri Scheiwiller, 1994), pp. 89–95.
10. Pier Paolo Pasolini, "The Catholic Irrationalism of Fellini," *Film Criticism* 9, no. 1 (Fall 1984): 63–73; rpt. in Bondanella and Degli-Esposti, eds., *Perspectives on Federico Fellini*, pp. 101–9, at 106, 107.
 11. Cited by Suzanne Budgen in *Fellini* (London: British Film Institute, 1966), p. 99.
 12. Cited from *The New Yorker* (30 October 1965, p. 66) by Robert Richardson in "Waste Lands: The Breakdown of Order," rpt. in Bondanella, ed., *Federico Fellini: Essays in Criticism*, pp. 103–12, at 104.
 13. Cited in Tullio Kezich, *Il dolce cinema* (Milan: Bompiani, 1978), p. 25 (author's translation).
 14. Stuart Rosenthal, "Spectacle: Magnifying the Personal Vision," in Bondanella, ed., *Federico Fellini: Essays in Criticism*, pp. 289–302, at 300.
 15. Federico Fellini, *Fellini on Fellini*, ed. Anna Keel and Christian Strich, trans. Isabel Quigley (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996; rpt. of the original English edition [London: Eyre Methuen, 1976]), p. 157.
 16. Federico Fellini, *Comments on Film* (Fresno: California State University, 1988), ed. Giovanni Grazzini, trans. Joseph Henry (from *Intervista sul cinema* [Rome: Laterza, 1983]), p. 136.
 17. *Ibid.*, pp. 132–3.
 18. Federico Fellini, *Un regista a Cinecittà* (Milan: Mondadori, 1988), p. 50 (author's translation).
 19. Fellini, *La dolce vita* (English ed.), p. 36. All English dialogue is cited from this edition.
 20. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
 21. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
 22. Martelli discusses this in Franca Faldini and Goffredo Fofi, eds., *L'avven-turosa storia del cinema italiano raccontata dai suoi protagonisti 1960–1969* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1981), pp. 10–11.
 23. See Gherardi's comments in *ibid.*, p. 12.
 24. Stefano Masi and Enrico Lancia, *Italian Movie Goddesses: Over 80 of the Greatest Women in Italian Cinema* (Rome: Gremese, 1997), p. 120. This book is an indispensable history of postwar Italian actresses, especially interesting for the history of the phenomenon of the *maggiorata* or buxom actress that became so important in the period.
 25. See Nemiz, *Vita, dolce vita*, for the photographs.
 26. Masi and Lancia, *Italian Movie Goddesses*, p. 120.
 27. See Barthélemy Amengual, "Fin d'itinéraire: du 'côté de chez Lumière' au 'côté de chez Méliès,'" *Études cinématographiques* 127–30 (1981): 81–111, for the complete exposition of this perspective on Fellini's entire career.

Chapter 4. 8½: The Celebration of Artistic Creativity

1. Federico Fellini, *Fellini on Fellini*, ed. Anna Keel and Christian Strich, trans. Isabel Quigley (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996; rpt. of the original English edition [London: Eyre Methuen, 1976]), p. 147.
2. For a discussion of Fellini and Bernhard, see Tullio Kezich's *Fellini* (Milan: Canumia Editrice, 1987), pp. 302–7; for a more general discussion of Jung in Italian culture, see Alberto Carotenuto, *Jung e la cultura italiana* (Rome: Astrolabio, 1977). Peter Bondanella, *The Cinema of Federico Fellini* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), contains photographs of a number of Fellini's dream sketches.
3. Gideon Bachmann, "A Guest in My Own Dreams: An Interview with Federico Fellini," *Film Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (1994): 2–15, at p. 7.
4. Barthélemy Amengual, "Une Mythologie fertile: Mamma Puttana," in Gilles Ciment, ed., *Federico Fellini* (Paris: Éditions Rivages, 1988), pp. 32–9, at 34.
5. Federico Fellini, *Comments on Film* (Fresno: California State University, 1988), ed. Giovanni Grazzini, trans. Joseph Henry (from *Intervista sul cinema* [Rome: Laterza, 1983]), p. 162.
6. There are a number of important books and articles devoted to the script and the filming of 8½. Two discussions of the film's shooting exist: Deena Boyer, *The Two Hundred Days of "8½"* (New York: Garland, 1978); and Camilla Cederna, "La bella confusione," in Federico Fellini, "8½" di *Federico Fellini*, ed. Cederna (Bologna: Cappelli, 1965), pp. 15–85. Two guides to analyzing the film exist in English: Ted Perry, *Filmguide to "8½"* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975); and Albert E. Benderson, *Critical Approaches to Federico Fellini's "8½"* (New York: Arno Press, 1974). The Italian script containing Cederna's essay is not a continuity script, since it presents the discarded ending of the film as its finale. As is the case with *La strada*, the most reliable continuity script available is in English: Federico Fellini, "8½": *Federico Fellini, Director*, ed. and trans. Charles Affron (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987). References to 8½ will be made to this script by shot number rather than page number, as was the practice in the chapter on *La strada*.
7. Cited in Fellini, "8½": *Federico Fellini, Director*, p. 238.
8. Fellini, *Fellini on Fellini*, p. 52.
9. For a photograph of the note, see Federico Fellini, *Un regista a Cinecittà* (Milan: Mondadori, 1988), p. 50.
10. Ted Perry makes this important observation in *Filmguide to "8½"*, p. 21.
11. Donald Costello, *Fellini's Road* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), pp. 83–8.
12. Fellini, "8½": *Federico Fellini, Director*, pp. 130, 132 (shots 460, 469).