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On "And The Ship Sails On"

by Federico Fellini

"And The Ship Sails On" is my eighteenth film. I wrote it, together with Tonino Guerra, some time ago as I had to come up with an idea for somebody but I no longer remember who that person was.

After two or three days of vague chat and indolent familiarity we completed the treatment and screenplay in just three weeks. If three weeks sounds very short for a good script, just bear in mind that from the birth of the original idea for the story to the start of shooting the picture, three years went by, and I reckon that's long enough to vouch for the worthiness of the film.

Originally Gaumont were going to make the picture, then Vides, then Dino De Laurentiis, then Aldo Nemni, a Milanese industrialist in love with the movie business.... Finally RAI managed to get everyone to agree, except De Laurentiis, and entrusted the production of the film to Franco Cristaldi.

As has always happened to me for the past fifteen years, when I live too closely, too long with a project, I begin to hate it. I try to get rid of it, I don't want to do it anymore. That is the moment when the film actually gets made.

Now that "And The Ship Sails On" is finished, I can no longer say what was the original intention. Only the completed film exists; whatever I wanted to do has sort of faded out. I remember that at the time I talked of characters full of that kind of yearning fascination of the photographs of unknown people. I said I wanted to make a film in the style of the first moving pictures, which therefore would have to be in black and white, or rather, lined, with patches of humidity just like something out of an old film library. A fake, in fact, and this was what really captivated me because I think real cinema has to be like that. I no longer know how many of those intentions are still in the film because at the moment of shooting things always providentially happen as usual.

Perhaps this time I took a little longer to choose the faces. I thought I needed the sort of faces that probably no longer exist, that have disappeared in time, yet

touch us, excite our curiosity because we think that hairstyle is out of fashion, those clothes are a hundred years out of date, that way of smiling, of staring at us with eyes lost in eternity, is trying to tell us the meaning of a story, the tale of a life lived. I therefore thought that perhaps actors from a different country, a different society, of different usages and customs, could better express this type of remoteness, of moving extraneousness. I think this is the real reason that in the film, apart from many Italian actors, you will see others who are English, French and German who are the more probable because they are playing characters from those countries. Surrounded by their photographs pinned to the walls of my little office in Cinecittà I felt the need to develop their stories, to go deeper into their relationships, to add friends, relations, new acquaintances and to invent new situations; in short to make the journey with them. Because the story is a voyage, a sea voyage, a ritual, that we imagine happened sixty years ago, at the eve of the World War.

I had my usual collaborators, and also some with whom I had never worked before like Maestro Plenizio who trustingly followed me, guiding me in a daredevil, and for me, exciting musical adventure. And Andrea Zanzotto, who as he did for "Casanova", once more gave me the pleasure of his excellent collaboration, enjoying himself, I believe, in composing lyrics for the music of Verdi and Rossini. There was one other friendly and stimulating presence on this voyage and that was Andrea De Carlo, the writer, who was on the picture as my assistant.

I shot for 14 weeks, with 120 actors and hundreds of extras on 8 stages at Cinecittà where 40 sets were built. I used 192,000 feet of film. The length of the picture is 2 hours which comes to over 10,000 feet.

Now the film is finished. Seeing it, a friend told me that it is a terrible film. Perhaps he said that to make me happy, because I think that an author always feels flattered when he is told that he has done something that is frightening. I don't think it is. It seems to me rather that it is a happy film, a film that makes you want to make another one.

Federico Fellini



## FEDERICO FELLINI

### Filmography

- 1950 VARIETY LIGHTS  
in collaboration with Alberto Lattuada
- 1952 THE WHITE SHEIK
- 1953 I VITELLONI  
L'AMORE IN CITTÀ (LOVE IN THE CITY),  
episode "AGENZIA MATRIMONIALE" (MARRIAGE AGENCY)
- \*1954 LA STRADA
- 1955 IL BIDONE
- \*1957 NOTTI DI CABIRIA (NIGHTS OF CABIRIA)
- 1960 LA DOLCE VITA
- 1962 BOCCACCIO '70,  
episode "LE TENTAZIONI DEL DOTTOR ANTONIO"  
(THE TEMPTATION OF DOCTOR ANTONIO)
- 1963 EIGHT AND A HALF
- 1965 JULIET OF THE SPIRITS
- 1968 TRE PASSI NEL DELIRIO, (SPIRITS OF THE DEAD)  
episode "TOBY DAMMIT" or "NEVER BET THE DEVIL  
YOUR HEAD".
- 1969 FELLINI SATYRICON
- 1970 THE CLOWNS
- 1972 FELLINI ROMA
- \*1973 AMARCORD
- 1976 CASANOVA
- 1979 PROVA D'ORCHESTRA (ORCHESTRA REHEARSAL)
- 1980 CITY OF WOMEN
- 1983 E LA NAVE VA (AND THE SHIP SAILS ON)

\*Received Academy Award - "Best Foreign Language Film"