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AMARCORD, "I recall" in the vernacular of Romagna, region which has always been the key to the Fellinian muse for it is here that he finds his deepest inspiration in his "Remembrance of Things Past". Fellini is the only poet of the Italian culture who has been able to transfer this admirable approach of Proust's from the pages of literature to the screen.

His usual memories: his native Rimini, adolescence, the family, school, the arousing of sensuality, the escape from the country... already to be found in "I Vitelloni", "La Strada", "Fellini-8½", "La Dolce Vita", "Roma", "Les Clowns" each of which was a work sparkling with originality and freshness. Now AMARCORD, a wonderful film, delicate, incredibly moving, in which Rimini and youth are once again taken from a "dimension of the memory" but this time "invented, modified, forced" and therefore even more truthful, and drawn from the only autobiographical essay that Fellini has written "La Mia Rimini" (1967).

Veracity but also poetry in which all the places, typically Fellinian, even though solid and real in the beginning, are exalted and transfigured, starting with Rimini which becomes the Market Town and which is completely reconstructed because "a Rimini which has been invented is more real than the real Rimini" and "I offer Rimini in a theatrical sense, scenic, and therefore inoffensive... My country, as though cleansed, emptied of its visceral humour, without any aggressivity, without any surprises... reconstructed in the land of memory and into which one can enter without, let us say, the risk of becoming bogged down.

AMARCORD is life in the Market Town, to the rhythm of the seasons, holidays, traditions, family life (a slightly hysterical mother; a heavy-handed father; a rustic grandfather, a bit senile; an uncle in a lunatic asylum; another uncle good for nothing other than enjoying himself; two boys of whom one, Titta, is and yet is not the narrator - but who is not the main character because there is none), school "The Headmaster, nicknamed Zeus, a sort of fire swallower at a country fair...", the teachers, the pupils, the Fulgor cinema whose "owner looked like Ronald Colman and knew it..." the Commerce Cafe, the daily rite of "a stroll along the main street, the Corso: every evening 500 yards at the speed of a tortoise... sly winks and bursts of laughter..." the prostitutes passing by in a horse drawn carriage for the brothel owner "offers his new batch every fortnight...", the priest "the father Don Baravelli, in charge of religious instruction at the High School... (we used to wrap rings around him like Red Indians)...", the Christmas parade "the faces of the Fascists are added to that of religion. One day Starace (Party Secretary) was supposed to pass through Rimini. A train

decked with flags stopped at the station. The sun was shining. The orchestra burst into music, the brass band rang out, the train drew up to the platform smothered in a cloud of white smoke...", the Grand Hotel "a fable of riches, luxury and Oriental splendour...", the evenings became Istambul, Bagdad, Hollywood... It was only with the coming of winter, with the humidity, obscurity and mists that we could take possession of the vast drenched terrasses. It was like pitching one's tent in a camping ground after everyone had left and the fire gone out. One could hear the sound of the sea..."

The women, Gradisca "dressed in black satin that shimmered with lights... the first false eye lashes... tight little curls, the first permanent waves... (her passing aroused intense feelings: appetite, a desire for milk)..." the opulent tobacconist, object of the first emotions; the maths mistress with her large breasts; Volpina, wild and determined. Events such as the Mille Miglia car race and the dreams of glory it aroused; the mythical passage of the Rex, symbol of power and ostentation but also of flight, of mirages and far away worlds; and then the arrival of the fog, the snow, illness and the death of Titta's mother (and her departure in the footsteps of Moraldo of "Vitteloni"); and with the return of spring, a re-birth, the "manine" which blows about like candy floss to greet the bonfires lit in honour of St. Joseph; then Gradisca's wedding which puts an end to the dreams of many and the adolescence of all.

"An epoch, a town, a season of one's life..." in a realistic fable in which everything is at the same time invented and yet authentic, in which memories produce events and individuals of different tones depending on the state of he who evokes them and depending on the age, the behaviour, the situation, real or imaginary, of the characters.

Also there are moments of satire, farcical and grotesque alternating with lyrical, gentle and even pathetic notes, yet always a certain nostalgia (but without sentimentality or pity, remaining limpid, clear and PURE), lit by the glow of a continual internal tension which transforms this land of memories into a dramatic outburst, a heartrendering and even painful performance.

Without the complexity of "Fellini-8½", without the claw marks of "La Dolce Vita", and without the purple passages of "Roma"; but with a glowing inspiration, redeveloped, which gives the film a PERFECT NARRATIVE BALANCE, in which the most contrasting notes end up composing a harmony, a song; at the same time, it is a chronicle and an elegy, life and dreams, FULLY DEVELOPED ART offering passages that are sometimes gay, sometimes tender and interwoven with fascinating vibratos, illuminations and allusions.

Amongst the saddest moments, the most unforgettable: the theme of the death of the mother; and amongst the most decisive: Gradisca's

wedding; the visit to see the mother in hospital, which has overtones of Chekov. Everything that "is not said" about the nearness of death, the troubled silence of the father, the melancholic reserve of the patient, the unconscious roughness of the son, and outside, the snow, and in the snow, a stray peacock, an ecstatic apparition of the Fellinian monster, bird of ill omen.

Next the funeral in the old church, the rites, the latin chants, the creaking of the heavy portal, the tolling of the bell, the mournful notes of the trombones, the orphans, the procession, the horse drawn carriage reserved for the family: an authentic document, stamped with tenderness and silent sorrow.

Then Gradisca's wedding, the table set up on the beach, the tone, half touched by emotion and half by mockery of a country fete. And the "manine" which, with the return of spring, brings the cycle back to where it began. The farewells, the emptiness, the silence, the lonely music of the blind man's accordion...

The finale, deliberately Chaplinesque, in order to turn the page and announce "this is the end" (and life goes on).

For the fascist rituals - irony, racy parody and farce: the arrival of the "gerarque", the race from the station, under the colors of the myth of the athlete, the gymnastic demonstration, the huge face of Mussolini made out of flowers, inducing romantic dreams of school-boy love, as did the Mille Miglia.

"Deification of puppets", smoke-filled images which, better than any controversy, places the boorishness, the rhetoric and the bombast of twenty years of fascism in the pillory.

In the same way, school, within the framework of childhood caricatures, where headmasters and teachers are seen as nonentities. (...)

We should also note the flash, the enchanted vibrations of the "Rex", as she glides by, watched by the whole population of the Market Town, who have put to sea for this long vigil because for many, it is the moment of truth.

With the arrival of Giuseppe Rotunno we have low key tints, clear, precise, almost strong but always moving towards the greens; washed-out browns cleverly darkened or lit up with snow; a wonderful purity of summer light (with the costumes and decor by Donati Danilo which are a perfect synthesis of the humiliations and clumsiness of Italian provincial life; with the exception, intended, of the sequence at the Grand Hotel, with its white telephones, between Gradisca and the Prince).

The music: long, pungent symphony typical of the twenties (and the thirties) in which Nino Rota has also poured the colorful echos

found in the music of the accordion, the country orchestra and the circus while respecting that dimension of the memory through which the whole film drifts.

And the cast: perfectly constructed, with exactness and precision: everyone, the main characters and the walkers-on become themselves, that is people; the mimicry is eloquent, the range of expressions is unbelievably rich; the whole is enhanced and colored by the warm musicality of the roman accent, with an almost filigree rhythm: less a dialect than a beat.

Gian Luigi Rondi