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## Reconstruct the Memory of Roman Space - Analysis of Federico Fellini's Cinema

Fang Xie<sup>1</sup> and Dongye Lyu<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Humanities and Law, Jiangsu Ocean University, 222005 Lianyungang, China; E-Mails: [fangxie@ucm.es](mailto:fangxie@ucm.es)

<sup>2</sup>College of Education Sciences, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Guangzhou. 511455, Guangzhou, China; E-Mail: [dongyelyu@hkust-gz.edu.cn](mailto:dongyelyu@hkust-gz.edu.cn)

\* Corresponding author

### Abstract

Throughout history, the interplay between cinema and urban environments has played a pivotal role in both reflecting and influencing perceptions of cities and their development. In cinematic narratives, cities often transcend mere backdrops, assuming central roles rich in symbolic meaning, which underscores the significance of urban spaces in shaping cultural narratives. Starting from the films directed by the famous Italian director Federico Fellini, this paper focuses on the process of reproducing the urban space of Rome and organizes the Fellini-style imagination about the Roman space by combing the construction and expression of the Roman city in the films. The study finds that Fellini symbolizes the Roman space with the help of images, realizes the re-creation of the urban space of Rome, and enriches, stimulates and passes on the various cultural memories of the Roman space. At the same time, the study concludes that the film's retelling of the memory of Roman space is based on director Fellini's imagination, and it is a unique narrative system of urban images created by integrating history and reality, and it is the result of the joint effect of the iteration of urban time and space and the integration of film narrative.

**Keywords:** Rome, Urban space, cinema, Federico Fellini, narrative.

### 1. Introduction

Federico Fellini, widely regarded as one of the most significant filmmakers in cinema history, holds an esteemed position in both Italian and global cinema due to his distinctive cinematic style and narrative approach. The term "Felliniesque" has become synonymous with a unique cinematic style, symbolizing the expansive potential of film. Fellini's exceptional directing talent and innovative style have profoundly influenced future generations of filmmakers, inspiring countless directors to emulate and pay tribute to his work. This "Fellini-style" effect has drawn the attention of numerous scholars who study his films from various perspectives.

Current research has delved into the sources of inspiration for Fellini's narratives (Bondanella, 1992; Chandler, 2001) and has examined his films through lenses such as ecstasy (Yi, 2015; Xie, 2023), dreams (Fellini, F., Tofetti, S., et al., 2020), and representations of women (Renga, 2001; Butler, 2015). Scholars have also analyzed the reception of Fellini's films from the standpoint of film policy (Miccolis, 2010) and have provided in-depth examinations of individual films (Arumi, 2000; Canga, 2008; Ventura, 2011; Arévalo, 2015). However, to date, no systematic analysis exists on the multiple portrayals of Roman urban space in Fellini's films. This paper aims to address this gap by exploring the

relationship between Fellini's films and the urban space of Rome. Building on the existing body of research, it will analyze how Fellini's cinematic representation of Rome contributes to the reimagining of urban spatial memory. By taking Rome as a focal point, this study will elucidate the mechanisms by which urban spaces are reconfigured and remembered through film.

For Federico Fellini, Rome has always been a significant source of inspiration for his films. "Fellini has been telling the story of Rome all his life" (Yi, 2015). Born in the 1920s in the Italian seaside town of Rimini, Fellini left his hometown at the age of 18 and traveled to Rome, where his cinematic journey began. To Fellini, Rome is not only the cradle of Italian history and civilization but also the imaginative foundation for his cinematic dreamscapes. As the vessel of Italian life, Rome has developed a unique urban space shaped by its evolving history, culture, and religion. When Fellini utilized Rome as the backdrop for his film narratives, he unearthed and integrated the city's deeply embedded cultural memory into his cinematic spaces.

Through Fellini's creative process, Rome transformed into a metaphorical and symbolic space, cultivating an urban imagination perfectly suited to his films. Generally, urban space is integrated into the cultural system of cinematic space through the director's production and refinement. This process not only enriches the cultural medium of cinematic space design but also effectively connects city symbols within the film, forming a cohesive cultural memory that supports the film's narrative. Every city has its own unique personality, shaped by its distinct challenges and experiences throughout its history. This personality can be reflected in the city's geographic space, cultural, political, and economic paradigms, or even in aspects such as class and race, all of which influence the city's character (He, 2011). American literary critic Richard Lehan Daniel discusses this concept in his book "The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History" (Lehan, 2023). Moreover, cinema, as a branch of literature, like other art forms, is intrinsically linked to urban space (Baldini, 2020; Pires, 2020)). The art space allows audiences to enter the theatrical realm and participate in the drama (Martin, 1992). By visually reproducing the cultural landscape of the

city and the times, film and television media lead the public into the cinematic art space, reinforcing the emotional connection between people and the city in this virtual environment. This process creates a powerful interplay between the cinematic portrayal and the lived experience of urban spaces, highlighting the enduring influence of cities like Rome on cultural and artistic expression.

Urban-related art reflects a drastic change from an artistic perspective, offering recognition to urban expressions through the intricate interplay between the city, its identity, and its social interactions (García-Luna Romero, 2021). Based on this perspective, this paper primarily analyzes the textual content of Fellini's films through textual analysis. It examines the construction of Roman urban space and the formation of urban memory from both regional and cultural perspectives. The aim is to enhance the understanding of Fellini's films by exploring the relationship between city and film. By focusing on the integration and reshaping of the symbolic metaphor of Roman space and the cultural memory within cinematic space in Fellini's films, the study seeks to elucidate the close connection between urban development and the creation of cinematic space. It clarifies the intertextuality between the metaphorical nature of Roman space and the narrative space of the films, revealing that the construction of Roman urban space is not only a geographic endeavor but also a process of cultural memory construction.

## **2. Rome - The Origin of Urban Memory**

Urban space is a cluster of multidimensional cultural constructs, rather than a simple geographic area. Wilson argues that urban space is imbued with social formations and spiritual consciousness, with meanings that are constantly renewed through spatial narratives (Wilson, 2000). In the case of Rome, which serves as a concentrated expression of Italian culture, the city holds significant political and cultural importance. Under Fellini's unique narrative mode, contemporary Rome and ancient Rome are integrated across time and space, recreating the evolution of the city.

### **2.1. Starting with ancient Roman culture**

Italy is located in southern Europe, comprising the Apennine



**Figure 1.** A scene from *Satyricon*. Source: <https://www.eastman.org/fellinis-satyricon>

Peninsula and the two large Mediterranean islands of Sicily and Sardinia, territories that were once the heart of ancient Rome. Italy is the birthplace of the Roman Empire, which formally inherited the ancient Greek culture after the fall of the Greek Empire. Italian culture, therefore, developed on the foundations of ancient Roman culture. Ancient Greek and Roman cultures emphasized the natural essence of human beings, focusing on the enjoyment of real life and the needs of the body. Influenced by these concepts, the ancient Greeks and Romans pursued an unrestrained, even indulgent lifestyle. They admired physical beauty, sought bold and free sexual experiences, and viewed life as a pursuit of pleasure.

Monogamy was not the norm in ancient Rome until the 3rd century AD, during the crisis of the Roman Empire (Robles Velasco, 2011, pp. 299). Sexuality was distinct from marriage, allowing individuals a high degree of freedom and choice. Both men and women could divorce and seek

new partners, freely choosing their sexual lifestyles. This passionate and unrestrained character of the ancient Greco-Romans, with their bold pursuit of carnal pleasures, deeply influenced later Italian culture. Consequently, Italians developed a more tolerant attitude towards sex and refrained from making moral judgments about personal sexual lives.

This cultural backdrop is a significant undercurrent in many of Fellini's films, where he openly explores male desire for sex and women. The topic of gender relations is prominent in most of his works, with Fellini drawing on the ideas of ancient Rome and incorporating them into the Roman space depicted in his films. In *Satyricon*, Fellini uses ancient Rome as a vessel for his fascination with desire. This fascination is not confined to the ancient Roman setting but extends to modern Rome, creating a bridge of memory. Fellini's films often feature women's nude clothing, becoming a distinctive visual symbol of his style. In *Satyricon*, he uses tulle, lace,



**Figure 2.** A scene from *La dolce vita*. Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2020/jan/03/la-dolce-vita-review-federico-fellini-marcello-mastroianni>

and other materials for women's clothing, highlighting his pursuit of intuition and evoking the extravagance of the ancient Roman period. Fellini's work, therefore, not only reflects but also critiques and reinterprets the cultural attitudes towards sexuality inherited from ancient Rome, presenting a complex interplay between historical influence and modern cinematic expression.

The spatial memory of ancient Rome profoundly influences Fellini's cinematic portrayal of Rome. Throughout many of his films, traces of ancient Rome are subtly interwoven into the Roman landscape. *La dolce vita*, in particular, serves as a love letter to Rome, with Fellini selecting iconic Roman landmarks such as the Trevi Fountain and Via Veneto as filming locations. Through these scenes, Fellini endeavors to blend the free-spirited ethos of ancient Rome with the contemporary Roman milieu.

In a memorable sequence from *La dolce vita*, Sylvia, adorned in a black velvet evening gown, wades into the baroque

fountain for a late-night soak, creating an iconic image alongside Marcello. However, as Marcello attempts to kiss Sylvia, the fountain abruptly ceases its flow, symbolizing a clash between sexual liberation and entrenched Catholic values. Yet, as the narrative unfolds, elements of ancient Rome within Fellini's cinematic space undergo a reversal, gradually transforming sexual freedom into a disregard for faith and spiritual crisis. Ultimately, Fellini transcends the confines of neorealism, depicting a world plagued by decay and existential emptiness.

As a vessel of history and culture, cinema inherently carries historical symbols, yet it also serves as a medium for contemporary expression. The Roman space depicted in Fellini's films, born from the legacy of ancient Roman civilization, must balance its connotative ties to antiquity with the demands of modern Roman society. In this delicate balance lies the essence of Fellini's cinematic vision of Rome, a space that simultaneously reflects its rich historical heritage and contemporary complexities.

## 2.2 A mingling of Roman landscapes from ancient times to the present day

As the seventh art form, cinema communicates artistically through a combination of visual imagery and auditory elements. Visuals, in particular, hold significant power to leave a lasting impact on audiences, and Fellini masterfully presents the Roman cityscape in a distinctive manner. In *La dolce vita*, for instance, Fellini not only draws upon the concept of ancient Rome but also underscores the amalgamation of ancient and modern Rome within the cityscape.

The film opens with a striking sequence featuring a helicopter transporting a statue of Jesus above Rome. As the helicopter traverses the skyline, it passes over iconic landmarks such as the Claudian aqueduct, dating back to the 1st century, and the walls of Aurelian situated in the southeast corner of Rome. The camera then shifts its focus to a residential area nestled on a hillside, evoking a neorealist depiction of traditional rural life predating the industrial age.

Through this juxtaposition of ancient and modern elements, Fellini metaphorically illustrates the enduring influence of ancient Rome on the collective consciousness of contemporary Romans. The interplay between ancient Roman spaces and modern cityscapes signifies that the values and ideals forged in antiquity continue to shape the thoughts and identities of present-day Italians. In essence, Fellini's cinematic portrayal serves as a poignant reminder of the spiritual and cultural legacy ingrained within the fabric of Rome's urban landscape. Fellini's utilization of Roman settings extends beyond *La dolce vita* to encompass various landscapes depicted in his other works. Throughout his films, iconic Roman locales such as the Colosseum in *Lo Sceicco Bianco*, Termini Station in *I vitelloni*, and Cinecittà Studios in *8½* serve as prominent backdrops, each reflecting different facets of Rome's urban development. Among these depictions, *Roma* stands out as a quintessential exploration of the city's evolution. Released in 1972, the film represents Fellini's concerted effort to chronicle the fusion of traditional and modern Rome. Described by Fellini himself as a reflection on the continuity between ancient and contemporary Rome,

*Roma* transcends traditional narrative structures to offer a fragmented yet immersive portrayal of the city. Unlike conventional films with a central plot or protagonist, *Roma* unfolds as a kaleidoscopic mosaic of vignettes, spanning Fellini's personal experiences of Rome as a teenager, a young man, and observations of contemporary Roman life. Through this multifaceted approach, Fellini encapsulates the essence of Rome across different epochs, blurring the boundaries between past and present. By interweaving elements of reality with his signature fantastical imagery, Fellini imbues *Roma* with his distinctive cinematic style, offering viewers a Fellini-esque documentary that captures the essence of the eternal city. In essence, *Roma* serves as a testament to Fellini's enduring fascination with Rome and his ability to evoke its timeless allure on the silver screen.

The film immerses the audience in a carnivalized rendition of Rome, showcasing its diverse landscapes, from the bustling Via Veneto at night to the tranquil sea at the city's edge. Within Fellini's cinematic universe, these disparate images converge and intertwine, forming the rich tapestry of Rome's urban space. Amidst the reinforced concrete structures, brothels, and modern entertainment venues, traces of traditional Roman mystique linger, underscoring the city's multifaceted identity.

As the seat of the Italian Catholic Church, the government, and the film industry, Rome embodies multiple identities, blending tradition with modernity to create a dynamic urban landscape ripe for exploration. Fellini adeptly utilizes the medium of film to construct an imaginative portrayal of Rome, where tradition and modernity coalesce in unexpected ways. One striking scene in *Roma* exemplifies this fusion, as workers excavate a subway tunnel only to uncover a 2,000-year-old ancient tomb adorned with lifelike paintings. The juxtaposition of ancient relics with the trappings of modern civilization underscores the city's complex history and enduring allure.

Through masterful editing techniques, Fellini seamlessly transitions between the surreal, ancient Rome and the bustling metropolis of modernity. In one memorable sequence, a procession of motorcycle riders traverses the ancient streets of Rome, symbolizing the encroachment

of industrial civilization on the city's historic landscape. Fellini's films serve as a cinematic canvas, capturing the evolving spatial dynamics of Rome and reflecting upon the societal changes brought about by urbanization.

By incorporating the unique landscapes, people, culture, and architecture of Rome, Fellini crafts a cinematic representation of the city that transcends mere geographical boundaries. His films serve as cultural artifacts, enriching our understanding of Rome's urban identity and expanding the cultural lexicon of cinema. In essence, Fellini's portrayal of Rome as a symbolic urban space embodies the symbiotic relationship between film and city, offering a lens through which to explore the interplay of tradition, modernity, and collective memory.

### 3. Re-creation of Roman Culture

The city's space exists objectively, and throughout its long development, countless urban cultures and symbolic metaphors have been nurtured. During film creation, the clever use of urban symbols can enhance the film's plot narration and atmosphere. However, an individual's thoughts are influenced by their country, historical context, cultural trends, and family life. Similarly, a director's work is always intertwined with specific social, historical, and cultural contexts. In Fellini's films, he relied on Roman city symbols to enhance the film's recognition and imbue it with a unique cultural temperament. Fellini recreated Roman culture through metaphors, crafting a distinct narrative and environmental atmosphere that enriched the film's cultural memory. His use of Roman symbols not only provided a backdrop but also deepened the audience's connection to the cultural and historical essence of the city, creating a signature Fellini-style that was both evocative and resonant.

#### 3.1. Dynamic Roman Catholicism and Urban Space

Fellini has frequently mentioned the special significance of Rome to him in interviews. As Italy's capital, Rome is an ancient European city with a glorious history, serving as both the capital of the ancient Roman Empire and the seat of the Vatican, the center of Catholicism. Before 1948, Italy was a country with a union of church and state. In 1948, Italy adopted its Republican Constitution, which in Article 7 reaffirmed the independence and sovereignty of both the

state and the Catholic Church (Jiménez Bolaños, 2014, p. 13). Although the Italian government has since amended the constitution to clarify the principle of separation of church and state and the freedom of religious belief, almost every Italian citizen is still a baptized Catholic, and Catholic traditions persist. Even today, most Italians remain Catholics, and the Catholic ideas formed over millennia continue to influence Italian culture and society.

As a typical Catholic believer, Fellini's films consistently exhibit religious consciousness. According to the Bible and Catholic tradition, sexual behavior that is not for the purpose of reproduction is considered shameful. The essential purpose of marriage and family is to bear and raise children, opposing divorce, remarriage, and birth control. Within this framework, giving birth within marriage is deemed moral, while sexual desire and extramarital sex are condemned, equated with serious crimes like robbery and murder. Fellini himself noted, "When the purpose of sexual behavior is pleasure before reproduction, Catholicism has always adopted a repressive attitude" (Liu, 1999, p. 18).

When Catholicism enters the Roman space crafted by Fellini, it enhances the film's depth through metaphorical forms. Influenced by the inherent ancient Roman culture, which celebrates the body and sexuality, this juxtaposition against Catholic ideals of abstinence creates conflicts within Fellini's narratives and characters. These contradictions reflect Fellini's own personal and psychological struggles. In his films, characters often chase carnal pleasures while simultaneously grappling with guilt induced by Catholic teachings.

In the opening scene of *La Dolce Vita*, a group of women in bikinis wave from the rooftop of a building at a statue of Jesus being transported by helicopter. This imagery juxtaposes the statue of Jesus with the scantily clad women, ancient aqueducts with modern technology, and ancient buildings with skyscrapers, creating stark contrasts within the Roman space. Here, the ancient Greco-Roman culture of indulgence in sexual desire clashes with Catholic values. This blend of traditional and emerging cultures constructs a new Roman space in Fellini's films, where traditional beliefs and natural life are supplanted by modern consumerism and hedonism. The decadence of the upper



Figure 3. A scene from *La dolce vita*. Source: <https://www.coeval-magazine.com/coeval/lcxln8b2wl8n2k5x4df7678r1596dz>



Figure 4. A scene from *La dolce vita*. Source: <https://www.coeval-magazine.com/coeval/lcxln8b2wl8n2k5x4df7678r1596dz>

class unfolds under the gaze of Jesus, symbolizing the decline of Catholicism and the erosion of religious values. Rome, in this depiction, is a city in moral decline, filled with calls for the fall of faith. Fellini uses the specific space of Rome to explore the tensions between religion and reality, crafting a poignant commentary on modern civilization's impact on traditional values.

Although religion has been significantly impacted in the space of Rome, it cannot be denied that religious education is deeply entrenched, influencing Fellini's construction of Rome's cinematic image. As Fellini mentioned in an interview, his pessimistic outlook is partly due to the intrinsic appeal of such a perspective as a director and partly due to the two-thousand-year influence of Catholicism (Grazzini, 2005). In the film *Roma*, Fellini once again integrates Catholicism with the urban space of Rome.



Figure 5. A scene from *Roma*. Screenshot



Figure 6. A scene from *Roma*. Screenshot



As the birthplace of Catholicism, Rome has a profound influence on those educated under Catholic doctrines, fostering a lifelong yearning for the city. At the beginning of the film, a teacher leads students to Rome, symbolizing this journey. The students, dressed in black school uniforms, follow their teacher in white shirts, resembling a shepherd guiding a flock. The contrasting colors of their clothing effectively distinguish the power dynamics between them. Fellini, however, emphasizes the bandage on the teacher's foot, subtly subverting this imagery.

Canga (2008) noted, "Fellini was inspired by the figurative autonomy of the master mediating the visual presentist, presenting a scene where the author confirmed his true colors; a scene that also determined the pedagogical institutions of the two centuries" (p. 953). Through this scene, Fellini uses changes in the characters' behavior and appearance to challenge the public's idealized vision of Rome. This depiction places the Roman space in a state of dramatic transformation, highlighting the crisis of religious faith amidst the evolving cultural landscape.

This cultural fission is evident not only in the journey leading to Rome but also within the urban space of Rome itself. As a pilgrimage site for Catholics, Rome represents the heart of Catholic faith. Fellini intensifies this cultural and religious fission by recalling the religious fashion show attended by Princess Dominique. The show features various styles of religious clothing that defy traditional expectations, introducing innovative and contemporary designs. In this ecclesiastical setting, the solemnity typically associated with religion is transformed. Through the medium of fashion, the cultural significance of this space is redefined, creating a new, radiant, and mysterious world.

In the urban space of Rome, Fellini masterfully integrates Catholicism, ancient Roman civilization, and modern ideas to forge a unique Roman culture. In his films, the image of Rome as a Catholic empire is portrayed as gradually declining. The fusion of ancient and modern elements in this space alters the collective memory. Rome, in this cinematic depiction, emerges as a dynamic urban symbol, continuously enriched by evolving cultural

integrations. When the newly formed Roman cultural space is incorporated into the film narrative as a symbol, it reshapes the Roman memory, constructing a distinctive artistic value. Fellini's portrayal of Rome captures the city's multifaceted identity, reflecting its historical, cultural, and religious transformations. Through his films, Fellini not only preserves the essence of Rome but also reimagines it, offering a profound commentary on the evolving interplay between tradition and modernity. This cinematic approach underscores the enduring impact of urban space on cultural memory and artistic expression.



**Figure 7.** A scene from *Roma*. Source: <https://greatoldmovies.blogspot.com/2013/01/fellinis-roma.html>



**Figure 8.** A scene from *Roma*. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPgwr9snRJI>

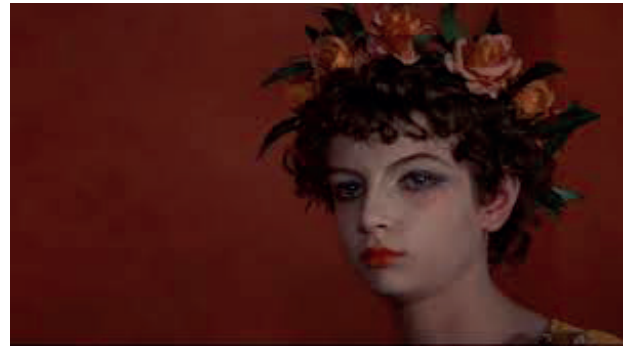
### 3.2. The Eternal Roman Female Mythology

While Catholicism in Fellini's films represent dramatic change, the Roman space in his later works embodies a more eternal quality. In these films, women transcend their social and theoretical roles, embodying a primal essence that symbolizes the birthplace of the Italians—Rome. Historically, Rome has always been intertwined with the presence of women. The religious worship and life of goddesses held significant positions during the ancient Roman era. Fellini revisits and rewrites the ancient city of Rome through the lens of mythology in films like *Satyricon* and *Casanova*.

For Fellini, the ancient, mysterious, and inclusive temperament reflected in Rome's memory aligns with his imagined concept of motherhood. "In Fellini's films, the image of the mother is eternal. She is not only a real woman in the flesh, but also a series of symbolic intentions" (Hu Hongcao, 2011). To Fellini, Rome epitomizes the eternal mother, reshaping the myths and legends ingrained in the Italian subconscious, positioning Rome as a timeless, everlasting space.

In *Satyricon*, Fellini narrates Encolpe's quest to find his lover Gitone, blending ancient Roman customs with mythological elements. A notable character is the hermaphroditic son of God, a potent symbol in the film. Scholar Denise L. Carmody interprets hermaphroditism as a fantasy of mysterious power (Carmody, 1982). The departure of this hermaphroditic deity from the temple parallels a baby's departure from the womb, signifying a confrontation with mortality. The temple, like Rome, serves as a sanctuary for public imagination, echoing Fellini's reliance on maternal imagery.

Through *Satyricon*, Fellini visually resurrects Roman civilization, allowing audiences to uncover the mysterious layers of Rome's memory. The hermaphroditic deity awakens powerful and mystical memories of the city, ensuring that the fragmented and ancient legends continue to thrive in this recreated space. Fellini's films, thus, forge a connection between the eternal essence of Rome and the timeless figure of the mother, underscoring Rome's enduring influence on Italian cultural identity.



**Figure 9.** A scene from *Satyricon*. Source: <https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/3473-fellini-satyricon-not-just-friends>

In *Satyricon* and *Casanova*, Fellini intertwines mythology with male anxiety, presenting unique takes on each protagonist's journey. While Encolpe in *Satyricon* navigates an open and liberated Roman space, *Casanova*'s environment is repressive and confining. Fellini reimagines *Casanova*, historically known for his masculinity, as an exiled artist searching for meaning through encounters with women and maternal figures. This reinterpretation focuses on *Casanova*'s quest for identity in a chaotic, wandering life, highlighting his internal struggles rather than his famed virility.

The various female images in *Casanova* symbolize the animus, or the female aspect within the male unconscious. *Casanova* seeks his sense of existence among numerous lovers, projecting an image of a romantic, suave lover that masks his inner emptiness. This quest underscores the film's exploration of male vulnerability and the perpetual search for maternal comfort, a central theme in Fellini's portrayal of *Casanova*.

At the film's conclusion, the aging *Casanova* closes his eyes and imagines returning to his hometown, symbolizing Rome as a representation of home and a specific space embodying the essence of his origin. This return signifies Rome as a nurturing mother, encompassing both past and present, change and permanence. Like a mother, Rome is portrayed as a sanctuary, welcoming its lost and confused children with open arms.

From *Satyricon* to *Casanova*, Fellini re-expresses the Roman space through the lens of Roman mythology, uncovering long-sealed mysterious memories within this urban space. In this context, Rome transforms into a symbol of motherhood, utilizing primitive symbolic elements to express the collective subconscious's anxieties. This expression flows between absurdity and temptation, embodying an incredible contradiction inherent in human experience.

Fellini's portrayal of Rome as a maternal symbol resonates with the ancient, mysterious, and inclusive nature of Roman memory, mirroring his concept of the eternal mother. By reshaping myths and legends within the Roman space, Fellini creates a timeless narrative that bridges ancient civilization with modern consciousness. This narrative enriches the cultural fabric of his films, making Rome a dynamic urban symbol that evolves with cultural integration and continuously reshapes its identity. As these newly formed Roman cultural spaces participate in the film narrative, they reconstruct Roman memory, bestowing the film with unique artistic value. This eternal quality of Rome, rooted in its mythological and maternal essence, solidifies its place in Fellini's cinematic universe as a timeless entity that nurtures and sustains the collective imagination.

From *Satyricon* to *Casanova*, Fellini reinterprets the Roman space through the utilization of Roman mythology, thereby unveiling the long-concealed, enigmatic memories embedded within this urban landscape. Within this context, Rome is reimagined as a symbol of motherhood. Through the incorporation of these primordial symbolic elements, Fellini articulates the anxieties present in the collective subconscious of humanity, navigating a narrative that oscillates between absurdity and temptation, thereby encapsulating a profound and complex contradiction.



Figure 10. A poster of *Casanova*. Source: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0074291/>

#### 4. Concluding remarks

This article examines the films of Italian director Federico Fellini, focusing on the intricate interplay between urban memory and the evolving narrative space in his works. It explores how Fellini not only portrays the physical reality of Rome but also employs cinema as a medium to construct a fantastical and evocative urban space that aligns with his creative vision. In Fellini's cinematic depiction of Rome, audiences encounter echoes of ancient myths, the progression of civilization, and the societal issues embedded within the city. Simultaneously, they are confronted with the moral strictures and religious doctrines of contemporary society.

Through meticulous analysis, it becomes evident that Fellini employs film narrative to transmute Roman space from the realms of realism to imagination. His films transport viewers into a Rome that tantalizes with illusions of timelessness and spatial fluidity, traversing seamlessly between ancient epochs and modern realities. In this broader context, Rome serves as a microcosm that resonates with the essence of cities worldwide, each shaped by historical, cultural, and social influences to forge distinct urban memories.

In conclusion, as a symbolic repository of collective memories, the city becomes a potent metaphor that reshapes cultural memory within cinematic space. By delving into the urban space, one gains deeper insights into the cultural narratives embedded within film. The cultural memory articulated in cinema is intricately intertwined with urban spaces, underscoring how cities provide rich fodder and creative inspiration for filmmakers while films, in turn, rejuvenate and reinterpret cities through evocative imagery, thus perpetuating cultural memories rooted in urban spaces.

### Conflict of Interests and ethics

The author(s) declare no conflict of interests. The author(s) also declare full adherence to all journal research ethics policies, namely involving the participation of human subjects' anonymity and/ or consent to publish.

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