

Fellini's dream (and your nightmare)

by Ken Burke

Satyricon, the last film in the Cohn Fall Film Series, should really only be known by its original title, **Fellini's Satyricon**. That's because absolutely everything in the movie - from sets to characters to cinematography to story - is the product of director Federico Fellini's imagination, lovingly re-created on the wide screen just for you. For you? Well, probably just for him, with Fellini's ego being what it is. How loving the film is, that's another matter. In the course of my review of Time Bandits, I

there with an insane grin on my face, as I absorbed the surreal ballet of oddities arranged before me, all the while thinking, "Somebody actually made this?"

If the title hasn't already tipped you off, the story deals with one person's odyssey of (attempted) sexual pleasure in Fellini's idea of Roman Times. It's all played out before us - homosexual, bisexual, incestual, pedophile - name your preference, they're all here (all at the same time in most characters), and in none too appetizing

it's hard to tell whether he's against sexual abandon or just sex in general. The only tender or normal scenes in the film are inseparably linked with death or great loss, to further confuse me as to his intent. In reality, while a lot of people think of the director as one of the great libertines of film, Fellini is prudish to a fault, having his ideals firmly set in his mind, and hell-bent on discrediting all other alternatives. Hell, **Satyricon's** one of the best arguments for celibacy you could ever watch in a movie.

So what's the net effect of all this weirdness and fantasy for two unrelenting hours? God, I dunno, I'm still trying to figure it all out - my opinions, that is; it's dangerous to attempt to under-

stand everything in a Fellini flick - but I know that others found the whole thing so bizarre and unconnected as to be stiflingly boring. After all, one thing this film doesn't do is give the viewer a roadmap to the unexplored territory on the screen; we're just thrown there, and left to survive and adapt as best we can. As for myself, I'm going to

go again. I like Fellini's movies - they're like vacations for the senses - it's great to spend some time in someone else's imagination, instead of your own, for a change. **Fellini's Satyricon** is such a vacation, but instead of a leisurely tour, it's more like around the world in twenty minutes. If you feel up to it, then grab your Gravel and come along for the ride.



called **Satyricon** a virtual treasure-house of the weird and grotesque. And so it is - and lots more besides.

Fellini has called this movie a "documentary of a dream", and it's easy to see why. Just about all the characters, sets, and situations have no place in any "real" world. And, like a dream, it switches abruptly from episode to episode with only the loosest of connections, relying on the unconscious logic of dreams to bring the audience along. Plot summary is almost impossible, but what the movie really tries for is a cumulative visual effect by over-loading the eye with more than it can take. When first I saw the movie, I sat

forms, at that. The movie isn't sexually explicit by any means, but in this film great pains have been taken to always pick out grotesque images for our consumption. Whores weigh 800 pounds, faces are painted like peeling frescoes, eyebrows are shaved at weird angles, and mutants abound. And the acting is stylized to make the characters act just as they look. It's pointless to name any of the actors, because their performances are groomed and mannered to fit Fellini's idea of what his "dream" looks like, to make their contributions to the film non-existent.

Fellini piles the bizarre on top of the bizarre here so much that

Private lessons

by Philip Franck

To begin with, let me say that several things are wrong with this film. The production is somewhat amateurish, the actors are all unknowns (exception: Howard Hesseman of **WKRP** fame), the film itself is only 90 minutes long, and it is preceded by a 20-minute Three Stooges feature which stretches slapstick to its tolerable limits.

Aside from all this, I liked the movie: it has an honesty lacking in most films these days, but best of all, it is **FUN**. Essentially, the plot is that of every boy's fantasy: his father goes away on 'business', leaving the young Philly (Eric Brown) under the care of attractive young housekeeper Nichole Mallet (Sylvia Kristel). Philly is just becoming interested in girls, going to great

lengths to peer into their windows at night to try and watch them undress. Miss Mallet, aware of this (she is one being observed), proceeds to teach the young lad all about sex. Actually, this plot line only makes up about two thirds of the movie, the rest being a good-vs-evil climax with the good guys winning: a rather trite ending but pleasant nonetheless.

However, it is Philly's initiation into the mysteries of sex that is the real winner, for the whole audience sympathizes and laughs with him as he learns. This makes for a truly lighthearted (and refreshing) approach to a subject so often maligned on the silver screen. Sure, the film has its faults, but they are easy to overlook if you laugh along with it. I give it an A-minus on its sincerity alone.



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