Rhetorical Analysis of Federico Fellini's film La Strada

Randall Scott Hanzen

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RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF FEDERICO FELLINI'S

FILM LA STRADA

BY

RANDALL SCOTT HANZEN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Master of Arts
Major in Speech
South Dakota State University
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RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF FEDERICO FELLINI'S FIlM LA STRADA

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Arts, and is acceptable for meeting the thesis requirements for this degree. Acceptance of this thesis does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

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CLARENCE

JENNIE, GARY AND DENNIS
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Origin of the Problem

In the middle 1950s Italian cinematographer Federico Fellini produced a spark of criticism with his unique style of filmmaking. Italian film critics were disturbed by Fellini's apparent abandonment of neorealism, the status-quo in Italian filmmaking since the early 1940s.¹ In 1942, Marxist screenwriter Cesare Zavattini, the theoretical founder of neo-realism, called for a new kind of Italian film. "One which," as described by film historian David A. Cook, "would abolish contrived plots, do away with professional actors, and take to the streets for its material in order to establish direct contact with social reality."² Throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s, Italian filmmakers such as Rossellini, DeSica, and Visconti dedicated their works to Zavattini's ideas. As a result, when Fellini began using strategically written plots, professional actors, and manipulated scenery, he was breaking the rules. The controversy over Fellini's style reached its highest point after the release of his 1954 film, La Strada.
Overall, the response to La Strada was mixed, as some critics denounced Fellini while others marked his work as award-winning material. Cook documents this mixed response when he writes:

Realistic in form but essentially allegorical in content, La Strada was attacked by Leftist critics, including Zavattini, as betraying the social commitment of neo-realism, but it attracted worldwide attention and won a Silver Lion, the second highest honor, at the prestigious Venice Film Festival in 1954.

Ironically, the predetermined rules of the Leftist critics served as blinders, preventing them from recognizing La Strada as a film containing a social commitment beyond that of its predecessors. Fellini consciously portrays reality on many interpretative levels. Fellini, himself, best answers his critics when he states:

... it is a question of feeling reality, but we always need an interpretation of it. Left-wing criticism is wrong when it says that the only thing to be shown in films is what happens around us. The important thing is always to know who is seeing reality. Things must be condensed in order to impose their essence. For me neo-realism is looking at reality fairly and squarely, but at every type of reality, not only social, but also spiritual and metaphysical reality, all that man has within himself. For me neo-realism is not contained in what is manifest, but in the way in which it is manifest. It is simply looking about oneself, free from the burden of convention or prejudice. Certain people are still convinced that neo-realism only serves to show a particular kind of reality, social reality. But then that would merely be propaganda. Someone once called me a traitor to the neo-realist cause and accused me of being too much of an individual. I, on the other hand, am convinced that the films that I
have made so far are in the stylistic tradition of the first neo-realist films.

La Strada received its first recognition in America in 1956 when it was voted the best foreign film. In the years which followed, the film emerged as one of the greater films in the history of the industry. Its title can be found in virtually all film anthologies. Film historians view it as truly representative of a period of renaissance in cinema. Fellini is also recognized as one of the great film directors. Film historians see him as an innovator and leader in the development of the film industry. A brief early biography of Fellini's life and a listing of his awards are found in the Appendix.

While film historians document achievements, they do not address the significance of Fellini's film as a rhetorical act. Viewing Fellini's work only as a landmark in film history is as "blinder-ridden" as were the Leftist critics who only saw it as a betrayal to neorealism. Instead, this writer suggests that La Strada could be better understood and appreciated if it were viewed as a rhetorical act, focusing upon a dramatistic approach to the event rather than the literary approach to printed rhetoric. In the absence of any previous rhetorical approach to La Strada, this writer believes that by applying a rhetorical analysis to the film's
contextual and textual content, this study offers significant insight into Fellini's contemporary thought and his strategies as a filmmaker.

Statement of Problem and Purpose

One of the problems faced by critics in the past was a lack of critical resources that would allow for viewing a film as more than just moving pictures. Certainly, it would be difficult to understand or appreciate Fellini's use of the spiritual and metaphysical realms of reality if a critic did not have a means for such analysis. This writer believes that a rhetorical analysis serves as that means to the interpretive end. This study seeks to shed light on Fellini's definition of man's reality through its rhetorical analysis. Noted philosopher of rhetoric Kenneth Burke proclaims that a "rhetorical analysis throws light on literary texts and human relations generally." Film is a special form of literary text; a very powerful form of literature combining the audio with the visual. Its power is in its ability to communicate to an audience the attitudes of the filmmaker. Film's rhetorical nature warrants a need for a rhetorical analysis. Burke recognizes rhetoric's reflection of human relations. Burke's insight is a key point when studying the work of Fellini. Furthermore, the Burkean
approach allows for the holistic viewing of a film, addressing all realms of reality within the film and the reality in which the film was created and produced.

Burke's dramatistic pentad is universally recognized as an effective tool for rhetorical analysis. Burke introduces his pentad as such:

We shall use five terms as generating principle of our investigation. They are: Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, Purpose. In a rounded statement about motives, you must have some word that names the act (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the scene (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also, you must indicate what person or kind of person (agent) performed the act, what means or instruments he used (agency), and the purpose. Men may violently disagree about the purposes behind a given act, or about the character of the person who did it, or how he did it, or in what kind of situation he acted; or they may even insist upon totally different words to name the act itself. But be that as it may, any complete statement about motives will offer some kind of answers to these five questions: what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and why (purpose). 6

To illustrate the pentad, this study approaches the rhetorical act, La Strada, by viewing its agent's, Fellini's, use of his agency, the film medium, in communicating his purpose as it emerged within his scene, post-World War II Italy. In this study, with the pentad serving as a means to the end, the end translates into Fellini's purpose.
The Burkean approach offers many advantages:

1. It views the rhetorical act, La Strada, within its contextual scene, post-World War II Italy.

2. It views the agent, Fellini, within the influential contextual scene surrounding the rhetorical act.

3. It views the agency's importance in the achievements of the rhetorical act; in the case of this study, the impact of Fellini's selected use of the film medium.

4. It views the rhetorical act as a strategic and stylized answer to the situation in which it arose; thus, La Strada is Fellini's answer to his situation within the contextual scene. 7

The purpose of this study is to investigate Fellini's use of rhetorical devices as strategic means through which he offers his stylized answer to the question existing within the context of the situation. Few studies take into consideration that Fellini's films ambiguously reveal the ideas he believes to be significant to his scene. Post-World War II philosophy saw the emergence of new schools of thought. The Italian film director's films contain distinct images of the lost self as seen frequently in modern literature. Fellini appears to engage in a struggle similar to that of such noted writers as Dostoevesky, Kierkegaard, Sartre, Camus,
Kafka, and Beckett. Yet, before this study draws conclusions about Fellini's rhetorical answer, it must investigate the question. This writer attempts to show that the question existing within La Strada, within the context of post-World War II Italian existence and its influence on Fellini's perceptions of realism, is a philosophical one; an ontological question of man's existential meaning. In phrasing this question, this writer suggests, "What is man's relationship to his fellow man and to Nature. With this complex question in mind, this study shows how it is extrapolated from the situation and attempts to methodically draw valid conclusions in finding Fellini's answer, or purpose in communicating his rhetorical act.

**Procedure**

In investigating the question raised in the previous section, the procedures outlined below were completed.

1. Given the knowledge that it has been determined by previous scholars that consistent themes can be found throughout all of Fellini's films, this writer has chosen to concentrate specifically on Fellini's rhetorical act, La Strada. This film has been chosen for two reasons. First, this writer viewed the film in three separate college courses. The significance
of the film can be seen through the respective purposes for its presentation in each class. In an introductory film class, the film was studied as a landmark in the history of film. In a graduate level film studies course, the film was again observed as an achievement in film history and also as representative of Fellini's unique style. Recently, in a course entitled, "Existentialism and the Absurd Hero," the film was viewed as an existential statement. This study is a result of the impacts of those courses and their enthusiastic exploration for meaning within the film. Secondly, this critic believes that the film is truly representative of Fellini's definition of reality and his cinematic use of characters, objects, situations, and scenery as strategies of rhetoric.

2. In an effort to secure a better understanding of Fellini's use of rhetorical strategies, La Strada was viewed repeatedly with that specific purpose in mind. For further insight, previous critical responses to the film were researched and read. The analysis of some of Fellini's other films was also read in seeking consistencies in Fellini's style as a filmmaker.

3. The following publications were surveyed to determine if any previous study had been done applying the rhetorical insights of Kenneth Burke to the films of Federico Fellini. Since both men did not come into
prominence until the 1950s, this would be the earliest possible date for such a study to have been conducted.

**Central States Speech Journal, 1949-Fall 1986.**

**Comprehensive Dissertation Index, 1972-1985.**

**Dissertation Abstracts, 1957-1986.** Ann Arbor, Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms


Additionally, to update the aforementioned publications, a computerized search of ERIC publications and **Dissertation Abstracts** was performed. In obtaining a list of pertinent literature, the following key words were submitted into the database: *Fellini*, *La* *Strada*, *La* *Dolce* *Vita*, *Juliet* (of the Spirits), *Film* *Criticism*, *Kenneth* *Burke*, and *Rhetorical* *Analysis*.

Under the realization that the terms would individually produce many studies, the terms pertaining to Fellini were initially combined. This entry revealed many academic studies on Fellini. Of those studies, none appear to approach the problem of this study. One dissertation, completed in 1969 by Lessie Mallard Reynolds, entitled "An Analysis of the Non-Verbal Symbolism in Federico Fellini's Film Trilogy: La Dolce Vita, Eight and One-Half, Juliet of the Spirits was
reviewed by this writer, who found that while it deals with the non-verbal symbolism in three of Fellini's films, it does not directly analyze _La Strada_ nor does it take a rhetorical approach as defined by Burke.

The terms pertaining to Burke were also combined to reveal that only one writer had applied the insights of Kenneth Burke to film criticism. The dissertation, completed in 1980 by Jack Leonard Hillwig and entitled "Film Criticism: Its Relationship to Economically Successful Films and an Application of Rhetoric to Improving the Critic's Methods," does use Burke's dramaticistic pentad and concept of identification. An analysis of its abstract led this writer to believe that the dissertation does not approach the strategies within Fellini's film, _La Strada_, around which this study focuses.

In questioning if any critic had applied Burke's approach to Fellini's film, the terms *Burke* and *Fellini* were entered together. When the Fellinian and Burkean terms were combined, the computerized search yielded no previous studies.

This writer has been exposed to one dissertation, completed in 1973 by James L. Johnson, entitled, "Samuel Beckett: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Absurd Drama," which applies the insights of Kenneth Burke to Beckett's plays. While there are similarities between the
methodology used in Johnson's dissertation and the one used in this study, this writer applies the insights of Burke to film and specifically to Fellini's *La Strada*.

Research studies investigated on Fellini included those by George Wead and George Lellis, David A. Cook, Norman N. Holland, Edouard de Laurot, Christian Strich, Angelo Solmi, Stuart Rosenthal, and Charles B. Ketcham. While these studies receive reference from this writer, none provide an investigation of film as a rhetorical act.

**Methodology**

Although the research tools are focused toward Fellini's use of rhetorical devices as strategic means through which he offers his stylized answer to the philosophical question, the study does attempt to apply some of the rhetorical insights of Burke in determining the implications of the question itself. The overall advantage of using the Burkean approach, previously listed in part, is that these insights provide the means for uncovering the essence of Fellini's philosophy as seen through the rhetorical strategies found in *La Strada*. In comprising a comprehensive methodology for a rhetorical analysis, the following books by Kenneth Burke were utilized.


Organization

Specific Burkean terms are applied as guidelines in the chapters which follow. Chapter II surveys Fellini's scene, Italy, and its influences of Fascist oppression, careless destruction of the war, and the people's commitment to the Catholic faith. The chapter focuses on Fellini's exposure to the scene, including encounters with Fascist officials, visits to destroyed childhood homes, and years of Catholic training during his early education. With the scene surveyed, the study then investigates its influence on the perceptions of the agent, Fellini. The scene becomes the situation in which the critical and imaginative work arose, yet the work, or act, remains rooted in the agent who offers it as a stylized answer. Fellini's experiences left him with a unique view of reality. His new personalized philosophy
is suggested throughout the many interviews in which he was asked to defend his revolutionary approach to filmmaking. By comparing the Leftist critics' definition of neo-realism with that of Fellini, the chapter begins to find Fellini's burden.

With Chapter II suggesting the development of a burden, Chapter III addresses Fellini's agency, or how he chose to perform his act of unburdening. In the case of _La Strada_, Fellini uses the medium of film. An inspection of the director's inclusion of signs serving as symbols within the film, reveals a practice of Burke's defined motive of identification. Johnson explains the motive, or strategy, of identification.

The strategy of identification is the process of establishing a common interest, value, or form with others through the usage of symbols. Men are apart from one another, according to Burke, and strive for unity through identifying symbols. The identification process occurs through consubstantiality—having the same substance or interest in common. Burke's identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. This implies the search for a rhetorical method in order to attain the simulation of "one substance" or identification. The term used for the fusion process by Burke is "strategy," which is based upon attitudinal identifications with the reader or the audience.

Chapter III studies Fellini's strategies in making "attitudinal identifications" with his audience. The chapter concentrates on three cinematic techniques: the use of symbols, the use of mise-en-scène, and the use
of montage. As a supportive device to the three aforementioned techniques, the use of music and the sound track is also reviewed.

The cinematic techniques discussed in Chapter III create La Strada's form. Chapter IV begins with an outline of the different aspects of form found in the film. The film's overall form suggests that Fellini uses his cinematic techniques as strategic means for communicating terms for his rhetorical devises. Again, Burke's process of identification emerges as the overriding motive. The chapter explores the motive by analyzing four "sub-strategies" of identification: the strategy of properties, the strategy of depersonalization, the strategy of ambiguity, and the strategy of spiritualization. The study approaches Fellini's achievement of identification by recognizing the ambiguity of the filmmaker's style. Burke states, "Accordingly, what we want is not terms that avoid ambiguity, but terms that clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise." Once the chapter has gained insight into the ambiguity of the film, an order process is performed with the given terms, following Burke's concept of transcendence.

Chapter V concludes the study by summarizing the analysis of Fellini's burdening situation and his
cinematic and rhetorical organization of *La Strada*, leading to conclusions as to the **purpose** behind his tactics of expression. Burke explains:

> Yet, as seen from the standpoint of symbolic action, we do not have to choose between the artist's mode of consideration and my own. He was concerned with a unifying act, and so was I. I am merely suggesting that, when you begin to consider the situations behind the tactics of expression, you will find tactics that organize a work technically because they organize it emotionally. The two aspects, we might say Spinozistically, are but modes of the same substance. Hence, if you look for a man's burden, you will find the lead that explains the structure of his solution. His answer gets its form by relation to the questions he is answering.  

The chapter attempts to classify Fellini's question into an established school of thought; yet his own thoughts are new and unique to the period in which *La Strada* was released and are only now being more clearly addressed by recent studies of existential writers whose situations, or burdens, were similar to the one found in Fellini's question. The chapter compares Fellini's purpose in communicating his act to the motives of such writers as Kafka, Beckett, Kierkegaard, and Sartre, seeking the mysterious answer offered by the Italian filmmaker through his work, *La Strada*. 
Justification of the Study

This writer believes the following study to be important and justified for the following reasons:

1. Fellini is an artist burdened with the philosophical inquiry concerning the spiritual, metaphysical, and social reality of man's existence. This inquiry continues to challenge philosophers, theologians, and artists today.

2. Fellini expresses the burdens of his inquiry and his strategic answer through the very powerful medium of film. At the time of La Strada's release, the film received mixed response. Today it is viewed as a classic.

3. Fellini created and produced La Strada during a very important period in world history and in the history of film.

4. La Strada contains poetic rhetorical implications. Critics in the past could only rely on Aristotlean means for rhetorical criticism. It is hoped that this study, through the insights of Kenneth Burke, offers a more comprehensive analysis of Fellini's poetic style.

5. It is believed by this writer that this investigation of Fellini's rhetorical act gives accurate and impartial insights into the director's contemporary
thought. Since no previous study has applied such comprehensive concepts of Burke to film, this methodology may be beneficial to the field of speech communication, and more specifically, the medium of film.

6. Taking into consideration that Fellini's film presents that which he feels to be significant contemporary thought, the investigation into his rhetorical devices involves vital issues in dealing with the search for the self and modern man's philosophical inquiry of social consciousness which has reached particular importance in today's rhetoric.

Due to a lack of rhetorical analysis, this writer hopes that through his insights and those of Kenneth Burke, the following chapters can provide an exciting and meaningful study of Federico Fellini's film, La Strada.
ENDNOTES


2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., p. 501.


6 Ibid., pp. xvii.


10 Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, p. 92.
CHAPTER II
ITALY AND FELLINI

Introduction

Kenneth Burke's dramatistic pentad consists of the five terms--Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, and Purpose. When considering these terms, a critic must recognize their interrelationships. For example, the act cannot be fully understood if the scene is not studied; nor can the purpose be identified if the agent is not adequately recognized. Since any term or terms can be given more emphasis than the others in a rhetorical study, many different approaches are possible. In this study, the rhetorical act, La Strada, receives the emphasis. Yet, a holistic view of the rhetorical act requires that all the terms be addressed, and addressed on two levels.

The first level is intrinsic to the act. In analyzing the content of the rhetorical act, the protagonist can be labeled an agent who performs his or her own act (whether it be physical, verbal, or symbolic in nature) within a scene (which could be physical, psychological, or metaphysical). The agency, how the protagonist performs his or her act, can also be labeled,
leading to conclusions concerning his or her purpose for the rhetorical act.

The first level needs to be accompanied by the second level of analysis. The second level approaches the factors extrinsic to the rhetorical act, or the context of its situation. Specifically, this approach will be used in this study as follows. The rhetorical act, *La Strada*, will be viewed holistically by first viewing the background of Fellini in his native Italy. Secondly, *La Strada* will be studied through an analysis of the agency which Fellini incorporates; the film medium and rhetorical strategies. Lastly, the purpose of Fellini's agency and act will be theorized. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to investigate the scene, Italy and the agent, Fellini.

**Italy**

The philosophical implications within *La Strada* result from the philosophical ideas of Fellini. These ideas have their roots in the numerous events in Fellini's life prior to 1954, the year in which the film was finished. In an attempt to reduce the numbers of events and isolate those which may have influenced Fellini in some significant way, we should look to Fellini himself for help. In the book, *Fellini on Fellini*, the Italian director makes continuous references
to two very influential scenes within his country. These are Fascism and Roman Catholicism.

Officially, the Fascist Party controlled Italian life for approximately twenty years, from the establishment of Benito Mussolini as head of the government in 1922 to his overthrow in 1943. The Fascists ruled Italy by suppressing all opposition. Under Mussolini's militant policies, many Italians could see the inevitability of entering World War II. Public awareness increased as Mussolini signed the Munich Pact on May 22, 1939, marking his intention of bringing Italy into the war on the side of Germany, and continued to increase until the official declaration of war less than a year later. Many Italians viewed this act with much pessimism. Italian historian Giuseppe Mammarella writes, "In spite of assurances by the fascist propaganda machine that the war would be won in a few months, many Italians who had fought in the first World War and who were familiar with British determination as well as German ruthlessness looked upon Italy's future with much uncertainty."¹

A retrospective study of Italy's participation in the war helps to reveal the state of suppression and confusion under which its people lived during the Fascist regime. The Italian people became the victims of a very
unprepared army and a government torn over its participation in the war. A conflict of interests existed between King Vittorio Emanuele III, who doubted Germany's changes for victory, and Mussolini, who was deeply involved with the German movement and had indeed become a close friend of Hitler. On May 15, 1943, King Emanuele wrote Mussolini, "It is time to think very seriously of the necessity of disentangling Italy's destiny from that of Germany." Apparently Mussolini did not give this note much thought as Italy continued to become more and more involved in Germany's war efforts. After two more months of stalemate, anti-Fascist forces finally convinced the King to dismiss Mussolini as prime minister. The July 25 dismissal was celebrated by the Italian people who viewed it as an end to Fascism and Italy's participation in the war. However, while the people rejoiced, the Italian government realized that disengagement from Germany and an armistice with the Allies would be difficult.

Italy had allowed itself to become occupied by German forces. The Italian government feared that the signing of an armistice with the Allies would lead to disastrous German retaliation. Secretively, government officials met with General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Allied Commander in the Mediterranean. At this meeting, it was
decided that the American airborne division would parachute into Rome and, with the help of the Italian Army, defend the capital from German attack. An armistice containing these terms was signed. However, things did not go as planned. Italian forces were not successful in securing control over the necessary airfields, and the Italian government no longer felt secure with the strategy of the Allies, which could put the King and his officials at the mercy of the Germans. The mission was therefore cancelled.

A rhetorical war developed between Italy and the Allies. Realizing that Italy's future was more secure on the side of the Allies, prime minister Badoglio, Mussolini's successor, agreed to the demands of the Allies. On the evening of September 8, 1943, Badoglio announced the signing of an armistice to the Italian people. Mammarella writes, "The proclamation ended with the order to the Italian armed forces to cease hostilities against the Allies and to be prepared 'to resist any attack from any other source.'" It became obvious that the other force which needed to be resisted was the Germans who had already established themselves in Italy; a force that had become so strong that many Italian soldiers allowed themselves to be disarmed. Ironically, the rhetorical battle between Italy and the
Allies resulted in Italy's Army becoming an addition to the German Army. While the Allies rushed to discontinue these developments in Italy, the Italian people were suffering the effects of their government's rhetoric.

The situation in Fellini's home city, Rome, may best display the consequences of Italy's actions during the period. The Italian capital, Rome, which had been closely protected by governmental policies (one of which declared it an "open city" in August 1943), became the stage for military confrontation and endless terror. Mammarella describes the situation as such:

The capital had been declared an "open city" in August 1943 and had suffered only few Allied air attacks. The city was almost intact, although the Romans had lived through a difficult period during the German occupation. On the verge of starvation, the city's population had been subjected, especially during the last months, to organized terror by Fascist Milizia and the German political police. Young men were frequently rounded up and either forced to enroll in the new Fascist army or, more often, sent to do slave labor in Germany.

Rome was the center of an intense underground activity. The resistance movement stood against the Fascists and the Germans. It is estimated that 232,841 persons actively engaged in the movement. Their efforts played a large part in Italian society and politics, and later became a key line of communication for the Allies. When the Allies reached Rome and finally liberated the city on June 5, 1944, the resistance movement continued
to fight against German units and the neo-Fascist who were attempting a resurgence. The partisans were regarded as heroes; unfortunately, many became martyrs.

According to Mammarella:

The partisans paid dearly in sacrifice and lives. Partisan bands underwent severe difficulties, especially during the winters when, pressed by Germans and neo-Fascists, they were obliged to hide in the mountains without food or contact with other partisan units. Sometimes, for short periods, resistance units were compelled to disband. When their members returned to civilian life they were often caught by the police, tortured and executed.

The failings of the Italian war effort, and, more specifically, its effects on Rome are included in this study because it is here that Fellini experienced the anxiety created by the Fascists and the Germans. During the early 1940s, Fellini was employed by the Marc'Aurelio magazine as a writer. Fellini's articles reflected his individuality, and they did not always conform with Fascist propaganda. His satirical style kept him beyond definite interpretations and established guilt, but it did make him a target for Fascist scrutiny. Fellini's friend and biographer, Angelo Solmi, recalls the consequences of one incident:

But there was more trouble for Fellini, after a letter written by him and signed "Bianchina," addressed to a soldier at the front, had been published in the Marc'Aurelio. The mocking, paradoxical tone of the letter was not to the liking of the Minister of Popular Culture and the atmosphere around the happy-go-lucky editor became oppressive.
Up till then, Fellini had got by with successive extensions of his convalescent's certificate which he had obtained from sympathetic friends or by means of a small bribe, with the excuse of a heart murmur. But one bitter day—at the beginning of 1943—he went to the Celio military hospital for the usual renewal and realized that the medical staff had been completely changed. Moreover, German officers were watching at a distance, but with attention, the procedures of the visits. The only doctor who knew him rolled up his sleeves cautiously, behind the backs of the others, making desperate signs to warn him that he could do nothing. The result was that Fellini, in the twinkling of an eye, was declared fit, sent to his unit and told to join his regiment which, he recalls, was in Puglia.

Being told what to do was never well accepted by Fellini, who soon after receiving his papers, tore them up. While this act may have given him a momentary feeling of freedom, he eventually convinced himself that he had better obtain replacements. "He went back to Bologna," writes Solmi, "for another medical examination. His innate fatalism had already resigned him to his destiny when, just as he was about to undergo his examination, the siren went off and an air-raid burst upon the city." The military hospital was hit, and as a result Fellini's records were lost, freeing him from any military commitment. Perhaps it was this event in his life that caused his hatred for commitment. Fellini states:

Commitment, I feel, prevents a man from developing. My "anti-Fascism" is of a biological kind. I could never forget the isolation in which Italy was enclosed for twenty years. Today I feel a
pavement talking. I didn't lose time and I began to shout to them 'Fritz, my dearest Fritz!' and leaped down almost at the same time. The soldiers in the convoy were puzzled for a moment, all the more so when I boldly held out my hand to the nearest German officer, and embraced him, still calling loudly, 'Dearest Fritz.' When I think about it now, it gives me the shivers. Nothing happened: whether the soldiers believed in the comedy, or whether they hesitated to shoot at someone who used the body of one of his superiors as a shield, the important thing is that there was no fatal burst of machine-gun fire and a few moments later I heard the rumble of the lorry as it drew away. Meanwhile, the German officials pushed me away in annoyance and went off in pursuit of their own affairs. They had probably understood, but let the matter slip. I found myself alone in the Via Margutta, weak at the knees, my heart thumping, but safe."

Solmi admits that the story changes a bit whenever Fellini tells it. Still, the event did happen to some extent. Again Fellini was fortunate in evading his oppressors. Fellini and his wife continued to live in Rome throughout the war years. Eventually, Rome did become liberated; however, in Fellini's home the celebration was soon ended by tragedy. Federico and Giulietta suffered the tragic loss of their son, Federichino, who lived only a few weeks after his birth during the summer of 1944. In the midst of poverty and hunger, the couple felt desperately alone. Eventually, they were able to regain their faith and happiness but in that summer Fellini felt a sense of loneliness that he would commit to memory, to be witnessed in his artistic expression.
While Rome was not a victim of many air-raids, Fellini did witness the physical destruction of the war when he returned to his childhood home immediately after the war's conclusion. Fellini recalls the feelings he experienced during his visit:

I left Rimini in 1937. I went back in 1945. It looked like a sea of rubble. There was nothing left. All that came out of the ruins was the dialect, the familiar cadences, a call of "Duilio! Severino!," those strange names.

Many of the houses I had lived in no longer existed. People talked of the front, of the caves of San Marino where they had sheltered, and I felt slightly ashamed of having been out of the disaster. Then we went round to see what was left. The small medieval piazza, "La Pugna," was quite unharmed; among the ruins, it looked like a Cinecittà film set designed by the architect Filippone.

I was struck by the way people were so busy, nesting in their wooden huts yet already talking of boarding-houses that must be built, and hotels, hotels, hotels: the desire to rebuild houses.

In Piazza Giulio Cesare the Nazis had hanged three local people. There were now flowers on the ground.

I remember that my reactions were childish. The sight seemed to me an outsize outrage. Where was that hotel, that house, that district, that café, that school? I felt that respect for some things ought to have stopped them. All right, all right, there was a war on: but did they have to destroy every single thing?13

Having one's birthplace and childhood home destroyed may do more damage to one's sense of belonging than to one's property. The Americans promised to pay restitution and help rebuild the cities destroyed by themselves and the Nazis, but the Americans could not remove the psychological damage done by the war; not only
in Italy, but all across Europe where the war had been fought. Along with ending many family traditions, the war experience changed many deeply-rooted philosophies. The change became evident as Europeans turned to the arts as a means for expressing their post-war burdens. A study of any of the arts can show a profound sense of pessimism and despair. The study of the cinema, with Fellini as an example, during this period not only shows the physical destruction of the war, but also the new philosophy behind its filmmakers. David A. Cook studied this period and writes:

More devastating to the cinema than either economic instability or physical wreckage, however, was the state of psychological and moral collapse in which Europe found itself immediately following the Nazi surrender. It is estimated that World War II killed over forty-eight million people in Europe and created more than twenty-one million refugees. Whole cities, with their entire civilian populations, had been wiped out in minutes by fire-bombing and artifacts of a centuries-old civilization reduced to rubble. Indeed, at least 35 percent of all permanent dwellings in Western Europe had been destroyed by the end of the war. Liberation was joyful when it came, but the experience of Nazi barbarism left a dark imprint upon the European consciousness: and the revelation of the true extent of Nazi atrocities in the occupied territories was nothing less than shattering. In one large province of the Soviet Union, for example, 40 percent of the inhabitants had been deported to death camps, and Poland had lost 25 percent of its entire population to the camps. German-born sociologist and philosopher Theodor Adorno, himself a refugee from Hitler, was moved to state that there could be "no poetry after Auschwitz," and indeed for a while there could not.
Italian cinema was first to emerge from the ashes of the war. In fact, even before the Nazi surrender, Italian filmmakers and critics were laying the foundations of Neo-Realism. Critics such as Cesare Zavattini and Umberto Barbaro and filmmakers Visconti, De Sica, and Rossellini created the innovative neo-realist movement which would influence cinema around the world. On location shooting, the use of non-professional actors, and improvisation of the script, are just a few of the techniques that were introduced during this movement. However, perhaps the most important contribution of neo-realism was the works of Roberto Rossellini. Rossellini gave the cinema world two vital elements. Firstly, his film, *Open City*, is a masterpiece of neo-realistic techniques and documented events of Roman life during German occupation. Secondly, during *Open City* in 1945 and his 1946 film, *Paisa*, Rossellini trained a young man named Federico Fellini, who later would transcend the neo-realist movement and become one of the great film directors in film history.

Before we look at Fellini's transcendence of neo-realism, we need to observe the second influential scene within his country--Roman Catholicism. Fellini says that his people "grew up in the shadow of fascism and the Church."15 "For those born in Italy, being Roman
Catholic is a condition that exists before birth." For Fellini, the Church was another form of suppression. He attended Catholic schools where discipline was very strict. When he speaks of his school experiences, the stories are underscored by harsh feelings toward the school officials. "I cannot tell you what I think it has done to me. I had a strict religious education and for forty years it has given me problems which should never have been problems." Dogmatism appears to be the characteristic with which Fellini links Fascism and his religious training. "I have experienced and witnessed so much dogmatism in my life that I am always afraid of sounding like one of those terrible dragon priests from my childhood: pompous and presumptuous." Fellini, the individual, rejected those who tried to impose the fear of God on him by means of threats. The threat that there "is no salvation outside the Church" remained with Fellini, whose Cardinal character in his film Eight and One-half uses the phrase as an attempt to "guide" the film's protagonist, Guido, in the right direction. In fact, many of Fellini's films reflect his attitudes toward overbearing officials of the Church. Catholicism became a rhetorical strategy for Fellini. Since much of his audience could identify with religious connotations, Fellini used religious symbolism as a means of
consubstantiality. This process will be discussed in detail later. Paradoxically, Catholicism is a major element in Fellini's style as a filmmaker. "I know that I am a prisoner of 2,000 years of the Catholic Church," states Fellini, "All Italians are. I do not mean to scorn religion; perhaps all I say is 'we have always needed religion, we have not the strength to do without it! And where it has been needed, the atmosphere, the symbols, are always the same... and we keep on having that need...""19

A rhetorical analysis of his film, _La Strada_, exposes his use of religious symbolism within this film. While his film, _La Dolce Vita_, is not the subject of this study, it may be the best example of how Fellini includes religious symbols in his films. In the opening shot of the film, a statue of Jesus Christ is flown by helicopter over the city of Rome. This is just a beginning to his strategic use of symbols universal to those of the Christian faith. Fellini's use of religious, and specifically Catholic, symbolism produces negative criticism from some of his viewers. Fellini replies, "I have a feeling of devotion towards the Church, and I see her for what she means to Catholics in Italy--a great mother, indulgent and affectionate towards the sinner. I should never dream of purposely exiling myself or
opposing myself to her, for she is inseparable from my personality as an Italian."\textsuperscript{20} Subsequently, the Church is also inseparable from his personality as a filmmaker. A look at Fellini as an agent may help reveal his interesting philosophy toward religion. However, the best means for analysis will come later in this study, during the analysis of \textit{La Strada}. Fellini once answered a Jesuit priest, "I leave my films to answer your question about the spiritual concept of my world as an artist."\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{Fellini}

Burke writes, "Critical and imaginative works are answers to questions posed by the situation in which they arose. They are not merely answers, they are \textit{strategic answers, stylized answers}."\textsuperscript{22} The previous section attempts to show Fellini's situation during the war and his attitude towards the Church. These physical situations, or scenes within his life, affect the psychological situation of the creative agent. In Fellini's life, the scenes contained much suffering. Dostoevsky writes, "Why, suffering is the sole origin of consciousness."\textsuperscript{23} This statement relates to the mental process through which the psychological situation evolves into the philosophical attitude or belief. It bonds the strategic answer and the stylized answer. Fellini's
psychological strategies of identification are used as a means of encoding his philosophical, stylized answer. Therefore, Fellini's beliefs are behind his strategies as a filmmaker, and his philosophy becomes his style as a filmmaker. This leads a critic to another starting point—the agent who performs the act. Burke writes, "At such points the very attempt to discuss the poem purely as the product of a poet should eventually help sharpen our perception of the respects in which the poem must be analyzed rather as the product of a citizen and taxpayer, subject to various social embarrassments, physical ills, and mental aberrations." La Strada is the product of Fellini's thoughts. While an analysis of the film will expose many of his ideas, his own words, given during interviews, also reveal his attitudes, values, and beliefs. These elements, as Fellini's philosophy, create an interesting interpretation of reality. According to Fellini:

Realism is a bad word. In a certain sense everything is realistic. I see no dividing line between imagination and reality. I see a great deal of reality in imagination. I don't feel it's my responsibility to arrange everything neatly on one universally valid level. I have an infinite capacity for amazement, and I don't see why I should set up a pseudo-rational screen to protect me from being amazed.

Fellini's definition, or lack of definition, of reality alienated him from neo-realist critics who called
him a "traitor" to the movement. This criticism may be unjust because Fellini does not betray the movement, he transcends it. Fellini, the individual, did not allow predetermined qualities to suppress him in his films the same way that he did not allow Fascists and "dragon priests" to suppress his individuality. Fellini saw neorealism fading, and felt that it was "necessary to become a poet, to cope with its flatness." While his critics wanted to concentrate solely on social reality, Fellini also wanted to address social reality, but not just on a single level. Fellini summarizes many of his beliefs when he states:

Realism is neither a tight enclosure nor a one-dimensional panorama. A landscape, for instance, has a number of layers, and the deepest, which only poetic language can reveal, is not the least real. What I want to show beyond the outer surface of things is what people call "unreal." They say I have a taste for mystery. If they liked to give the word a capital M, then I would be glad to accept it. To me, mysteries belong to man, they are the great unreasoning lines of his spiritual life, love, health . . . At the centre of successive layers of reality, God is to be found, I think—the key to mysteries. I would add that if neo-realism is called "social," as it is by certain Italian critics, then it is limited. Man is not just a social being, he is divine.27

Fellini's beliefs do not abandon the mission of neo-realism, nor do they show disrespect for his mentor, Rossellini. They reflect the understanding that societies are made of men, and if an artist seeks to portray social reality he or she should concentrate on
the individual. Neo-realist filmmakers documented social reality by merely following a man around with a camera, but Fellini chose to use his instrument of film to probe the successive layers of reality which lie within a man. (See page 2.) Fellini sees this searching of the soul as a religious investigation. "Every investigation that a man makes about himself, about his relations with other people and about the mystery of life, is a spiritual investigation and--in the true sense of the word--a religious one." Fellini says, "I suppose that this is my philosophy. This is neo-realism, as far as I am concerned, in its pure and original sense; a quest for the essential self, my own and others, along all paths of life." La Strada, which means "The Road," is a quest for the self along all paths of life. The point needs to be made, that this motive links Fellini to neo-realism. Social reality is man's relationship with his fellow man. Man's ability to love his fellow man is spiritual; mysterious in that this powerful emotion transcends rationality. Scientists prefer to equate reality with the physicality of rationality. Fascists defined neo-realism along these guidelines. Fellini defines the movement through its artistic essence,

A common bond links all the various neo-realist tendencies, and it is love of man, of his life and his surroundings. Neo-realism is the "common man's"
movement, that is man and his relationships outside and beyond himself. These relationships become the nucleus for a complicated change in the pattern of living, an existence which becomes co-existence.

Conclusion

From this introductory material, we again realize that World War II changed the pattern of living. German could not co-exist with Jew; Fascist Italian could not co-exist with anti-fascist Italian. The inability to co-exist caused the inhumanity of death camps. Many suffered, and consequently many were awakened to a new consciousness. But the new consciousness came in the form of burdening questions. The rational could not answer these questions. Roman Catholicism could not answer these questions. This inability to define one's own essence became the "human condition." Following World War II, man's irrationality and his mysterious sense of loneliness and alienation within his own world became the work of artists rather than politicians or priests. Few were able to fulfill the responsibility of offering an answer as authentic as the question. Fellini is one of those artists whose personal condition provided insight into the "human condition." Fellini's scene presented an awareness of the situation and gave him the ability to address it. If we are to understand Fellini, the filmmaker, we must first come to grips with the
background which shaped his reality. Following this, his agency, how he meets the challenge and offers his answer, becomes the focus of study.
ENDNOTES


2 Ibid., p. 12.

3 Ibid., p. 24.

4 Ibid., p. 25.

5 Ibid., p. 70.

6 Ibid., p. 80.

7 Ibid., p. 81.


9 Ibid.


11 Solmi, p. 74.

12 Ibid., pp. 75-76.

13 Strich, pp. 31-32.


15 Strich, p. 151.


17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Solmi, p. 30.
21 Strich, p. 66.
25 Strich, p. 152.
27 Strich, p. 152.
28 Solmi, p. 17.
29 Ibid.
30 Solmi, p. 18.
CHAPTER III

FELLINI AND FILM

By looking at things with the love and communion that are established from one moment to another between a person and myself, between an object and myself, I understood that the cinema could fill my life, helping me to find a meaning in existence.

--Fellini

Introduction

The previous chapter studied La Strada's scene, Italy, and its agent, Fellini. It is the purpose of this chapter to analyze La Strada's agency, or "how he did it." By the nature of Burke's definition, the agency is the work of the agent. Therefore, chapter three proposes to study film as an agency and Fellini's use of this agency.

How did Fellini create La Strada? The question could be answered in a number of ways. Financially, Fellini needed the help of Carlo Ponti and Dino De Laurentis. Technically, Fellini was assisted by his production staff and crews. Only Fellini had the idea, and he governed all aspects of La Strada's production, insuring that his idea was expressed. The film medium offers many resources for expression and Fellini takes
advantage of them all. In this sense, the following sections will show how Fellini presented La Strada, rhetorically through the use of film.

**Film as a Medium of Identification**

When certain thoughts fill a person's head, they can become a burden. If these thoughts are burdening, a person usually does one of two things: expresses the thoughts or goes insane. By human nature, people have a need to communicate. Fortunately, we are able to do so through a very simple process; but, the process is performed by humans so it often becomes complex. The standard communication process involves a person who encodes a message and sends it through a channel to the "other" who decodes the message. This is a two-way process when the other returns feedback to the sender. Two factors determine if the process is successful. Firstly, the message must reach the other, and secondly, the meaning must reach the other. The message usually does get transmitted; however, the meaning is often not received.

The sender encodes a meaning into the message which he or she intends the other to decode, making the encoding process a very strategic one. Encoding strategies relate directly to the motive of the sender. For instance, a sender whose motive is to encode a
message so that its meaning informs itself to the other, will use signs which the other will clearly identify and understand. The process changes when a sender's motive is to encode a message whose meaning or "hidden" meaning persuades the other. In this case, the message strategically contains signs which have connotative meanings. A third motive rests somewhere between the two. It is similar to persuasion in that the signs strategically possess connotative meanings; however, the motive of the sender is to identify with the other. This is the strategy of identification. Burke explains that, "Traditionally, the key term for rhetoric is not 'identification,' but 'persuasion.' . . . Our treatment, in terms of identification, is decidedly not meant as a substitute for the sound traditional approach. Rather, . . . it is but an accessory to the standard lore."¹ Therefore, this study observes the strategy of identification as a motive in which the sender intends to reach the other by identifying with him or her. This could be called persuasion once removed. Burke writes that, "You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your ways with his."²

In communicating a meaning to the other, "talking his language" requires more than just speaking a common
national dialect. The sender wishes the meaning to travel a path past the ear and into the mind of the other. When the sender knows a great deal about the other, the goal is more attainable. But, when the sender only knows general information about a general audience, he or she must rely on instincts and hopefully a basic understanding of the audience's "condition." In attaining identification, two points should be understood. Firstly, the transmission of the message's meaning can only reach the minds of the audience via their senses. The more sense stimulated, the better the chances of the meaning reaching its destination. Secondly, each audience member's mind is different, suggesting that the encoding process should strategically utilize signs which leave room for interpretation. The film medium has been proven successful in putting these two points to use. Fellini understands this point when he states, "A story of characters, a story about various situations, an idea seems to me particularly valid when it suggests itself on various levels, that is, when it gives a possibility of fruition, of assimilation on various levels. From that it is possible to impose an unique level for each person." ³

Skilled rhetoricians use ambiguous signs and arrange them in such an order as to suggest their meaning
without constricting it. This strategy is used to bring differing minds closer together. Burke writes:

In pure identification there would be no strife. Likewise, there would be no strife in absolute separateness, since opponents can join battle only through a mediatary ground that makes their communication possible, thus providing the first condition necessary for their interchange of blows. But put identification and division ambiguously together, so that you cannot know for certain just where one ends and the other begins, and you have the characteristic invitation to rhetoric.  

The interpretation of a rhetorically ambiguous message relies on the mental processes of the other or audience of others. Fellini believes that each mind has various levels and that a message can receive its meaning by assimilating to at least one of those levels. Fellini's strategy of assimilation appears to be just another name for Burke's strategy of identification. In his films, Fellini concentrates his strategy on the audience's level of imagination. He feels that "The film takes all of its meaning, finds its true justification on the level of imagination. And then, each one will appropriate it to himself according to his own sensitivity and his own intelligence."  

Burke sees the role of the imagination in rhetoric as making the real seem doubly real. For years, educators have used imagery as a means of reaching their students. Rhetoricians, through the strategy of identification, also use imagery. The example of a politician who proclaims that "he's a farm boy himself"
is his attempt to create the image of himself and farmers agreeing on political issues. The images become even more powerful when the rhetorician is able to control their order in the audience's mind. Perhaps this is the root of film's power; its ability to present images and present them in a strategic order. When a film is able to project its images and order onto the mind of its viewer, identification is made possible. The viewer has his own images and sense of order, and when these two sets come together, the strategy of identification is successful.

**Fellini's Use of the Film Medium**

Film, alone, is a medium of communication. It becomes a means for expression when someone "writes" a message on it. Fellini writes his message during all three production stages of his film. He decides what is shot, how it is shot, and how it is presented. In doing so, he uses three cinematic strategies: the use of symbols, the use of *Mise en scène*, and the use of montage. The three facilitate Fellini's use of the strategy of identification.

A single film shot is an un-edited piece of film of any length. It reveals what the film director chose to include in creating an image. In creating the image, the director will use signs. Anything within the film's
frame can be a sign. According to Burke, "nonverbal conditions or objects can be considered as signs by reason of persuasive ingredients inherent in the 'meaning' they have for the audience to which they are 'addressed.'"\(^7\) Such signs are no longer just signs when their inherent meaning signifies another quality. They become symbols. Carl Jung, in his book entitled *Man and his Symbols,* defines a symbol as "a term, a name, or even a picture that may be familiar in daily life, yet that possesses specific connotations in addition to its conventional and obvious meaning. It implies something vague, unknown, or hidden from us." He adds, "Thus a word or an image is symbolic when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning."\(^8\)

Filmmakers have been very successful in using signs as symbols because they can manipulate the camera in such a way as to make them appear significant. Film critic Monroe C. Beadsley feels that there are two kinds of signs: natural ones and conventional ones.

A natural sign is one which has within itself an inherent relationship to another quality. For example, a picture of a clock is a sign for the concept of a clock, but also is a natural sign, or symbol, for the concept of time. A conventional sign is somewhat more symbolic in that it is an arbitrary sign which represents another
quality not through an inherent relationship, but through
convention. For example, the word "clock" is only a sign
for five letters within quotations. Arranged as these
letters are, they are a natural sign for a word. Through
convention, the word is a conventional sign for the
concept of a clock. All words are conventional signs or
symbols for the thing symbolized. Therefore, they can
only be used to mean the thing once a society has agreed
upon its meaning. These "agreed-upon" meanings also make
a sheep a symbol for purity or a cross a symbol for
Christianity. Man can only communicate a meaning by
using symbols, unless he actually waves the thing in
front of the other's nose. Obviously it is easier to
communicate the concept of a clock by saying or writing
the word than it is to communicate the concept by
attaching a clock as appendix A. Man has become very
content with the use of symbols. In fact, Burke defines
man as the "symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing)
animal." He explains:

The "symbol-using animal," yes, obviously. But
we can bring ourselves to realize just what that
formula implies, just how overwhelmingly much of what
we mean by "reality" has been built up for us through
nothing but our symbol systems? Take away our books,
and what little do we know about history, biography,
even something so "down to earth" as the relative
positions of seas and continents? What is our
"reality" for today (beyond the paper-thin line of
our own particular lives) but all this clutter of
symbols about the past combined with whatever things
we know mainly though maps, magazines, newspapers, and the like about the present? In school, as they go from class to class, students turn from one idiom to another. The various courses in the curriculum are in effect but so many different terminologies. And however important to us is the tiny sliver of reality each of us has experienced firsthand, the whole overall "picture" is but a construct of our symbol systems. To meditate on this fact until one sees its full implications is much like peering over the edge of things into an ultimate abyss. And doubtless that's one reason why, though man is typically the symbol-using animal, he clings to a kind of naive verbal realism that refuses to realize the full extent of the role played by symbolicity in his notions of reality.10

Successful rhetoricians and poets realize the extent of the role played by symbolicity in their audience's notions of reality. Fellini is successful as a filmmaker largely because he creates a reality in his films built on symbolicity. As symbols, Fellini's signs allow themselves to identify or assimilate to a level within the mind of the audience. Fellini's motive is to stimulate the imagination. He does this through the use of symbols. Burke understands this strategy when he writes, "the use of symbols to induce action in beings that normally communicate by symbols is essentially realistic in the most practical and pragmatic sense of the term."11

Fellini uses symbols in creating his image for film. He does not take a single shot lightly. He feels that, "Any shot at all expresses the totality of a world. There is not need to even say it."12 Fellini
sees no dividing line between the imagination and reality because he is able to create an imaginary world by using real signs. Since these signs are symbols, his imaginary world is doubly real. It is real on the surface of film and increasingly real within the audience's identification.

The cinematic term for creating an image for film is *mise en scène*; a French term which literally means "putting in the scene." It describes the action, lighting, decor, and other elements within the shot itself. Fellini strategically puts all of these elements in his shot. This is one of the areas in which Fellini broke the constrictions of neo-realism. Neo-realism simply followed the action within an existing scene. Ironically, it was during this movement that Fellini learned the visual power of *mise en scène*. He recalls, "when I was working with Rossellini I began to see how much more expressive the visuals can be."\(^\text{13}\) Indeed neo-realist films were successful in using real things. Immediately following World War II, Italian life itself was dramatic. But one does not gain insight from just looking at reality, one has to dissect it. Fellini dissects reality and does not put it back together as it originally was, but with what he finds significant inside of it more evident on the outside. In his case, the
exterior is the film image. Fellini's use of *mise en scene* reveals what he sees in reality and how he has chosen to show his reality to the audience. To identify with his audience, he puts, into his world on film, symbols that function as real things. Fellini reverses the normal mental process because he relies on the audience's decoding process. Fellini views real things as symbols, therefore in depicting his reality he uses symbols whose meanings are more influential and important to the scene than their mere presence as real things.

Two primary examples found in *La Strada* are Fellini's placement of children and animals in the background of many shots. The technique is made effective by their "logical" ability to be within the scene and action of the shot. With this technique, Fellini *transcends* neorealism. According to Burke:

> And when we use symbols for things, such symbols are not merely reflections of the things symbolized, or signs for them; they are to a degree a transcending of the things symbolized. So, to say that man is a symbol-using animal is by the same token to say that he is a "transcending animal." Thus, there is in language itself a motive force calling man to transcend the "state of nature" (that is, the order of motives that would prevail in a world without language, Logos, "reason").

Fellini's shot contains a motive not found in neorealistic shots. He does more than create an image for his audience's mind, he creates the stimuli for a
transcending process in each mind. When Fellini's things stop being just things, they become rhetorical devices. The term rhetorical implies that the meaning of Fellini's mise en scene depends on the decoding process of each viewer. Fellini apparently believes that by using symbols which identify themselves with his audience he can communicate the meaning of his film to his viewers. If the audience does not find the meaning in the verbal words, it may find it through the non-verbal things that Fellini associates with them. In this sense, Fellini identifies his things with the action in the shot so that the meaning of the action will be more easily identifiable with the audience. In this light, it is not surprising that Fellini aims at the audience's imagination in trying to communicate a meaning on the various levels of its consciousness.

The concept of mise en scene is based on rhetorical situations. The director strategically "puts into the scene" what he or she believes will stimulate the viewer. Burke writes, "we do not want to ignore the import of imagery in its own right, first as needed for characterizing a given motivational recipe, and second for its rhetorical effect upon an audience." 15 A film shot makes a rhetorical effect possible by projecting an image. When the image contains real things, it will
impact the audience to some degree. French critic Andre Bazin, using the term "depth of focus," argues that the image is very realistic because "what is imaginary on the screen must have the spatial density of something real." Through a poetic use of his depth of focus, Fellini populates a rhetorical world. The reality of his rhetoric ultimately depends on his viewer. As Burke says, "the poetic house is built of identifications." The import that Fellini places on the use of mise-en-scene stems from his views on the spoken word. Fellini feels that the spoken word is not the best use of film's potential. He states:

Dialogue is not important to me. The function of dialogue is merely to inform. I think that in the cinema it is much better to use other elements, such as lighting, objects, and the setting in which the action takes place, since these are more expressive than pages and pages of dialogue.

Fellini's "film language" places the emphasis on the language of signs. His attitude toward the use of signs as opposed to spoken words reflects the influence of the French prophet, Antonin Artaud. Artaud sees the same potential in the resources of theatre that Fellini finds in film. In 1931 Artaud writes:

It has not been definitely proved that the language of words is the best possible language. And it seems that on the stage, which is above all a space to fill and a place where something happens, the language of words may have to give way before a language of signs whose objective aspect is the one that has the most immediate impact upon us.
Considered in this light, the objective work of the mise en scene assumes a kind of intellectual dignity from the effacement of words behind gestures and from the fact that the esthetic, plastic part of the theatre drops its role of decorative intermediary in order to become, in the proper sense of the word, a directly communicative language.

It appears that both Fellini and Artaud believe that words, as symbols for the sign or thing, are an extra step in the communication process. When the theatre and the film relies too heavily on words, this extra step can confuse the audience. Fellini feels that words create a world of labels. He says, "I detest the world of labels, the world that confuses the label with the thing labelled." The world of words can confuse or disrupt the strategy of identification if it does not produce the image as intended by the rhetorician.

A better understanding of Fellini's, and Artaud's, use of the strategy of identification may be found in the two terms that Burke associates with this strategy: transcendence and consubstantiality. Transcendence, as the act of going beyond ordinary limits, occurs in Fellini's and Burke's motives in symbolicity. This is their poetry. Through transcendence, Fellini's poetic use of language of signs achieves his motive of reaching the audience on various levels. In an article entitled Metaphysics and the Mise
en Scene, Artaud addresses the capacity of the poetic use of signs. He writes:

This language created for the senses must from the outset be concerned with satisfying them. This does not prevent it from developing later its full intellectual effect on all possible levels and in every direction. But it permits the substitution, for the poetry of language, of a poetry in space which will be resolved in precisely the domain which does not belong strictly to words.

Doubtless you would prefer, for a better understanding of what I mean, a few examples of this poetry in space capable of creating kinds of material images equivalent to word images. You will find these examples a little further on.

This very difficult and complex poetry assumes many aspects: especially the aspects of all means of expression utilizable on the stage, such as music, dance, plastic art, pantomime, mimicry, gesticulation, intonation, architecture, lighting and scenery.

Each of these means has its own intrinsic poetry, and a kind of ironic poetry as well, resulting from the way it combines with the other means of expression; and the consequences of these combinations, of their reactions and their reciprocal destructions, are easy to perceive.21

Fellini's effectiveness in using film as an agency for communication is due to his incorporation of all the means of expression, as listed by Artaud. Artaud sees this potential in the theatre, but Fellini reaches this potential by using the film medium. As a result Fellini also reaches the potential of Burke's theory on consubstantiality. Consubstantiality plays a large role in the strategy of identification. Burke explains:

A is not identical with his colleague, B. But insofar as their interests are joined, A is identified with B. Or he may identify himself with B
even when their interests are not joined, if he assumes that they are, or is persuaded to believe so.

Here are ambiguities of substance. In being identified with B, A is "substantially one" with a person other than himself. Yet at the same time he remains unique, an individual locus of motives. Thus he is both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another.

. . . Similarly, two persons may be identified in terms of some principle they share in common, and "identification" that does not deny their distinctness.

To identify A with B is to make A "consubstantial" with B. . . .

While Burke speaks of consubstantiality in terms of rhetoric, the term applies very well to Fellini's cinematic use of mise en scene. Fellini combines the means of expression to create the single substance of his film image. Since the image can be broken into its elements, the poetic effects of each element increases the likelihood of consubstantiality with the audience. This process is inherent in the arts. Artaud compares it to alchemy, a magic power or process for changing one thing into another. In his article entitled, The Alchemical Theater, Artaud writes:

There is a mysterious identity of essence between the principle of the theater and that of alchemy. For like alchemy, the theater, considered from one point of view its deepest principle, is developed from a certain number of fundamentals which are the same for all the arts and which aim on the spiritual and imaginary level at an efficacy analogous to the process which in the physical world actually turns all matter into gold. But there is still a deeper resemblance between the theater and alchemy, one which leads much further metaphysically. It is that alchemy and the theater are so to speak virtual arts,
and do not carry their end—or their reality—within themselves.  

Artaud, Fellini, and Burke all agree that the reality of rhetoric is found in the mind of the audience. Fellini practices Burke's theory of identification and Artaud's theory of alchemy. Fellini's rhetoric is communicated through his films. Strategically utilizing *mise en scène*, the symbolic function of Fellini's language of signs makes his rhetorical reality actually more realistic than the social reality filmed by neo-realists. By not manipulating their scene, neo-realists were just spectators. Fellini was cursed by some of his peers because he had the nerve and the ability to become a magician. In the 1950s, critics were not able to recognize the power within the practice of a theory introduced by Artaud in the 1930s and reiterated by Burke in his *Rhetoric of Motives*, published in 1950. In the critics' defense, all three are dealing with a power that none would claim to fully understand themselves. In the theatre, Artaud brings this unknown force, found in the confines of the human mind, to the forefront. He calls those who can call on this force, specialists. He writes:

It is in the light of magic and sorcery that the *mise en scène* must be considered, not as the reflection of a written test, the mere projection of physical doubles that is derived from the written
work, but as the burning projection of all the objective consequences of a gesture, word, sound, music, and their combinations. . . . the authors who use written words only have nothing to do with the theater and must give way to specialists in its objective and animated sorcery. 24

The language of signs and the strategic arrangement of them, *mise en scene*, offer a power to the theatre and film that authors are without. Artaud's concept of a "Theatre of Cruelty" was his response to theatre's neglect of this power. Fellini does not neglect this power. In fact, the third element that Fellini strategically uses, montage, provides film with a power that may surpass that of the theatre.

Fellini's poetic use of *mise en scene* is only equalled by his use of montage. Montage is the cutting of a film to create a juxtaposition of shots. Montage is performed in the editing stage of a film. Fellini decides what to shoot, how to shoot it, and how to present it. How it is presented is determined by the film's editing. Fellini edits his own films. He believes that this is very important. He states:

After the shooting, then comes the real work--the editing. Here is where you get the breath into the film. I run the scenes over and over again--one hundred, maybe two hundred times. I hear them with their natural sound to capture again the excitement that was on the set when the scene was shot. I try to keep what sounds I can--a train passing by, a crowd yelling, the traffic noises. Often even these must be recreated, however, because the generators for the cameras and the lights are too loud. I also
try to see how much I can do without sound. ... You learn to alternate sound with silence, silence with sound, and then finally it all comes alive. I feel that every director must cut his own picture. 25

Fellini uses montage as a strategy of time and space. Ever since Sergei Eisenstein used the strategy of montage to create shock stimuli in his 1925 film, Battleship Potemkin, montage has been considered very powerful. According to Cook, "Eisenstein created a completely new editing technique merely overshadowed in his first film [Strike!]—one based upon psychological stimulation rather than narrative logic, which managed to communicate physical and emotional sensation directly to the audience." 26 Controlling the order of images, filmmakers gained rhetorical effects through montage. Film critic James Monaco calls this the syntax of a film. He writes, "the dialectical process is inherent in any montage, conscious or not." 27 Italian neo-realism basically only used montage to follow the action of the film, as a narrative story. French avant-garde in the twenties and its "New Wave" 28 movement in the fifties used montage in a more poetic sense. Fellini's use of montage is found somewhere in between. His motive is to be more poetic than narrative. He says that "movies have now gone past the phase of prose narrative and are coming nearer to poetry. I am trying to free my work from certain constrictions a story with a beginning, a
development, an ending. It should be more like a poem, with metre and cadence." While Fellini does use montage in a poetic sense, he is sincere to neo-realist's commitment to unity of time and space. Bazin points out that montage is less realistic when filmmakers use it in such a way as to play tricks with time and space. Fellini demands a sense of reality in his films. He does so by respecting the laws of unity in time and space. Fellini's poetic effect comes from his use of montage as a sort of aesthetic "transformer," in which Bazin would find "The meaning is not in the image, it is in the shadow of the image projected by montage onto the field of consciousness of the spectator." Some of Fellini's shots are used to create the "shadow" more than they are for narrative story development. Specific examples of this practice, as found in La Strada, will be discussed in the next chapter of this study, where a rhetorical approach is taken to identify the dialectical and dramatrical processes within Fellini's montage.

To this point in the chapter, Fellini's use of the language of signs, his arrangement of them, and the order he imposes upon them, have been discussed. One element in La Strada strategically accompanies all three production effects; Fellini's use of the sound track as a strategy of music. Fellini's style is very unique when
it comes to the sound in his films. According to Fellini:

The sound effects should aim to emphasize the image. I work on the sound-track myself, after making the film. The noises one can get in the sound studio are very much better—quite apart from tricks and artifice—than those one can get by recording the sound live during filming. All my films have been post-synched, even the earliest.

I put dialogue into the film after I have made it. The actor plays better that way, not having to remember his lines. This is all the more because I often use non-actors and, in order to make them behave naturally, I get them to talk as they would in real life. A cafe waiter can talk like a cafe waiter. I have even got people to say prayers, or make lists of numbers. Then I sort it all out in the sound studio.

While the primary function of a film's sound track is the transmission of dialogue, Fellini concentrates equally on sound effects. The background noise in La Strada effectively emphasizes the image. By recreating on-the-scene noises in the studio, Fellini gives them richness in quality and he gains control over their insertion into the film's action. For example, the sound of the sea or wind could not be recorded as well on-the-scene as it could be produced in the studio. Ironically, Fellini's realistic background noises are created in a studio, but he strategically inserts them into the film in such a way that they add to the reality of the image. By controlling the rhythm of the sea and the wind, Fellini adds tempo and intonation to the action and emotion in the film. In some shots, Fellini uses sound to establish
the scene; in others, the sound is used as a transition into the next scene. The sound-track is edited in the same manner as the visuals. Fellini complements the visual montage with sound montage.

After the dialogue has been dubbed and the background noise is inserted, Fellini adds the film's musical sound track. Fellini fills his films with music. He believes that a film can be narrated better by music than by words. Fellini succeeds in achieving the musical narration he desires in *La Strada*. Thomas Meehan writes, "In Fellini's mind, music is one of the most important elements in creating a film, and, as many critics have observed, the background music in *La Strada* went a long way toward evoking the mood of lonely melancholy that Fellini was after,..."  

Nino Rota, one of Italy's foremost contemporary composers, writes the original music for Fellini's films. Fellini and Rota work together very closely during the production of the musical sound-track. Fellini does not hand over his film to Rota and have him add music; Fellini stays by Rota's side. He says, "My preference for Nino Rota as a composer comes from the fact that he seems to me to come pretty close to my themes and stories and because we work together very happily--I'm not talking of the result, just of the way
we work. It isn't up to me to suggest musical ideas to him, I'm not a composer."36 Fellini's preference of Rota is due to Rota's acceptance of Fellini's suggestions. Although Fellini does not claim to be a composer, he composed the main musical themes for La Strada, Nights of Cabiria, and La Dolce Vita, "humming them for Rota, who then transcribed them.37 Rota's and Fellini's cooperation stems from a similar philosophy toward the part that music plays in a film. While Rota's talents deserve to be showcased, both men agree that a film's music should not distract focus; rather, it should clarify and emphasize the theme of the film. Fellini states:

All the same, as I've got pretty clear ideas about the film I'm making, in all its details, my work with Rota goes exactly as it does when we are elaborating the screenplay. I keep near the piano where Nino's sitting and tell him exactly what I want. Of course I don't dictate any themes to him, I can only guide him and tell him what I'm looking for. Of all composers of film music he's the humblest, I believe, because he composes extremely functional music. He hasn't got the presumption of so many composers, who want their music to be heard in the film. He knows that, in a film, music is something that cannot occupy the foreground except in a few rare moments and, as a rule, must be content to support the rest of what is happening.38
In La Strata, Fellini's music helps create the magic of his characters. The emotions of the characters are very crucial to the film's theme. These emotions cannot be exposed realistically through soliloquy, but through the character's behavior and Rota's music, they produce a strong impact on the viewer. Music is identified with the characters and, as a result, the viewer can identify with the characters. Solmi writes, "The musical themes in La Strada, reflecting Gelsomina's character, are absurd and enchanting; Rota uses a whole range of instruments from the violin to the trumpet. (La Strada also contains the beautiful musical trick which transforms the lively tune played by the marching bandsmen into the slow, solemn music of the procession.)." 39 Fellini associates music with his characters in such a way that a certain instrument or a certain tune becomes a "property" of the person. Fellini's strategic use of music in his motive of identification will be studied further in the next chapter under the headings, "The Strategy of Properties" and "The Strategy of Spiritualization."

Conclusion

In answering the question, "How did Fellini do La Strada rhetorically?" this study chose to focus on film's potential as an agency for communication and Fellini's
use of film as his agency. Fellini, the filmmaker, utilizes the language of signs, *mise en scene*, montage, sound, and music. Fellini, the film-using rhetorician, creates a fusion between himself and his audience through the dialectical and dramatical processes inherent in each cinematic element. The fusion process is a part of the strategy of identification. In identification, all the elements transcend themselves in becoming consubstantial with the film image. The image allows itself to be identified with by the audience through the combinations of elements, or through an audience member's identification with a singular element. Since Fellini's image contains signs which can be interpreted as symbols because of their arrangement within the content of the shot and/or because of their presentation within the context of the film, each image is ambiguous in meaning. Fellini's style is poetic rather than narrative; therefore, his meaning is strategically hidden but also strategically revealed. Many people do identify themselves with the rhetorical act, *La Strada*, and while some critics interpret its meaning one way, others interpret it quite differently.

Three factors cannot be determined: the exact meaning that Fellini encodes into the message, the degree of an audience member's accuracy in decoding the message,
and his or her identification with its meaning.
Fortunately, Fellini aids the viewer's decoding of the
message by sending it through the verbal, nonverbal, and
musical channels. The decoding process must involve all
three messages, searching for a meaning in their
individual use and combined effect. This rhetorical
analysis has studied the encoding factors, including the
scene, agent, and agency, in attempting to gain a better
understanding of the act. The focus must now be given to
the decoding process.
ENDNOTES


2. Ibid., p. 579.


5. Ketcham, p. 15.


7. Ibid., p. 685.


10. Ibid., p. 5.


12. Ketcham, p. 13


15. Ibid., p. 541.


20 Ketcham, p. 15.


22 Burke, A Grammar of Motives and A Rhetoric of Motives, pp. 544-545.

23 Artaud, p. 48.

24 Ibid., p. 73.

25 Knight, p. 29.


28 Cook, p. 445.


30 Brazin, p. 36.


35 Ibid.
36 Strich, p. 110
37 Meehan, p. 28.
38 Strich, p. 110.
39 Solmi, pp. 45-46.
CHAPTER IV
LA STRADA'S RHETORICAL STRATEGIES
OF IDENTIFICATION

Introduction
La Strada, in its final form, is the culmination of Federico Fellini's development of creative ideas, use of rhetorical strategies, and fulfillment of cinematic capabilities. Through his medium of film, Fellini offers his carefully encoded message to the interpretations of his audience. Aided by the insights of Kenneth Burke, the critical viewer can methodically decode and analyze the message presented by Fellini. Such an analysis must focus on the rhetorical act dissected into the different aspects of its form, and the use of rhetorical strategies within these interrelated aspects. By following this two-step procedure, this chapter will investigate La Strada's accomplishment of the motive of identification.

Form
All rhetorical acts have form. When a rhetorical act's form initiates an intended response from the audience, it becomes more than a mere pattern of organization. Burke recognizes the positive effects of
form. He defines form as "an arousing and fulfillment of desires," in that, "A work has form so far as one part of it leads a reader to anticipate another part, to be gratified by the sequence."¹ Therefore, before an analysis of rhetorical strategies of identification can be performed, a brief assessment of a rhetorical act's form must be completed.

Burke divides form into four aspects. Each aspect acts on its own, as well as in direct relationship with the others. The four are: progressive form (subdivided into syllogistic and qualitative progression), repetitive form, conventional form, and minor forms. **La Strada** consists of the three aspects of progressive, repetitive, and minor forms. Significantly, it does not follow the constraints of conventional form.

**Qualitative progression** is the primary aspect of form that takes the viewer from the beginning of **La Strada** to its indicated ending. In doing so, "the presence of one quality prepares us for the introduction of another."² Burke's definition appeals to Fellini's poetic approach to film narration. **La Strada** progresses through a series of segments, each possessing a quality that reveals the film's development of its dramatis personae and the thematic meaning.
Repetitive form emphasizes the qualities expressed in the film. According to Burke, repetitive form is the "consistent maintaining of a principle under new guises. It is the restatement of the same thing in different ways." Fellini's poetic style in using *mise en scene* often focuses on an action in the foreground, while seemingly incidental action in the background actually accents the principle of the film's overall image. One example as found in the film is witnessed in the scene in which Gelsomina sits on a street curb awaiting the return of Zampano. Her lost state and tedious wait is accented by the passing of an unattended horse. The image of this animal, framed by a fade-in and fade-out cinematic technique, works within the audience's mind in two ways. First, Gelsomina's dependency on Zampano clearly resembles the horse's awkwardness in the absence of its owner. Secondly, the methodical pace of the horse's coming and going creates the impression of the passing of an entire night.

Along with *mise en scene*, the film director also reinforces the principle through the poetic use of montage in that a scene, such as the one mentioned above, is strategically placed in the film to serve a purpose needed at the time of its inclusion. While each of these effects is the result of a minor form, they are
combined in *La Strada's* repetitive form. In a different series of images, Fellini uses montage to accent a metaphor which he wishes to create between Gelsomina's persecution by Zampano and a sheep's inevitable drive to its shearer. This image is further accented by the exchange of a potentially symbolic apple. Fellini's use of the repetitive form may be better understood by separating its overall effect from that of each minor form.

The primary minor form that Fellini utilizes in his film is that of metaphor. Burke views metaphor as "a device for seeing something in terms of something else."¹⁴ Fellini consistently encourages his viewer to see the characters in terms of the signs with which he surrounds them. In these terms, the surrounding signs act as symbols. By presenting symbols easily associated with each of the characters, Fellini successfully raises his characters from a social realness within the film to a level of metaphysical realness within the mind of the audience. Reaching this level of meaning is a primary motive of rhetoric. It is successfully achieved through the literary device of metaphor. Fellini creates a world of symbols to establish metaphors associated with his dramatic agents, resulting in his characters being viewed in terms of something else. In fact, many of *La Strada's*
critics have addressed the film's characters in terms of highly symbolic qualities, ranging from barbaric animals to religious entities. Such references are given critical merit through the same rhetorical process that transcends a man upward in being compared to an angel or transcends him downward in being compared to a beast. In effect, Fellini transforms his characters into rhetorical devices through which he can more identifiably offer the meaning of his message. As a rhetorician, Fellini's use of metaphor opens the cognitive and affective paths through which he wishes to reach his viewer.

_La Strada_ 's form is the combination of many different aspects. These aspects act upon one another to lead the viewer through the many segments of the film. The arousal of the film's form may maintain the interest of the viewer, but it does not insure that the audience will take an active role in completing the identification process. Fellini increases the probabilities of success in the motive of identification by incorporating rhetorical strategies into his film. The four strategies most significantly found in _La Strada_ are the strategy of properties, the strategy of depersonalization, the strategy of ambiguity, and the strategy of spiritualization.
The Strategy of Properties

The first strategy significantly found in La Strada is that of properties. Burke states that "metaphysically, a thing is identified by its properties." It is within this concept that a chair is identified as an object possessing four legs and a seat. In the same light, a thing may physically exist, but does not enter into the realm of metaphysics until it is labeled according to its properties. Once labeled, a thing's existence is given its essence. The existential movement brings this point to the forefront of its philosophy when it contends that man is truly unique in that he exists physically, metaphysically, and spiritually prior to the outside labeling of his essence. Man defines his own essence within his physical, metaphysical, and spiritual existence. Jean-Paul Sartre states, "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself." Burke focuses his literary criticism through an extension of this belief by stressing that man defines his moral growth through the acquisition of properties. Burke's viewpoint recognizes that while man defines his own essence, he does so by surrounding himself with properties that ultimately define his being in relationship to others. Burke states:
In the surrounding of himself with properties that name his number or establish his identity, man is ethical. ("Avarice" is but the scenic word "property" translated into terms of an agent's attitude, or incipient act.) Man's moral growth is organized through properties, properties in goods, in services, in position or status, in citizenship, in reputation, in acquaintanceship and love. But however ethical such an array of identifications may be when considered in itself, its relation to others entities that are likewise forming their identity in terms of property can lead to turmoil and discord. Here is par excellence a topic to be considered in a rhetoric having "identification" as its key term.

Burke's approach to rhetorical criticism is helpful in analyzing a filmmaker's strategic use of properties. Within a world created on film, a filmmaker allows his or her audience to identify with characters by strategically surrounding the dramatic personae with properties. Within the world of La Strada, Fellini employs this technique as a rhetorical strategy of identification.

Fellini wishes his audience to do what they would normally do: define his characters as people according to their properties. To aid in the process, Fellini limits the properties of his characters. The shortage of properties gives added emphasis to the few that they do have. This strategy is evident from the beginning of the film. In introducing the character of Zampano, the director gives him two distinct properties. First, the viewer is exposed to Zampano's motorcycle. Second, the viewer witnesses Zampano's purchase of Gelsomina. The
motorcycle, which ultimately serves as a motorhome, gives Zampano a nomadic quality, while Gelsomina, who serves Zampano as a slave, gives him an oppressive quality. While the terms associated with these properties are not fully revealed in the beginning of the film, they are more clearly defined through its progression. One shot, in particular, provides a strong association between Zampano and beastliness. At the end of the film's initial sequence, the camera focuses on the picture painted on the side of the motorhome. The picture, over which is printed "Zampano," is that of a mythical animal-man. Fellini immediately promotes his audience's association of Zampano with animal-terms.

In introducing the character of Gelsomina, Fellini strips her of any possessions. Her departure with Zampano leaves her identity mysteriously undefined. Without properties, she is free of labels, allowing for the necessary identification between her and the audience, who is also new and undefined within the world of La Strada. Gelsomina's progression through this world becomes the audience's progression as well. In this sense, Fellini uses the strategy of properties as a means for making Gelsomina's character infantile and ultimately rhetorical. In seeing the film in its entirety, Fellini does progressively associate Gelsomina with the property
of a horn. The progression of this association, or identification, with the horn begins as Il Matto's gift to Gelsomina. As a musical instrument, the horn represents a potential growth in Gelsomina through spiritual expression and personal satisfaction in being able to "make music." Later in the film, the viewer realizes that Il Matto, himself, is a spiritual gift to Gelsomina. Thus through the strategy of properties, Fellini presents a physical depiction of a spiritual attachment. However, the significance of the horn is two-fold. Not only does it represent the spiritual attachment, but it also serves as Gelsomina's instrument of expression. Her repeated playing of the same tune creates an identification between her and the tune. The contrasts within the tune, which is both playful and moody, articulate Gelsomina's innocence and suffering within her relationship with Zampano. While Zampano seemingly pays no attention to her playing of the horn, it is this tune, as sung by a stranger along the seaside, that leads him to discover Gelsomina's death. Therefore, even after Fellini physically removes Gelsomina from her world on film, the director is able to suggest her remaining spiritual presence within the character of Zampano. The magnitude of her spirituality in this relationship is fully felt in the final sequence.
of the film in which her tune, mixed with the natural sound of the sea, plays loudly, accenting Zampano's inescapable need for her companionship. Through the process of identification, and specifically the strategy of properties combined with a strategy of spiritualization to be discussed later, Fellini transcends Gelsomina's physical being into a spiritually and metaphysically substantial agent within La Strada.

The introduction of the character of Il Matto is similar to that of Zampano in that he is initially seen through the properties of his profession. While these characters are both circus performers, Il Matto's defining properties significantly differ from those of his counterpart. Il Matto's highwire heroics raise him above Zampano's grounded breaking of the chain. The former's circus act provides a physical depiction of his higher level of human talents; most significant in defining his essence are his symbolic qualities of temporality and language. These two qualities combine to give a degree of immortality. Fellini emphasizes the character's spiritualness by attaching wings to Il Matto while he dances upon the highwire of glory and potential death.

In La Strada, Fellini uses the strategy of properties in a truly rhetorical manner: he uses it for
clarity and ambiguity. Through this use of the rhetorical strategy of properties, Fellini begins an identification process between the audience and his protagonists.

The Strategy of Depersonalization

In identifying with Fellini's protagonists, a classification process is performed. The defining nature of properties begins this process. For example, the previous section views Zampano through animal-terms. In doing so, Zampano has been classified. The previous section also views him as being below Il Matto. This viewpoint not only classifies Zampano, but it also emphasizes Il Matto's transcending classification. Burke suggests that the classification process, such as the one being used by Fellini, is inherent to man's rhetorical nature. Burke writes:

We have said that man, as a symbol-using animal, experiences a difference between this being and that being as a difference between this kind of being and that kind of being. Here is a purely dialectical factor at the very center of realism. Here, implicit in our attitudes toward things, is a principle of classification. And classification in the linguistic, or formal sense is all-inclusive, "prior" to classification in the exclusively social scene. The "invidious" aspects of class arise from the nature of man not as a "class animal," but as a "classifying animal."

When Fellini offers his characters as rhetorical devices, it is his desire in the motive of identification
to have the critical viewer classify them within the viewer's frame of reference. The credibility of the classification depends on the quality and quantity of analysis within the classification process. Fellini's desire reflects his employment of a strategy of "depersonalization." Burke writes:

When a figure becomes the personification of some impersonal motive, the result is a depersonalization. The person becomes the charismatic vessel of some "absolute" substance. And when thus magically endowed, the person transcends his nature as an individual, becoming instead the image of the idea he stands for. He is then the representative not of himself but of the family or class substance with which he is identified. In this respect he becomes "divine" (and his distinctive marks, such as his clothing, embody the same spirit).

In using the strategy of depersonalization, Fellini clearly separates his characters from one another, providing the viewer with access to their individual substances. While the viewer may not be able to identify with the protagonist within the world of La Strada, he or she should be able to identify with the class that Fellini associates with each of his characters. Through depersonalization, Fellini offers a more universal message.

On film, the characters of Zampano, Gelsomina, and Il Matto represent real people in that they are real to the world in which they are placed. As a viewer interacts by putting the film into his or her own terms,
the strategy of depersonalization transcends the characters as real people on film, advancing them into the metaphysical world of terminology. While all rhetoricians attempt to suggest the terms they wish to have associated with their rhetorical devices, filmmakers possess the advantage of three potent communication channels: the verbal, nonverbal, and extraverbal. For example, Fellini utilizes the nonverbal channel to show the picture painted on the side of Zampano's motorcycle. This nonverbal image communicates a principle which is further acted upon by the verbal and extraverbal messages transmitted throughout the film.

Through the three communication channels mentioned above, Zampano clearly becomes associated with animal-terms. In depersonalizing Zampano into the class of animals, Fellini effectively plants the image of animals within the viewer's mind by having various animals wander in the background of his film shots. Extraverbally, these images serve a symbolic function intended to promote the viewer's identification process. For example, the aimless wandering of animals is easily associated with the nomadic nature of Zampano. Fellini then reinforces the association by having Zampano's actions in the foreground resemble those of animals. Examples of this include: (1) He shows no sign of having
feelings when whipping Gelsomina to train her as he has "trained dogs." (2) He works only for his stomach, a truly primitive trait. (3) His only concern after killing his enemy is covering his tracks, showing no signs of guilt. (4) He sleeps with "all women," displaying only a carnal desire. (5) He mates with women who are also viewed through animal-terms. The redhead he meets at the diner is clearly associated with an alley cat, while, in exchange for suits, he sleeps with a woman who eats "standing like a horse." From a slightly different angle, he violates the sheep-like purity of Gelsomina.

To accompany his nonverbal and extraverbal messages, Fellini also has other characters voice the association between Zampano and the class of animals. Gelsomina calls him "a beast" who "has no feelings." When Zampano joins the Giraffa Circus, Il Matto exclaims, "That's great! The circus needs animals." Later, Mr. Giraffa describes Zampano as a "wild animal." Zampano's classification, clearly revealed through the strategies of properties and depersonalization, becomes important only after it is placed in relationship to those of his counterparts, Gelsomina and Il Matto. The classes of these latter two characters are suggested through the previously studied strategies; yet, the terms through
which they should be viewed remain somewhat hidden. Fellini's use of the strategies of ambiguity and spiritualization substantiate the roles of all three protagonists.

The Strategy of Ambiguity

To this point, rhetorical strategies have been analyzed to expose certain qualities found within the film. These strategies have allowed a certain degree of identification to be made; however, while these strategies are important to the overall motive of identification, their results show that they are still only tools to be used for constructing an overriding structure of identification. The value of these tools is found in the uncertainty of La Strada's meaning. To reach the many levels of the mind that Fellini desires to reach, he needs to raise questions. In creating doubt, he invites division among his audience. But, as Burke points out, division is a key to a rhetoric of identification. Burke states:

Identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. Identification is compensatory to division. If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity. If men were truly of one substance, absolute communication would be man's very essence. It would not be ideal, as it now is, partly embodied in material conditions and partly frustrated by these same conditions; rather, it would be as natural, spontaneous, and total as
with those ideal prototypes of communication, the theologian's angels, or "messengers."\textsuperscript{10}

Fellini's poetic style of filmmaking welcomes division among interpretation. As he calls upon the poetic process, Fellini's viewers are challenged to match the director's use of symbols with their own emotional or logical associations with the natural or conventional signs. Burke views the ambiguity of the poetic process in terms of the major forms of unity and diversity, utilizing such minor technical forms as crescendo, contrast, comparison, balance, repetition, disclosure, reversal, contradiction, expansion, magnification, and series.\textsuperscript{11} The natural presence of diversity or division between Fellini, the filmmaker, and his viewers allows for his strategic development of unity. However, Fellini does not ignore the identification process which can be initiated through ambiguity, itself. In fact, Fellini utilizes what can be called a rhetorical strategy of ambiguity.

Ambiguity creates mystery. In lacing \textit{La Strada} with mystery, Fellini leads the viewer into a search for meaning. Throughout Fellini's life, he has been mystified by the image of the clown.\textsuperscript{12} The mystery that Fellini finds in the lifestyle of circus performers is effectively recreated through Gelsomina's introduction to Zampano's and Il Matto's livelihoods. Along with
Gelsomina, the viewer is thrust into a foreign environment. Gelsomina's search for meaning becomes that of the viewer and vice versa. The ambiguity with which Fellini initially introduced the character of Gelsomina allows her to serve as a perfectly objective point of view. The significance of her objectivity is its initiation of the viewer's subjective interpretation of the world of La Strada.

With Gelsomina as a guide, the viewer witnesses the symbols needed to formulate the desired sense of unity which all strangers seek to develop when wishing to belong. Surrounded by a world of diversity, the viewer's identification with the Gelsomina character increases. Fellini's effectiveness in using the strategy of ambiguity is crucial in that if a viewer is unable to become consubstantial with the lost Gelsomina, he or she will be denied access to the director's emotions in presenting the rhetorical act.

From the film's beginning to its end, the viewer is taken down the road, translated into "la strada." As the film's title, the road possesses what should be believed as a high degree of significance. Therefore, the title alone lures the viewer into a search for its ambiguous meaning within the film. Structurally, the road links the episodes of roadside scenes which produce
La Strada's form, similar in the way that the Mississippi River joins Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Yet, whereas Twain glorifies the river, Fellini allows the road to go virtually unnoticed. Through natural and conventional signs, a viewer may associate Fellini's road with the seasons which are shown passing by. In experiencing the living, waiting, and dying found along La Strada's roadside, the road can be seen as an analogy for the path down which a man travels his lifetime. As nature and man die along the side of the road, the passage of time becomes evident to such a degree that the viewer is awakened to his or her own temporality, similar to the effect left upon viewers of the roadside wait for Godot in Beckett's classic play. Symbolically, the ambiguous road is something with which every man can identify when he is made to stop and take notice.

While Fellini's film is rooted in ambiguity, the key to his strategic use of it as a rhetorical device for identification is that Fellini believes that twentieth century mankind can relate to the ambiguity which surrounds life itself, as well as the ambiguity found within Gelsomina's sense of loneliness and lack of definition inside an alien world. In awakening man's feelings of ambiguity, Fellini becomes capable of offering a philosophical message to his viewers. To
increase the audience's search for a metaphysical or spiritual meaning, Fellini calls upon the fourth rhetorical strategy of identification, the strategy of spiritualization.

**The Strategy of Spiritualization**

The final significant strategy is that of spiritualization or religiousness. In this interpretation, religiousness is not equated with any institution but with an attitude of identification. Burke's belief that man can reach out to "transcend upward" or "transcend downward" is premised by his definition of man as a symbol-using animal. He states:

So, to say that man is a symbol-using animal is by the same token to say that he is a "transcending animal." Thus, there is in language itself a motive force calling man to transcend the "state of nature" (that is, the order of motives that would prevail in a world without language, Logos, "reason").

Burke communicates a hierarchical order revolving around three orders: natural, socio-political, and supernatural. The natural order is a world without language. The socio-political order evolves from language itself in that all caste systems are dialectical. Furthermore, language is used in transcending the socio-political world, creating the supernatural order. Burke writes:
Whether or not there is a realm of the supernatural, there are words for it. And in this stage of linguistic affairs there is a paradox. For whereas the words for the supernatural realm are necessarily borrowed from the realm of our everyday experiences out of which our familiarity with language arises, once the terminology has been developed for special theological purposes the order can be reversed.  

Burke's philosophy on language and order is the basis for a rhetorical strategy of spiritualization. Fellini incorporates the strategy into La Strada through the same principles. With language serving as a ladder, Burke's order is built of hierarchy. Through language, Fellini establishes that the Il Matto character is above the character of Zampano. The director displays the former character as possessing a talent for rhetoric, ranging from the use of puns to the proclamation of eloquent philosophy. As the antithesis, Zampano is unable to express himself; he wishes to speak but can only "bark like a dog." Extensions of the concept are used within the strategy of properties when Il Matto is given an association with the violin while Zampano clumsily beats on the drum. Visually, Fellini relates Il Matto's transcending quality through his circus performance upon the highwire. In this sense, Gelsomina and the viewer are physically made to "look up" to the Il Matto character.
A similarity between the philosophies of Fellini and Burke is apparent. The Italian filmmaker expresses his own ideas concerning transcending qualities by placing them in a relationship through the embodiment of clowns. In his book, Fellini on Fellini, he writes:

The two types of clowns are in fact the white clown and the Auguste. The white clown stands for elegance, grace, harmony, intelligence, lucidity, which are posited in a moral way as ideal, unique, indisputable divinities. Then comes the negative aspect, because in this way the white clown becomes Mother and Father, Schoolmaster, Artist, the Beautiful, in other words what should be done. The Auguste, who would feel drawn to all these perfect attributes if only they were not so priggishly displayed, turns on them.

The Auguste is the child who dirties his pants, rebels against this perfection, gets drunk, rolls about on the floor and puts up an endless resistance.

This is the struggle between the proud cult of reason (which comes to be a bullying form of aestheticism) and the freedom of instinct. The white clown and the Auguste are teacher and child, mother and small son, even the angel with the flaming sword and the sinner. In other words they are two psychological aspects of man: one which aims upwards, the other which aims downwards; two divided, separate instincts.

The contrast between the white clown and the Auguste is seen in La Strada as Il Matto appears to aim upwards, while Zampano aims downwards. The instinctive nature of the separation is communicated through the immediate hatred between the two characters. Il Matto's uncontrollable urge to torment his counterpart through language is matched by Zampano's desire to physically hurt his antagonist. In placing Fellini's clown-terms in
polarity, Zampano comes closer to the Auguste than Il Matto comes to the white clown. Inconsistencies are given to Il Matto which prevent him from attaining such a level. For example, during the character's explanation as to Gelsomina's purpose in life, Il Matto cannot say "what should be done." He is only a human, and if he knew what everything was useful for, "he would be God." Significantly, Fellini keeps the character among the ranks of the Augustes, while providing him with the ability to give Gelsomina the spiritual inspiration for which she longed and the metaphysical essence for which she searched. Yet, while assuring Gelsomina that she has a purpose in life, he is unable to define his own essence. Instead, he surrenders to a sensed destiny of loneliness and inevitable death. Il Matto's gift of prophecy transcends him upward from the socio-political realm into the realm of the supernatural with his mortality preventing him from belonging there. In effect, through a strategy of spiritualization, Fellini effectively produces an association between Il Matto and Jesus Christ, providing for an identification process which his viewers call upon in their classifications of all three of the protagonists.

Zampano's ruthless murder of Il Matto receives added significance through the rhetorical strategy of
spiritualization. Zampano does not possess the transcending qualities of Il Matto, yet he does possess the physical strength through which he is capable of killing his counterpart. Fellini accents the religious mystery surrounding his social act of murder by having Zampano toss Il Matto's body under the tomb-like bridge, sealing the opening with the victim's car which immediately bursts into flames.

Symbolically, Il Matto's death results in his transcendence to the spiritual realm. Fellini makes a lasting statement through this character by having Gelsomina display a sense of loss so profound that the viewer is left feeling as though Gelsomina has lost her source of faith. Her inability to rationalize Il Matto's death at the hands of Zampano leads to her own spiritual, metaphysical, and physical death. In essence, with Il Matto's death, Gelsomina lost her Christ-figure, meaning in life, and will to live.

As the antithesis to Il Matto, Zampano displays a desire to transcend downward. He aims to fulfill the desire by refusing moral growth. Burke states that man's moral growth "is organized through properties, properties in goods, in services, in position or status, and in citizenship." When Burke's definition is applied to Zampano, an analysis through the strategy of properties
shows that Zampano's goods include only those properties needed for basic survival, capable of being stored inside his nomadic motorhome. As a circus performer, his services lower him to the mercy of his audience, who, in essence, become his evaluators. Fellini calls this the "mortifying aspect" of the performer. He writes:

... there is the more mortifying aspect of it [the circus] which keeps recurring, the fact that people come to you and you must exhibit yourself; that they examine you in this monstrous way and have this biological, racial right to come and say: "Well, here I am, make me laugh, excite me, make me cry."

In placing himself in the service of others who may possess very little status themselves, Zampano aims downward in service, position or status, and citizenship. He has no permanent home nor any social status because he has chosen not to, refusing the moral growth needed to interact with others. Zampano does not want conversation, he quests for food and sex. One of the first spiritual wants displayed by the muscleman is the widow's suits. Thomas Carlyle says, "The first purpose of clothes ... was not warmth or decency, but ornament." For "the first spiritual want of a barbarous man is Decoration."

Fellini uses Carlyle's concept of clothes to show that, as a man, Zampano does have spiritual wants. While he suppresses all wants, except for those of a barbarous man, his human nature serves as an untapped fountain,
and, with moral growth, resulting from the interaction of others, Zampano's spiritual wants will need the interaction of others. Fellini's character development is Zampano's moral growth. Throughout *La Strada*, Zampano is barbarous in his purchasing, beating, raping, ignoring, and abandoning Gelsomina; yet, there are instances where Zampano calls her his wife, respects her wish to sleep alone, covers her with his coat during the cold night, and suffers from her constant weeping following Il Matto's death. Toward the end of the film, Zampano seeks out the woman he abandoned, showing that he now misses her and longs for her companionship.

Symbolically, Zampano's relationship with Gelsomina exposes his spiritual wants and needs. Fellini makes a lasting statement through his character by having him get drunk, attempting to once again suppress his spiritual needs, but in his frustration he inevitably picks a fight with his drinking companions. In the final sequence, the viewer watches Zampano stumble in the street, crying out that he does not need anyone, finally collapsing on the beach where he weeps over his lost spiritual attachment. Through the strategy of spiritualization, Zampano's loss of Gelsomina, similar to Gelsomina's loss of Il Matto, represents a newly established void, resulting from his moral growth; for
Zampano's weeping is more of an epiphany or catharsis than that of an animal burrowing in the sand, his humanness replaces his animal traits and he now transcends upward in the truest spiritual sense: a man's interreligiosity, or his personal religiousness.

Fellini also employs the strategy of spiritualization to give added significance to the character of Gelsomina. From a rhetorical point of view, Fellini gives Gelsomina enough personality to make her appealing to the audience, while at the same time leaving her personality ambiguous enough as to allow for the audience's identification with her. Spiritually, the audience cannot help but either sympathize or empathize with the character. Fellini promotes the relationship between the character and the audience by once again calling upon the symbol of the clown. Fellini responds to Gelsomina's association with clowns:

"That reminds me," people say to me; "clowns are male as a rule, but the most important clown figures in your films so far have been women, Gelsomina and Cabiria [Le Notti Di Cabbiria]. How is this?"

The only great female clown recorded in real life is Miss Lulu. Gelsomina and Cabiria, in my films, are both Augustes. They are not women, they are asexual; they are the Happy Hooligan from the strip cartoon. The clown is sexless... This is the very reason they made people laugh.
Gelsomina's appeal is not physical, but spiritual; it is what could be her charming innocence. Her playful nature and desire to make people laugh transcends her to a level beyond the physical. She is identifiable with the audience because she calls upon a childlike instinct, the appeal of the clown. Fellini explains:

The child, on the contrary, identifies at once with the Auguste, who, like the gosling or the puppy, is always ill-treated, and breaks plates, rolls on the floor, throws buckets of water in people's faces. In other words, he does everything the child would like to do and is prevented from doing by the various adult white clowns like his mother and his aunts.

Fellini shows Gelsomina's attraction with children during the scene in which he is led by a group of children to the room of a bedridden child who never smiles. She immediately entertains the child, but just as the child is beginning to smile, a nun, dressed in white, chases Gelsomina from the room. The adult suppresses the clown while the child longs for his irrationality.

Although Gelsomina appeals to the viewer, she is unable to gain the attention and affection of Zampano. Significantly, while the crowd laughs at and applauds for Gelsomina's clown act with Zampano, Zampano ends the act by firing a blank gun at her. The audience could
immediately feel the physical pain experienced by her during Zampano's training session, and later feel the psychological and emotional pain experienced by her during Zampano's dismissal of her. Throughout the relationship within the film, Gelsomina is denied any spiritual reward. That which she believes to be special following Zampano's first night in bed with her, the audience knows to be strictly carnal to the needs of Zampano. Her gratification in Zampano's calling her his wife is followed by her pathetic presence in watching Zampano flirt with the redheaded waitress and eventually her innocence in being left on the curb as Zampano drives off with his carnal desire to be fulfilled by another. Her loneliness and sense of lost self is accented by Fellini through the symbolism of the unattended horse which passes by Gelsomina as she sits on the curb awaiting the return of her husband-master.

Gelsomina's pathetic appeal continues to grow from the time she flocks back to Zampano's side to the encounter with Il Matto, where she is given the chance to leave her oppressor. Her decision at this point becomes climatic. Once she places her fullest faith in Il Matto's prophecy of her purpose in life being to stay at Zampano's side, the viewer knows that her situation is hopeless. Il Matto is Gelsomina's only spiritual hope;
yet Gelsomina fears the dreadful freedom that awaits her if she leaves the security and definition as Zampano's servant. The viewer can no longer empathize with Gelsomina's situation since it is now the situation of her choice.

The significance of the climatic scene is more fully felt during the roadside scene in which Zampano murders Il Matta. In essence, Gelsomina is made to watch the man who she considers to be her destiny kill the man who once gave her the spiritual hope to stay by her husband's side. The physical, metaphysical, and spiritual loss experienced by Gelsomina is so profound that neither Zampano nor the viewer is able to understand its impact on her. The viewer now follows Zampano as he leaves Gelsomina asleep on the roadside.

Fellini makes a lasting statement through the character in a manner deeply rooted in the strategy of spiritualization. As Zampano and the viewer drive away from Gelsomina, her physical presence is removed from the film. Yet, it is at this point that Fellini transcends her from the physical realm into the spiritual realm. In the scene following her abandoning, Gelsomina's presence is still felt through Fellini's use of the sound track. Throughout La Strada, Fellini strategically associates a
musical tune with his character. It is this tune, which has come to be called Gelsomina's Theme, that leads Zampano and the viewer to the seaside lot where Gelsomina's lonely death is revealed through the singing minstrel. The tune is lastly heard as Zampano lies in the sand, weeping over the loss of his companion. Fellini accents the religiousness of Gelsomina's transcendence by mixing the natural sound of the sea with her theme song. The viewer is left with the sense that Gelsomina's spirit remains as the sea will always remain, to accompany Zampano's continual trek down the road. Zampano loses his partner, but has now experienced a spiritual, and moral, growth within himself; the humanness needed to feel sorrow and the longing for another.

Fellini not only transcends the physical presence of his agents in La Strada, but also raises the scene into a metaphysical and spiritual realm. The previous section of this study shows that through the strategy of ambiguity, Fellini gives added significance to the road within the film. Through the strategy of spiritualization, the road can then transcend into something as metaphysical and spiritual as the existence of man. A similar process of transcendence is performed through Fellini's use of the sea. The sea appears
throughout La Strada, from the opening sequence in which Gelsomina is taken from her seaside home, to the final sequence mentioned above. The sea's ambiguity allows for its association with many symbolic qualities. A list could include: (1) an extremely powerful force of nature capable of destroying man, (2) a wide open frontier representing the vastness of the universe, (3) a natural body of water to be used by man for purposes ranging from a source of food to the purification associated with cleanliness and baptism, (4) a surrounding barrier restricting the freedom of man's travels. The sea serves as the ultimate paradox: the less-than-human presence possessing the greater-than-human force. Burke gives a clearer order to man's relationship with nature through his rhetorical perspective. He writes:

"Man" arises out of an extrahuman ground. His source is, as you prefer, "natural," or "divine," or (with Spinoza) both. In any case, the scene out of which he emerges is ultimate. And in this respect it must be "super-personal," quite as it must be "super-verbal." For it contains the principle of personality, quite as it contains the principle of verbalizing. The distinction between personal and impersonal, like that between verbal and nonverbal, is scientific, pragmatic, and thus is justified when our concerns are pragmatic. But from the standpoint of ultimate speculation, there must be an order here: First, there is "nature" in the less-than-personal sense; next, there is the "personal" distinguished from such "impersonal" nature as an idea of something is distinguished from the thing. But ultimately there must be nature in the "over-all" sense; and nature in this sense must be "superpersonal," since it embraces both "personality" and "impersonality."
Thus, in viewing nature through a strategy of spiritualization, man is placed on a neutral level from which he can either transcend downward toward nature and become an animal or a thing, or transcend upward toward nature and enter the divine grounds from whence both the personal and the impersonal emerged. To visualize the relationship, one needs only to study Fellini's development of *La Strada*’s final scene. Zampano, the man, lies burrowing into the less-than-human sand of the beach, while the volume of the sea mixed with the spiritualness of Gelsomina's song, points out the greater-than-human presence of a transcendent natural power that makes Zampano shiver even more. The meaning of the final scene is undoubtably deeply rooted in Fellini’s purpose in communicating his rhetorical act, and will be further reviewed in this study's final chapter.

**Conclusion**

By decoding Federico Fellini’s rhetorical act *La Strada*, through an analysis of his use of rhetorical strategies of identification, namely the strategies of properties, depersonalization, ambiguity, and spiritualization, this study is able to classify, give meaning to, the film’s agents, acts, and scene. The defining principle of properties, along with the avenue of depersonalization, allow for insight into the ambiguity
of the film. With interpretations extrapolated, the strategy of spiritualization serves as an ordering process through which the agents, acts, and scene can be seen as transcending one another either upwards or downwards. While the critic is unable to profess that Fellini, the creative agent, systematically incorporated the strategies into his rhetorical act, the importance of the point is reduced by the fact that any rhetorical act is left for the analysis of the critic. Therefore, the rhetorical strategies found within La Strada give this study the analytical insight demanded prior to a suggestion of the rhetorical act's purpose.
ENDNOTES

2Ibid., p. 125.
3Ibid.
8Ibid., pp. 806-807.
9Ibid., p. 801.
10Ibid., p. 546.
11Burke, Counter-Statement, p. 46.
13Burke, A Grammar of Motives and A Rhetoric of Motives, p. 716,
15Ibid., p. 7.
16Strich, p. 124.

18 Strich, p. 122.


20 Strich, p. 129.

21 Ibid., p. 126.

CHAPTER V
THE PURPOSE

Introduction

In looking at the first four terms of Burke's dramatistic pentad, the Agent, Scene, Act, and Agency, this study performed a contextual and textual analysis of Federico Fellini's film, La Strada. The analysis now warrants conclusions concerning his purpose in performing his rhetorical act. As the fifth term of Burke's pentad, purpose implies the agent's motive in communicating his act. The previous chapter outlined the rhetorical strategies used to achieve Fellini's motive of identification. These strategies are the means to an end. The question still remains: With what does Fellini wish his audience to identify? The answer to this question will translate into the Italian film director's purpose.

The Purpose Behind Fellini's Tactics of Expression

With respect given to the rhetorical analysis completed to this point, the search for Fellini's purpose requires the critic to go beyond the rhetorical,
exploring the agent's philosophical burden. Burke stresses

Yet, as seen from the standpoint of symbolic action, we do not have to choose between the artist's mode of consideration and my own. He was concerned with a unifying act, and so was I. I am merely suggesting that, when you begin to consider the situations behind the tactics of expression, you will find tactics that organize a work technically because they organize it emotionally. The two aspects, we might say Spinozistically, are but modes of the same substance. Hence, if you look for a man's burden, you will find the lead that explains the structure of his solution. His answer gets its form by relation to the questions he is answering.

Through close inspection, Fellini's burden resembles an existential search for the self, a burden prominent in post-World War II literature. The role of the self is thoroughly explored in Charles I. Glicksberg's study, The Lost Self in Modern Literature. He prefaces his study by stating:

The modern writer is faced with the baffling problem of picturing a self that seems to have lost its reality. Dwelling in a universe that seems to him alien and hostile, man today retreats within himself; but the curse or the glory of being human is that he must at all costs strive to know. He cannot endure existence without some light, however uncertain, of self-knowledge. Engaged in an interminable monologue, he develops the habit of introspection to such a degree that he comes to feel entirely alone, cut off from communication with others. The brooding intellectual hero of modern literature frequently becomes a solipsist and eventually learns to distrust his perceptions, his thoughts, the language he employs, and the beliefs he once cherished. Nothing seems real, least of all himself.
By applying recent theories of the self in literature to Fellini's rhetorical act, La Strada, this writer observes three distinct portraits of the lost self. The characters of Gelsomina, Il Matto, and Zampano demonstrate the portraits. Within the ambiguous world of La Strada, Fellini uses the agents as rhetorical devices for the expression of his contemporary thought, his reality. He states:

"Things must be condensed in order to impose their essence. For me neo-realism is looking at reality fairly and squarely, but at every type of reality, not only social, but also spiritual and metaphysical reality, all that man has within himself."

Through La Strada, the viewer is confronted with the mystery of man's search for self-knowledge through every type of reality. The frustration of not knowing is simultaneously felt by the characters and the viewer. Fortunately, similar thoughts expressed by other prominent writers provide insights into Fellini's personal burden. This writer chooses to compare Fellini's scene and rhetorical heroes to those of such writers as Kafka, Beckett, Kierkegaard, and Sartre.

Fellini's application of animal-terms to Zampano establishes the desired distinction between the character and his counterpart, Il Matto. Fellini's device serves his purpose as does Kafka's use of a similar animal metaphor. Glicksberg writes:
The animal metaphor widens the gulf that separates two levels of existence: the biological and the spiritual, the natural and the human. Man is an animal who attempts not only to speak but to sing; he spells out the secrets of the stars; he walks upright; but he is oppressed by the cruel necessity of his physical being. He hears music that seems to promise a loftier life of the spirit and he reaches out eagerly for this new life, only to be thrust back ignobly on his animal self. He feels guilty if he keeps silent and seeks safety and security in becoming like the others; he feels equally guilty if he turns against his animal origin.

Zampano's transcendence downward to animal-terms is placed in polarity with Il Matto's transcendence upward to the spiritual realm. In transcendence, they are both examples of the rebellious self. Glicksberg states, "The rebellious self follows the principle of All or Nothing: it will either aspire to become God or sink to the level of the beast." Each example serves as a bridge between Nature and spirit, through his own humanity. While Zampano is called an animal, and is displayed in such a way as to resemble an animal, the viewer is reminded that he is first and foremost, a man. The character of Il Matto explains that Zampano is only like a dog. In speaking to Gelsomina, Il Matto states, "he is like a dog . . . A god looks at you . . . wants to talk . . . and only barks . . . " In being like an animal, he is separate from the animal. He acts on the instincts of his animal origin, but he also possesses the capacity for thought, language, and emotion. In this
sense, Zampano is the basis for every man. While most chose to develop these capacities, Zampano emphatically avoids such growth by not allowing himself to become close with others. He cuts himself off from communication which can help define his own essence.

The viewer is abruptly reminded of Il Matto's humanness by witnessing his murder. Yet, his death should not come as a surprise to the viewer or to Il Matto, himself, as during his philosophical discussion with Gelsomina, he indicates that he is no longer in control of his destiny, and that he knows he will soon die, alone. From this approach to life, Il Matto has given in to the concept of time. Time plays an important role in the works of many existential writers. Glicksberg addresses its role in the works of Samuel Beckett:

Having lost his identity, modern man is swept along by the tide of events. Time destroys him. He knows that all he has will dissolve into nothingness, "without memory and without dreams, where at last I shall finally be through with myself for good." Things simply happen to him. He cannot form a valid image of himself. There is no consistency or continuity in his behavior. There is no escape from time, "that double-headed monster of damnation and salvation."
Il Matto's death at the hands of Zampano symbolizes death as the inevitable end to the natural process of life. Time's other edge, salvation, is then shown through Gelsomina's spiritual loneliness resulting from Il Matto's death. The victim's prior discussions with Gelsomina remains with her in the world of La Strada. Thus, through the differences between Il Matto and Zampano, and their respective relationships with Gelsomina, Fellini effectively shows, "all that man has within himself": the social, spiritual, and metaphysical realities.

From the perspective of the search for the lost self, Il Matto's downfall is his dismissal of the quest, while Zampano fails by denying the burden of the search altogether. Fellini does, however, present the burden of the quest through his character of Gelsomina. She is truly placed in an alien world and constantly asks others to help define her meaning within it. She seeks a familial definition by asking Zampano about her older sister. As Zampano's companion, she longs for his vocal expression of her meaning to him. Paradoxically, she later equates her commitment to Zampano to a nun's commitment to the Father. Gradually, Gelsomina is led to three entities which possess resources for spiritual enlightenment. Significantly, each is presented to her
within a chaotic environment, emitting an air of intimidation. Fellini's cinematic techniques during the roadside wedding scene and the town's religious procession suggest that the filmmaker views the two institutions, marriage and the Church, as forms of commitment which can suppress a man's individuality. This opposition to commitment resembles Fellini's personal attitudes toward Fascism and Catholicism. (This writer recognizes that Fellini is happily married; however, he openly voices his hatred of commitment as discussed in Chapter Two of this study.)

Eventually, Gelsomina joins the masses who have gathered to watch Il Matto's highwire act. While the crowd prevents her from getting close to the performer at this time, later in the film, the spiritual enlightenment that was previously out of her reach presents itself through the lure of Il Matto's violin. Fellini's employment of repetitive form in mixing the high-pitched sound of the violin with the visual image of the white big-top tent swaying with the breeze provides a religiously-tinted scene in which Gelsomina meets her spiritual guardian.

Through Il Matto's relationship with Gelsomina, he becomes her Sartrean Other, the other needed to define man's own existence. 7 In answering her existential
questions, Il Matto tells Gelsomina that her purpose in life is to serve her master, Zampano, even though he "beats her like a donkey." By accepting this definition, Gelsomina makes the choice to remain with her oppressor, rather than accept Il Matto's offer to take her away from her present state. The Sartrean terms: self-deception, dreadful freedom, and bad faith, are seen in Gelsomina's decision. She is faced with the dreadful freedom of going with Il Matto into the unknown. Il Matto's offer resembles the opening of the door in Sartre's No Exit; Gelsomina is now free to go but the uncertainty of the world outside her defined existence as Zampano's servant stalls her departure. Afraid of leaving, she places her faith in Il Matto's determination of her purpose in life, causing her self-deception in thinking that Zampano represents her future. By not choosing herself, Gelsomina practices the same bad faith as does Il Matto in accepting his believed fate of loneliness and death. Sartre writes, "the free choice which a man makes of himself is completely identified with what is called his destiny." The decisions of the two characters transform this seemingly incidental scene within La Strada into a climatic one as the viewer learns that each has abandoned the search for self-definition and given into a destiny determined through self-deception. Following this scene,
Zampano does comply with Il Matto's death wish, leaving Gelsomina spiritually emptied, but still clinging to her husband's side. Once Zampano can no longer tolerate her pathetic state, he discards her along the roadside, leaving her to wander to the seaside where she dies her lonely death.

Only Zampano's physical presence remains at the end of the film. The significance of the film's final sequence finalizes Fellini's purpose in presenting his entire rhetorical act. In the final sequence of the film, Zampano continues his attempts in suppressing his spiritual needs as a human. Yet, neither excessive amounts of alcohol nor the false cry of needing no one allows him to escape his human condition. Physically and metaphysically confined by the natural presence of the sea, he is left lying on the beach, weeping over the news of Gelsomina's death. The act of weeping symbolizes Zampano's transcendence from the bestial to humanness, but now his humanness suffers as he can no longer revert into an animal state nor can he regain his spiritual other, Gelsomina. His despair grows even more because, as Kierkegaard says of man, he "cannot rid himself, cannot become nothing."9

Zampano's attachment to Gelsomina transcends to all the levels seen by Fellini within a man. The
beast-man proves to be a social being who can no longer merely exist in his physical world without metaphysical and spiritual definition. The statement translates into Fellini's definition of neo-realism. As discussed earlier, Fellini recognizes a level of spirituality within the man when he states, "At the centre of successive layers of reality, God is to be found, I think--the key to the mysteries." He adds that man's capacity for spiritualness transcends his mere social existence, when he states, "I would add that if neo-realism is called 'social,' as it is by certain Italian critics, then it is limited. Man is not just a social being, he is divine."

While Sartre excludes God as the other, Fellini sees God as the key to the mystery of spirituality within a man. Within La Strada, Fellini creates the presence of God through Spinoza's equation, "God equals Nature," by giving a spiritual quality to the cycle of the seasons and the presence of the sea. For Fellini, the cycle of the seasons communicates the double-headed monster, Time. Throughout the film, the sea symbolizes many things. Gelsomina, the viewer's perception of her, associates the sea with her birthplace and home. Along the roadside, Gelsomina rushes to the sea as if returning home after a long absence. Meanwhile, Zampano splashes water on himself for physical cleanliness, an act similar
to a mother cat licking her kitten. The characters travel down the road with the sea bordering their course. Later, Gelsomina flocks to the sea after being abandoned by Zampano. Ultimately, the sound, size, and color of the sea in the film's final scene transcend to the Absolute, with similarities in power and mystery. The characters' respective searches took them to the sea, where the lack of enlightenment left them with despair. Fellini's symbolism displays a philosophical agreement with the religious existentialist, Kierkegaard. Glicksberg writes:

The fascinating aspect of Kierkegaard as a prophet of modernity is that he understood so well the consequences of the loss of self in its denial of God, typical of the spirit of Promethean defiance of the romantic rebel of the nineteenth century, and the despair that springs from engaging in the absurd venture of faith, which in the intellectual climate of the twentieth century has been given an equivocal, non-religious cast. Kierkegaard foresaw all this before it happened. With prescient insight he analyzes the ontological despair that seizes upon the individual who cannot endure life without ultimate meaning. It is this type of despair, this "sickness unto death," which accounts for the tragic split in the self of man. His despair grows and grows to a degree of intolerable anguish because he "cannot get rid of himself, cannot become nothing." In identifying this sickness of the soul with sin, Kierkegaard was driving home his belief in man as spirit and spirit as identical with the authentic self, which is "a synthesis of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity." It is the capacity for despair that reveals the divine potential in man, his urge toward transcendence. In confronting the Absolute that is God, the individual must "leap" from outwardness to inwardness, a leap which is utterly beyond reason and without empirical warrant. God is the Absurd and yet God is real.
In using the physical scenery of Nature, Fellini displays his characters' "sickness unto death," resulting from the spiritual loss of Il Matto, by turning the scenery in the background of the world within La Strada, following the scene in which Zampano murders Il Matto, into barren wasteland. The trees are presented as dying, bowed over as if weeping themselves. Fellini's strategic use of the only two colors offered to him, black and white, adds the effect of emptiness, despair, and doubt lingering within the world. The principle is expressed even further through the coldness of the climate through which Gelsomina and Zampano now travel. Symbolically, the absence of Natural beauty, life, and warmth is as real as the spiritual loss of the Christ-figure and yet as absurd as the meaninglessness of life itself as felt by La Strada's characters, and all others who are unable to attain self-definition.

With the thoughts of the Existentialists such as Sartre and Kierkegaard in mind, this writer believes that Fellini uses La Strada to express his contemporary thoughts on the state of man's philosophical inquiry of social consciousness within the trying times of postwar Italy. Fellini appears to be saying that man must learn to live with the other, because the other is needed for his definition of the social, metaphysical, and spiritual
levels of his existence. A man must expose himself to possible sadness in allowing himself to grow as a human, but to be human would mean nothing if his existence never gained the essences of his spiritual and metaphysical nature. While Fellini's final scene is strategically rooted in ambiguity, it leaves the lasting impression that Zampano's despair represents a moment of epiphany in his spiritual growth. As a result of Gelsomina's kindness and humanity, Zampano learns the human condition; yet, within this condition, the more he learned; the more mystery confused and frustrated his existence. Zampano is left to find a way in dealing with his new-found self, and the way can only be found within himself. Therefore, through his agency and act, Fellini makes an existential statement termed La Strada.

Summary and Conclusion

When Fellini released La Strada in 1954, he received a great deal of criticism from Fascists and priests. To the Fascists, Fellini's statement may have been undesirable because it places the Absolute above the social state, while, to the priests, it brings the Absolute down to the existential level of man, a reduction that is clearly controversial in Catholicism. To Italian film critics of the period, Fellini's film violated the rules of the neo-realist movement. The
filmmaker answers all of his critics by redefining the term, neo-realism. Fellini states, "Every investigation that a man makes about himself, about his relations with other people and about the mystery of life, is a spiritual investigation and--in the true sense of the word--a religious one." He says, "I suppose that this is my philosophy. This is neo-realism, as far as I am concerned, in its pure and original sense; a quest for the essential self, my own and others, along all paths of life." Apparently, his critics were not ready for such an existential approach to both religion and neo-realism.

In concluding a study using Burke's pentad, summarizing the Agent's purpose finalizes the analytical and interpretive process. In this study, Burke's terms help gain insight into Fellini's scene, containing influences of Catholicism, Fascism, neo-realism, and the destruction of World War II, which became the artist's burden as Fellini struggled with his own lack of definition within his new world. This burden led to the creation of the rhetorical act, La Strada, in which Fellini chose to employ the agency of the film medium for communicating his quest for the essential self along all paths of life: the social, metaphysical, and spiritual. Through his act, he offers no solutions; only rephrased questions. Critics struggle with his philosophical
implications, while Fellini coyly answers, "I leave my films to answer your question about the spiritual concept of my world as an artist." \(^{15}\)

In rephrasing the philosophical questions of his world, Fellini's artistry on film, using rhetorical strategies of identification, combine mystery with meaning in such a way as to allow each audience member to identify with the film and formulate a personalized answer. Solmi notes that Fellini's films "never have a real conclusion; he does not alienate himself from the spectator whose life 'has no solution,'" \(^{16}\) Fellini explains his purpose in this approach by stating:

My films don't have what is called a final scene. The story never reaches its conclusion. Why? I think it depends on what I make of my characters. It's hard to put it--but they're a kind of electrical wire, they're like lights that don't change at all but show an unchanging feeling in the director from start to finish. They cannot evolve in any way; and that's for another reason. I have no intention of moralizing, yet I feel that a film is the more moral if it doesn't offer the audience the solution found by the character whose story is told. In other words, the man who has just seen a character sorting out his problems, or becoming good when he started off bad, finds himself in a more comfortable situation. He is going to say quietly to himself: "Well, all I have to do is carry on being the creep I am, betraying my wife, conning my friends, because at a given moment the right solution will turn up, just as it does in the films . . ." My films, on the contrary, give the audience a very exact responsibility. For instance, they must decide what Cabiria's end is going to be. Her fate is in the hands of each one of us. If the film has moved us, and troubled us, we must immediately begin to have new relationships with our neighbours. This must
start the first time we meet our friends or our wife, since anyone may be Cabiria— that is, a victim. If films like I Vitelloni, La Strada, and Il Bidone leave the audience with this feeling, mixed with a slight uneasiness, I think they have achieved their object. I feel, and I can even say today, unhesitatingly, that whenever I think up a story it is in order to show some anxiety, some trouble, a state of friction in the relationships that ought normally to exist between people. If I were a political animal, in order to explain this I should hold meetings or join a political party; or go out barefoot and dance in the streets. If I had found a solution, and if I were able to explain it convincingly and in good faith, then of course I should not be a story-teller, or a film-maker. 17

Fellini's approach to filmmaking clearly follows Burke's motive of identification. Fellini does not wish to inform or persuade his audience, he wishes them to identify with his characters and his message to a point of feeling uneasy with their own faults as human beings. Fellini's success in his motive results in a growing process within every viewer who begins his own search due to his or her exposure to the story told on film. Measuring the overall effect or success of his film, La Strada, would be as impossible as getting a straight answer out of its creator. Yet, through the process of rhetorical analysis as termed by Kenneth Burke, this viewer of the film and writer of this study concludes that through the agency of film, the agent Fellini, effectively presents his act La Strada, fulfilling his purpose of identification with the contemporary issues found within his personalized scene, post-World War II
Italy. This writer makes this conclusion and all the conclusions found within this study with the confidence given to him by the man in question, Fellini. Fellini states:

I am very grateful . . . for all the critical work, the work of interpretation, about some picture. They are all justified. But I am a little bit scared, I have some little diffidence, when an interpretation tries to put only one meaning on the film, setting the interpretation very fixed, precise. So I feel a bit imprisoned when I am asked if things mean this or that. That is the right work of the critics, and they have to do it. But they also can only say: "Yes," "Maybe." "Probably." "I guess so." "I hope so!" 18

This critic believes, through the analysis performed in this study, his interpretation to be justified. The main purpose of this study has been to elucidate some of Fellini's ideas toward the reality found within modern man's existence as well as to evaluate the strategies of his filmmaking style through the help of Kenneth Burke's insights. The study has sought to discover in Burke the basis for a different approach to Fellini's film, La Strada. It is therefore hoped this analysis will lead to other discussion of using the Burkean analysis with its approach to the rhetorical act in viewing modern films and the styles of contemporary film artists.
ENDNOTES


4Glicksberg, pp. 46-47.

5Ibid., p. 10.

6Ibid., p. 73.


8Glicksberg, pp. 139-140.

9Ibid., p. 20.


12Glicksberg, p. 6.

13Solmi, p. 17.

14Ibid.

15Strich, p. 66.

17 Strich, p. 150.

18 Ketcham, p. 23.
APPENDIX
Early Biography:

Born in Rimini on 20 January 1920. Father: Urbano Fellini, a travelling salesman from Savignano. Mother: Ida Barbiani, from Rome. A brother: Riccardo. A sister: Maddalena. Aged ten, Federico runs away from home and joins Pierino's circus, where he looks after a sick zebra. During the war he travels all over Italy with a touring theatre troupe, writing sketches for them. After a period in Florence, he moves to Rome, where he writes and does drawings for the humorous weekly, "Marc Aurelio," works on comics as an illustrator and translator, writes radio plays and is gag-writer for the comedian Macario. In the course of his work for radio he gets to know Giulietta Masina, whom he marries in Rome on 30 October 1943. They have a son in the summer of 1944 who dies when only a few weeks old. With the arrival of the American forces Fellini opens his "Funny Face Shop" where he draws caricatures and portrait sketches of the soldiers. It is here that Rossellini meets him in 1945 and takes him on as assistant on Roma, citta aperta.

Fellini's films have been awarded the following major prizes: the Silver Lion of Venice for I vitelloni (1953) and La strada (1954); Oscars for the best foreign film for La strada (1956), Le notti di Cabiria (1957) and Amarcord (1975); Oscar for the best direction for Eight and one-half (1963); the Golden Palm of Cannes for La dolce vita (1963); and the Grand Prix of Moscow for Eight and one-half (1963).
1954

LA STRADA


Cast Giulietta Masina (Gelsomina), Anthony Quinn (Zampano), Richard Basehart (Il Matto), Aldo Silvani (Mr. Giraffe), Marcella Rovere (widow), Lidia Venturini (the little nun).
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