



AMARCORD Federico Fellini & Tonino Guerra

**BEING A PREFACE TO A TRANSLATION . . .
WITHOUT A TRANSLATION . . .
OF AN IMPRESSIVE LITERARY FIND . . .
THAT I MUST IMPRESS UPON YOU . . .
IS NOT TO BE FOUND IN THESE PAGES . . .
INSTEAD, A DUTZOLOGY AND . . .
A CATALOGUE OF IMPRECATIONS, . . .
CATAMARANS, THE STUFF OF . . .
MEMORY AND THE MADE-UP . . .
AS A PRELUDE TO . . .**

**TONINO GUERRA &
FEDERICO FELLINI'S**

AMARCORD

the lost novel



The following translation is of a remarkable text, mostly lost or ignored in film and literary history. A full three months before the release of Fellini's *Amarcord* in December of 1973, this book was released to the public. Neither a screenplay, treatment or novelization, most critics agreed that it was not only an autonomous work of literature, but it was also something stunningly new.

But for three months, they were kept guessing.

The long 70s for Fellini was a period of literary adaptation—Poe, Petronius and Casanova were source texts that would be more accurately called "pretexts" for his films. He used the I-Ching to make decisions in his adaptations, embracing a fragmentary style and gaining a reputation for mystical indolence.

These were all writers from the deep past, however. For *Amarcord*, Fellini collaborated with Tonino Guerra, a fellow Emilia-Romagnian poet who had worked with Tarkovsky, Angelopoulos and Antonioni on their "scripts." We'll put that in scare-quotes since again the notion of whether in all these cases Guerra's contribution could be bracketed-off simply as "screenwriter" is in question, especially given the groundbreaking and visionary works to which he contributed.

Yet, in response to near unanimous suspicion to the contrary, Guerra said that *Amarcord* was not his. And Fellini: "I am an artisan who has nothing to say, but knows how to say it."

Regardless of the unique and prescient literary qualities of Guerra's book, the eventually-released film overtook the place of the forgotten novel. Some may have even simply chalked it up to a publicity "stunt."

This is not necessarily a pejorative term, as Fellini's command of the world of publicity was always part of his art. Here was the man who coined the term *paparazzi*, by depicting them in *La Dolce Vita* (via the character Paparazzo). The now legendary finale of *8 1/2* was originally shot as the film's publicity trailer.

The paradox of a book called "I remember," referencing a film that hasn't yet happened.

Amarcord the novel emulates the typical Felliniesque rallentandos: a scene that starts with great chaos is taken to the point of utter exhaustion until we are left with a moment, half-awake, half-conscious, of solitary crepuscular perception. Faithful to what he already knew of Fellini's vision, Guerra traced this movement across every chapter of fragments. It's notable that Fellini did not follow-through with this organizing structure in the film, but returned to something more like neorealism.

This among many other betrayals we can chalk up to his "mystic indolence."

But Guerra's prose also pointed to something futuristic. Pasolini spoke of its "reader-spectator" (of this, more later). Guerra's prose in *Amarcord*, "a race from box to box, with the reader's imagination called upon to fill in gaps, pauses, and deliberate omissions," seems to presage the 80s narrative minimalism of Renata Adler and Mary Robison with each vignette fragment framing the quotidian and landing on a note of mordant irony. Jay McInerney's second-person narration also comes to mind if we take Pasolini's interpretation seriously (again, later). So maybe this is now a retro-future, but with possibilities left unexplored.

We must keep in mind that, despite exploring the recesses of childhood memory, this book was written with much present-tense speed. The *passato remoto* (a verb tense specific to storytelling in Italian) is nowhere to be seen. But also, quite literally, the book was written almost instantly. Ten days if accounts are to be believed.

And so, one does not linger too much. The prose is telegraphic, imagistic. As a translator, I was sometimes compelled to soften an incomplete sentence with a verb, but ultimately repressed that impulse. The language of the film shot. But also, perhaps the freedom from a finicky editor? The text demands a lightness and even an insouciance.

Compared to the utter strangeness of the past as captured in Fellini's *Satyricon*, here at the level of language is established a familiarity, a complicity and tenderness even and especially when we sense the cruelty and violence subsumed in this world. It is as if, well before the shooting started, the camera-eye or the camera-me or the camera-me-ricordo has already done a significant amount of translation of the eons of energies that converge on this seashore.

Guerra is attentive to objects of memory and this is consequently a very object-oriented text. Included in this attentiveness to objects is the object of the word and the way in which the names of things themselves can be unstable objects of memory, mysterious artifacts, especially where dialect is concerned. My strategy for dealing with some of the strange and in some cases untraceable—and perhaps even made up?—dialect is to embrace an aesthetics of untranslation. Or at least give the reader enough textual clues so they can imagine the translation rather than bury the quiddity of the word beneath a vernacular approximation.

Much of this project had me shaking the internet until the right combination fell out when faced with an idiom that resisted easy translational equivalence. Even the smudgy Emilia-Romagnian dictionary on Internet Archive could not decipher some of the verbal oddities. Not to mention, many DMs were sent to Italian friends and, after I completed the translation, I had a list of the remaining Guerrian *imperscrutabilità* on my phone to make man-on-the-street requests on the Adriatic coast.

This summer, while I was completing this research and translation, I was sitting at a restaurant in the Val d'Orcia—midway between the Rimini of *Amarcord*'s memory and the Rome of its film production—when I decided once again to check the internet for confirmation of one of my own phantoms of dialect memory: "the dutz." While toying with a bag of not very

impressive dinner bread after an otherwise fine duck picci and rosemary steak, I remembered how "the dutz" or maybe "dutes" was used in my family, with relish and confidence, to describe the butt-end of bread.

The memory of such Italian-American verbal inventions has sent me on many linguistic quests. Sometimes it can take a lifetime to trace down a word, the butt-end of language that has made it across time and continents despite the all-consuming rush to assimilate. Bad Italian teachers, lacking curiosity, will claim such a word "does not exist." Sometimes, this is prejudice against the south: the less literate and impoverished *meridionali*. If anything, it might be considered a type of baby talk, neither Italian or American, and gladly left behind. A few years back, I used the resources of Facebook to open up the question of "the dutz": two language-centered poets who work in Italy and an Italian art historian claimed it was not correct, and offered up other equivalents akin to our "butt." And yet here in this isolated Tuscan town, shaking the internet again—now filled with new phantoms and maybe even hallucinations—the answer falls out: it's an Italian-American phonetic distortion of the Neapolitan "cuzzetiello."

A "dutzology" of translation would not be quick to translate the trace of this distortion out of existence. It may mean a fidelity to the memory of language. But also, a making do with the dutz.

Because of this instability of the memory of language, I have provided a little glossary of key untranslatables—since in many cases the untranslatability comes from the fact that the object simply doesn't exist in the same way now, or even 50 years ago, as it did during the time of the story, even if the word does. And that difference is important to the memory play of *Amarcord*.

Amarcord



Let's start with the basics. Amarcord is dialect contraction of "a mi ricordo." "I remember," or (more accurately following the Italian syntax) "I recall to myself." But also, in its dialect form, a type of portmanteau with rich associations. Love, music, Rome, heart and perhaps the literal cords that tie us to the past as boats to the shore. In one account, even, Guerra remembered men at bar counters during the 1930s calling for "Un Amaro Cora!" Bittersweet, but now with the added dimension of the *Kore* (notice the addition of young women in the Amaro Cora ads, here Joan Bennett whose career spanned from the silent movies to TV's *Dark Shadows*) and the *Chora* (the communal voice of the town). AMARO VINCIT OMNIA, to extend a famous Virgilian pun. The word for memory itself is filled with the sounds and associations of the remembered. And since Kristeva is responsible for another pun uniting *kore* and *chora*, it is to the semiotic energies behind the word that this word directs:

Amarcord: an assonance, then, and a declaration of poetics verging on neologism increasingly less neo. Amarcord is the thing that everyone knows how to say without saying it: a sequence of memories surrounded by an irreal halo. . . If one says amarcord one says in actuality nothing that has truly happened, rather a thing that maybe has not happened in that particularly way. A thing that did not go exactly so. Rather the sum of inventions and recollections where no one knows what holds water more or less than any other.

I like this idea of a dialect coinage as poetic invention rather than a rationally existent entity.

Le Manine



Case in point. *Amarcord* begins with the springtime arrival of *le manine*: a dialect intervention or even invention that both must remain untranslated *and* lightly translated in English to appreciate its language-specific poetics. The use of "*le manine*" in the place of what would more conventionally be called the "*pappi*" or "*piumini*" of the poplar tree is likely Guerra's doing. If it is "really" dialect, this fact doesn't matter as much as the effect it creates: "*pappi*" are not hand-shaped but the word *le manine* "grasps" the poetic image of human hands trying to capture these puffballs. This is their essence for us. The word memorializes the relation between the world of nature and the world of humans to remind us of pagan or childhood animism at the very start of the book.

I would like to think of such words as "made" (*fatto a mano*) rather than simply "used," since it connects to the ways in which Guerra here as in other texts plays with the poetics of memory and space to the point where he warps actuality. For instance, in Tarkovsky's *Nostalgia*, he has helped Tarkovsky create touristic sites that are elaborate, non-existent spaces composed of collage elements from multiple locations . . . e.g. the image of a Russia dacha in the courtyard of the abandoned Abbey of San Galgano. He continues this trickery in the documentary *Voyage in Time*, where Guerra and Tarkovsky do location hunting, while deconstructing location itself. And this is also something you see in Guerra's friend and colleague Wim Wender's *Notes on Fashion and Cities*, where Tokyo and Japan are montaged to the point of indiscernibility.

If feel like Guerra applies this plasticity to the unverifiable lexicon of memory. Mussolini banned dialect speaking in the period of *Amarcord*'s setting, making such words even more likely to be fictitious replacements for a lost language or lovingly smuggled artifacts of a pre-modern past. We can also think about how mistakes and nonce words circulate in families (something explored in Natalia Ginzberg's *Family Lexicon*) but which ultimately retain an archeological truth. If we attempt to capture them with our hands, however, they are likely to elude us. *Vagano, vagano, vagano!*

Os-cia and Other Imprecations

Perhaps the most celebrated (but still hard to find) local coinage is *Os-cia!* or *Oscia!* or *Ostia!* It means literally something like "Holy Host!" but is more typically translated as "Goddamn!" It's closer in sound and meaning to the Brazilian "*Nossa!*" than it is to anything in English. At one point, I translate "*Va bene l'os-cia di Dio,*" as "OK, you better believe it." When it's used in the film, much less frequently than in the book, the English subtitles translate it as "You betcha."

While walking in Santarcangelo, Guerra's hometown inland of Rimini, I see a Latin inscription that might give some clues as to the origin of this Emilia-Romagnian interjection. OSTIUM NON HOSTIUM is written across the lintel of a doorway. An opening not for enemies. This ghost between host and guest. This is something of which a port town would have a heightened sense (the storefront gates that feature prominently in *Amarcord* are called *saracinesca*—a word memorializing the pillage of Adriatic pirates). Coincidentally or not, the beach scenes of *Amarcord* were shot on the beach of Ostia, because that port is nearer to the Roman studios than the eastern beaches of Rimini. Ostia is an opening. The mouth of the port but also of language itself. The hospitality of the text.

Relatedly, it's also notable that one of the more untranslatable puns of the book is the meaning behind the nickname of the town's beauty "Gradisca": "help yourself" or "welcome."

I am routinely disappointed with English translations of *cazzo*: rushing to "shit" when it's actually "dick." It becomes especially inadequate when translating the imprecations of the peasant farmers who work the land of Signor Amedeo. A farmer would not use "shit" as a swear, and, in a similar way, I was hesitant to have the farmer say "goddamn." We usually swear against something of low value, over-abundant or to-be-avoided, and perhaps the vexatious aspects of male sexuality as it relates to over-zealous desire and unwanted children make this swear more ubiquitous in an Italian context. Many have reflected on the elevated aspect of small penises in Renaissance art!

Orca madosca is a "minced oath" of *porca Madonna*, a blasphemy a little stronger than variants such as *porca miseria* and *mannaggia la miseria*. Many other oaths in the book don't pull the same punches, and I try to keep the appropriate violence that an otherwise bowdlerizing translation would erase, almost unconsciously, with American jiminy-cricketisms. "Holy Cow!" doesn't cut it. One Italian critic pointed out that *Amarcord's* "violent expressions of everyday language are like scandalous thunderclaps in the sentimental material." (67)

The patriarch Amedeo's bursts of anger deserve an entry unto themselves for their sheer inventiveness. There were two for which I found what for me seemed acceptable equivalents: *Agamadonagà* became Dagnabamadonnagna and the blistering *La Madunaza aza-aza-aza us-ciaza!* . . . *Azzazzaza!* became Madonnanananana cocococo-cock-cunt-nadadadada! While *Vivalamadonna* was legible enough to keep, *Agarabardanarabembo!* remains a mystery, and so was left as is. Chalk it up to what I'll call Fellini's asa-nisi-masa-isms. Our "pig Latin," becomes in Italian other animals: the serpentine alphabet and the butterfly code.

Zozmà! I also kept as is. It sounds Croatian, but it's more likely something from a comic book. Think of Carla in *8 1/2* who peppers her talk with interjections of cartoon sounds. At his wit's end, Amedeo explodes with *Suca sluca iof gavgnuc!*, which seems purely sound poetry, no more decipherable than #%^&! Yet, there is an undercurrent of the sexual in many of these outbursts (*sucare . . . gnuc*), and it could be a repressed and flowery way to say, "suck my dick," without saying it.

Pernaccia

There is much ado about the way wind moves through the world and through the body. Here the translator must vouch for the weirdness of his own vernacular, Bronx cheer and raspberry the best equivalents we have at hand for *pernaccia*. But, in fact, the word in Italian designates *vernacularity itself*. *Pernaccia* comes from the Latin *vernaccia*, a classic fricative shift that we see proven by Grimm's Law (I benefited not only from the various Italian-Americanisms at the dinner table of grandparents, but also from classics professors who enjoyed running language through the paces of the Grimm's table as a kind of party trick.) *Verna* meant a slave born in the household, and so *vernaculus* would become associated with the domestic and thus the ordinary and popular. The "peanut gallery." In *Amarcord*, the unsettling *pernaccias* come from offscreen to anonymously discourage the Lawyer—*la spiega* who is prevented from taking over the narration by force of this vernacular wind—or are the non-linguistic foil to a lesson in Greek.

Petacca

There is some literature for this term as it relates to the nickname for the younger lay about brother of Signora Miranda, but I feel that most equivalents are inadequate. If we were to translate as "asshole," that doesn't rise from a general insult to the form of a lasting nickname. There is some talk in the literature of "Petacca" being a kind of old-boy honorific, like "rascal." This diminishes the surly and unredeemable qualities of this Petacca—fascist informer, womanizer, mooch and the instigator of a scene of racist sadism that "stains" the text. So, I have decided on The Stain. The added benefit of this translation is that it implies someone or something you can't get rid of.

Fellini's eventual film somewhat contributes to this softening of the character of The Stain by condensing his character with the dandy at the Grand Hotel. He thus acquires a real name: Lallo. As a shortening of the name Lorenzo, Lallo is cognate with our Larry, and I can't but help thinking about the Larry of *Three's Company*, whose makers seemed unclear about whether or not Larry was meant to be a blistering critique of heterosexuality, or the voice of sexual realism . . . an ambiguity undoubtedly almost traumatic while watching as a teen trying to figure out the mysteries of sexual relations! Despite Fellini's reputation, I don't think he would consider Petacca's antics in any way praise-worthy, especially since his filmmaking is resolutely "anti-moral." For instance, he saw in *Satyricon*'s pagan debaucheries a childlike innocence. Conversely, he was repulsed by the sexual insatiability of Casanova, even though he's often taken to task for the Casanovas in his films. He took on the notoriously difficult filming of *Casanova*, not because he identified with him but because his memoirs became the vehicle for a type of Jungian spiritual exercise.

It's worth mentioning at this point another character condensation that happens in the filmic interpretation of the book. The central character Bobo is reticulated across a number of boys of differing size and maturity in the film. This revision alleviates the discomfort or confusion that one has while reading the character of Bobo across episodes, all of which happen in a single year. At times, he seems like a Jackie Coogan-esque scamp, the stock *fanciullo* character: cf. Enzo Staiola in *Bicycle Thieves*, Salvatore Cascio in *Cinema Paradiso*, Gaetano Autiero in *Summertime*, etc.. No more than 10 years old? Whereas at other moments he is old enough to put the moves on the town's adult women. Casting a blond teenager is an interesting choice—Northern, exotic—but not so strange if we think about how the Swedish bombshell phenomenon of the 60s (cf. Anita Ekberg) filtered down into male homoerotic roles in the 70s (e.g. Michael York) and then into male teen celebrities (Björn Andrésen, Leif Garrett), making Bobo (Titta in the film, played by the Venetian Bruno Zanin) a somewhat plausible locus for the film's erotic fantasies . . . but *barely*.

The Indefinite Pronoun Si

Pasolini makes much of Guerra's use of the indefinite pronoun *si*. *Si* has a variety of uses in Italian verb constructions: reflexive, passive, and impersonal (e.g. "In Italy, one eats well" becomes "*In Italia, si mangia bene*"). Pasolini wrote two reviews of *Amarcord*, one for the book and one for the film, the latter appearing in Italian *Playboy* months after the premiere. In both, he says that "I remember" should be "we remember," and in the review of the film he makes it clear why this quibble is important, and also why it *doesn't* work in the film. It comes down to the "si" construction, and the connection the indefinite pronoun creates with the reader. "*Si mangia bene*" can mean both "one eats well" and "we eat well": the abstract "one" becomes the "we" of shared complicity. In the film, he claims, "The author seeks, indeed begs, the viewer's complicity. But he doesn't get it." Guerra's prose, however, through use of the insistent "si" throughout, invites readers into a shared point-of-view, something perhaps new to Italian literature.

Before reading Pasolini's reviews, I started to get the sense that Guerra was using "si" too much, where an active verb with a clear subject pronoun or simply the verb would be more appropriate. At first, I chalked it up to another dialect quirk. Then, discovering Pasolini's reviews late into my translation, I felt I had made a gross blunder throughout and missed a radical structuring principle akin to Jay McInerney's use of "you" in *Bright Lights, Big City*, except here the dominant point-of-view would be "we." However, going back to the text, I concluded that Pasolini, the inveterate semiotician, overstated his case in order to posit the idea of a "reader-spectator." If the indefinite pronoun as "we" were used consistently throughout, as the action passes through each character "we" would be aligned with Bobo and his father, Giudizio and the Hierarch, the Lawyer and his invisible persecutor, the dying elephant in Africa on the movie screen of the Fulgor. A radical optics, indeed, but it's not there. If "we" were "everybody," it would create an existential catastrophe rather than a kumbaya of nostalgia, disruptive of narrative and memory itself to the point of creating literary grey goo. Pasolini's semiotic point is, however, correct in the way that some uses of "si" are indicative of the book's attempt to approximate the camera-I addressing the "we" of the audience. Taking this note, I went back to revise some more tepid "ones" to "we," in the spirit of a screenplay exposition: "We hear the voice of the Professor of Science, Bongiovanni and every so often we see one of his hands enter the field of light to underline what he says."

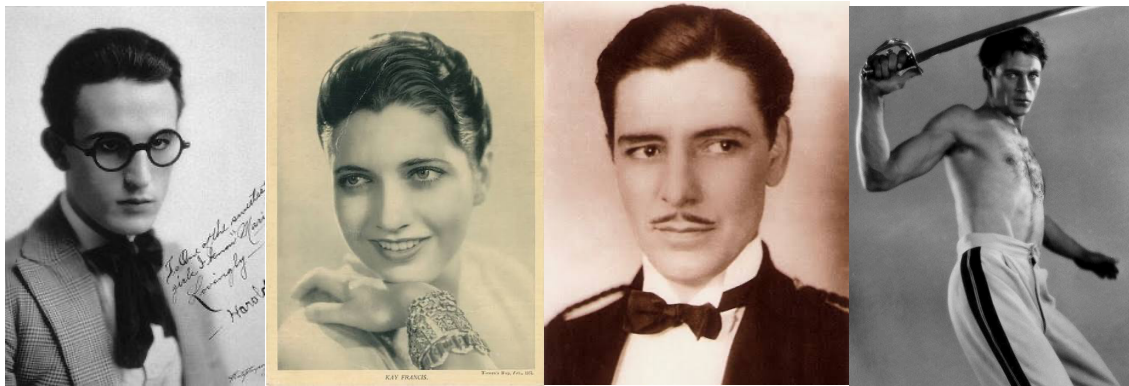
Filmic, yet paradoxically not translatable to film.

Fogarazza

We only have one good word for this, already French. But when one is faced with two different words where one would suffice (*falò* and *fogarazza*), the translator is faced with a dilemma one must creatively (or uncreatively) resolve or else end up with tautological sentences like "the bonfire is a bonfire." So, *fogarazza* is kept as is. I seem to have made the generally-accepted non-translation, standing for the specific ritual of bonfires lit on the eve of St. Joseph's day on March 18, a type of Father's Day. The Nino Rota track associated with this scene is listed on Spotify as *La Fogaraccia*—there with the more standard Italian ending for something undesirable, as the inhabitants of the town use the bonfire as an excuse to get rid of unwanted objects, including a scapegoat witch in effigy. So, the *fogaraccia* (bad fire) is simply the inverse of the bonfire (good fire), albeit with the same primal energies at play.

Although a quick check online shows that "bonfire" is not French at all, nor anything etymologically "good," but a shortening of "bone fire." We are met with folk or fake etymology at every turn.

The Coop



1930s Hollywood stars are used as short-hand descriptions for a number of characters. Harold Lloyd, Kay Francis, Ronald Colman . . . there's even a cat named Fu Manchu, the Sax Rohmer supervillain played in that era by Warner Oland and Boris Karloff. All old-fashioned and even lost references already by the time of writing. Most prominent, however, is Gary Cooper of the Beau Geste films. Surely, we remember Gary Cooper? Of *Design for Living*, of *Ball of Fire*, of *High Noon*? "The Coop?" Perhaps this is asking too much, since while translating this book, I met a number of people between the ages of 20 and 40 who had never even heard of Fellini.

The Fulgor Cinema in Rimini is a very important locus for this book and for Fellini in general. It is now a museum and bookstore, where I was able to access many secondary materials about Guerra after other resources and contacts failed. Elsewhere, Fellini writes of it:

[A]t the cinema I frequented, The Fulgor in Rimini, you took a beating. In the cheap seats, those right under the screen, a collection of loose benches, the scenes of adventure and war unleashed even more savage emulations, between the screams, slaps in the head, rolling on the belly, and the final intervention of the "Usher," a violent beast, ex-fighter, ex-lifeguard, ex-grocery bagger, who now, with a red fez on his head, and a green eyeshade, epitomized the face of the cinema and fought like an assassin. . . .

For me, cinema is a room bubbling with voices and sweat, masks, roasted chestnuts, children peeing: that atmosphere of the end of the world, of disaster, of police raid. The bustle that preceded the vaudeville, the professors who arrived in the orchestra, the tuning, the voice of the comedian, the steps of the girls behind the curtain. Or the people who leave by the emergency exit in winter, in an alley, made a little loopy by the cold, someone who hums the theme of the film and laughs, someone who pisses.

Una grossa acetilene



In the marvelous scene with Cologne the sewage man (not in the film), the butler of the Countess meets Cologne in the middle of the night with *una grossa acetilene*. We might at first imagine an oxygen tank, for welding or to ameliorate the Countess's emphysema. But it is simply a carbide lamp, the use of which was probably already a distant memory by the time of writing. The lighting in Fellini's films often comes from unconventional sources that no longer exist, and we can imagine that Guerra anticipated the otherworldly qualities of an acetylene lamp illuminating the Countess's cesspit.

Fascist ranks



At first, when encountering untranslatable words used for fascist ranks, I translated using shorthands such as "fascist official" or "fascist youth." I soon realized that the book dips into the varied and arcane hierarchical groupings of the fascist universe, not only officials such as the Hierarch and the Federale, but also an array of youth groups organized by age including the Balilla (pictured above), the Avanguardisti (this is the one I translated as "fascist youth" to avoid the obvious confusions the word in English would elicit), the Sons of the She-Wolf, the Young Italians.

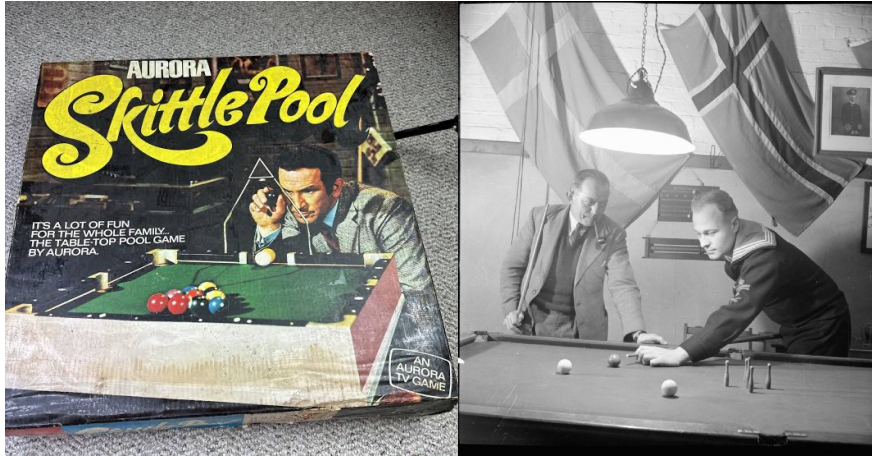
Balilla is also the name of the Fiat 508, which appears at the mother's funeral as a symbol of bourgeois pride, but I also think Guerra plays with this confusion—it could easily be misread as a fascist honor guard—to indicate the father's rejection of fascist politics.

Dolranogi



Never say never when it comes to dialect, but given this word is coming out of the mouth of the father, who we've established has an Archie Bunker/Leo Gorcey-esque relation to language, I can only assume it's a fabrication. "You bring them up worse and worse . . . like the *dolranogi*!" The distant idea of an African tribe?

Birilli



Birilli or the "skittles" of billiards is something surviving in living memory for Americans in the Don Adam's-celebrity-endorsed Skittle Pool ("An Aurora TV Game") but this is already a misnomer, since it lacks the pins that give it its name. The fascists in the Commerce Café play a billiard game with these small pins, predominantly found in Italy, Denmark, Canada.

I mention this fairly unimportant detail because the names of games pose particularly interesting translation problems. Like dialect, they can be local, obscure, poetic, lost to childhood memory, or even invented. The *locus classicus* of this problem would be Rabelais' catalogue of hundreds of games in *Gargantua*, which has served as a uniquely creative challenge to translators. Skittles and biased skittles appear there, and can be traced on this web site, which attempts a compendium of all the games from *Gargantua* and their translations.

<<https://games.porg.es/articles/lists/rabelais/>>

We find there that "skittles" comes from the French *aux quilles*.

Spirugarubanos

While I can't replicate how I shook the Internet to decode this word, I eventually found a strangely adequate translation for what is clearly not Italian. Again, it is spoken by the father, the linguistic trickster. "To wring his neck": a transposition of *rubare spiritus*? The "spirit" cut off by some vigorous pig Latin? There were a couple times I was able to squeeze strangely apt translations out of seemingly unsearchable words, and because the ghosts of the Internet include AI hallucinations—now unavoidable because they head any Google search—I was suspicious that rather than emerging from distant neural network that it was simply copying someone else's translation. I had the same uncanny or guilty feeling when "clonks on the noggin" came up for "tozze sulla capocia." It was the oddly appropriate and in the end seemingly best option, especially because of the ways the father's hitting the son was so difficult to translate without completely alienating modern readers. Often stated bluntly as "punches on the head," here the son offers a more folksy and euphemistic alternative when addressing his priest.

Una Lunga Dilanda

A misremembering of "Lancia Dilambda," a luxury car from the 1920s. One wonders whether to memorialize this mistake somehow or correct it. Named after letters of the Greek alphabet since its first model in 1907, the Lancia series culminated with the Lambda in 1922 and then the Dilambda—its most euphonic entry—in 1927 (with Beta, Gamma, Delta and Zeta returning at the end of the century in the form of coupes, hatchbacks and minivans).

Cassapanca

One could perhaps easily translate as "confessional," but like "*skittles*," or "*pattino*," the translation is not as easy as a word replacement when there is a specific *physics* described. It's not quite enclosed like a confessional, but there's still a sort of screen, which is a little confusing. It's a very specific type of ornate bench, not quite a "pew" either. Perhaps more appropriate for the penance of a child, even though we hear a confession—to the reader and not the priest—that is less-than-childlike.

L'inderniaghen della Vittoria



More erotic energy repressed through a non-sense word? It is used to describe the ass of the statue of Victory in Rimini. Feels somewhat Swedish, could be a *univerbizzazione* of foreign words in the same way in Argentina the *bandoneon* is a *univerbizzazione* of the Band Union accordion.

The modernist ass of Bernardino Boifava's *Monumento ai Caduti* in Rimini does, to an extent, defy language and even adequate image capture. So much so that Fellini created a replica, easier to film—a little more *belle époque*, less strikingly futurist—on the studio lots of Cinecittà. But then again, he did that with most of Rimini.





Esportazione



When Bobo asks for a *Nazionali Esportazione* at the Tobacconist's, it is prelude to an absurd and zany seduction scene. Clearly, "esportazione" cannot be simply translated as "export," since the word itself brings him almost to orgasm, something that one would need at least three syllables to pull off. Notice the rip-off of Max Ponty's more famous *Gitanes* cigarette design and the fact that Fellini chose an anachronistic cigarette, not appearing until after the war. You need to get those three syllables somewhere, but there is also an ironic poetics to the name, both national and export at once, a symbol of vicarious travel through a cigarette, that Fellini must have appreciated.

Pattino

In the scene where the town collectively rows out into open sea to witness the luxury liner The Rex pass in the night, there are a variety of vessels, two of which could be translated as catamaran: *pattino* and *moscone*. However, we use the word "catamaran" for something much more substantial than is indicated here. Even the Hobie Cat is not a great approximation. Instead, these are small paddle boats of the type that can still be seen on the beaches of Italy as lifeguard boats that punctuate the shore every few meters. It could even be plausibly stretched to indicate the paddle boats that have now fiberglass slides built in. In the 1930s it was simply a dual-hulled boat with oars, as can be seen in this postcard with the strikingly modern-looking girl reading on the simplest of *pattinos*. At first, I thought the difference between *pattino* and *moscone* came down to the quality of craftsmanship, since the *pattino* in this scene is associated with Gradisca—we imagine painted white slats and well-fashioned wood—whereas *moscones* could be the more utilitarian, unpainted version (as can be seen in the postcard). However, I asked a lifeguard at Ostia, and he claims that it is simply a regional difference: *pattino* is the west coast version and *moscone* the east coast version for the same thing.





Gurugul

This may be a kind of snail that Biscain eats while waiting for the Rex, but of the many words for snail of which I am aware—*lumacine*, *maruzzieli*, *bummaltti*, *bombolini*, *maraguline*, *cuccioletti*—this one is nowhere to be found. Perhaps it is the tiny type of sea snail that one can imagine eating like sunflower seeds. An onomatopoeic word for how one might eat it? A gurgle? A gargoyle of language? It's already in scare-quotes in the prose, clear sign that it is at least once removed from correct or common parlance. While in the film, Fellini replaces *gurugul* with a watermelon, he makes a point to have someone in the foreground of the barge with a plate of escargot, perhaps a placeholder for this memory.

The Terrace Chairs of the Grand Hotel



Fellini made Rimini as it exists today. Of this there is no question. What was once a sleepy and ignored seaside town became, by the influence of *Amarcord*, a lasagna of international hotels layered along the coast, divided by streets named after his various films. And yet, he would frequently say of *Amarcord*, "This is not Rimini."

Existing well before the film, the one imaginary constant that Fellini did not himself create but perhaps drew upon frequently was Rimini's Grand Hotel, which opened in 1908. I've used the talismanic white chairs of the Grand Hotel terrace on this provisional cover, because I feel like they appear with a certain regularity in his films (although, a closer look at the films themselves reveals that he uses much cheaper versions. However, the effect of repetition of empty white chairs on the abandoned terrace of a luxury hotel nevertheless remains). On its DVD box, one notices that the M of *Amarcord* morphing into the cartoon of busty woman also looks like one of these milk-white and heart-shaped chairs. It clearly feels like a Freudian dream condensation, with loaded significance for Fellini.



But I have erased Fellini from the original image sitting among these empty terrace chairs, because in effect, by reintroducing this translation, I would like to promote Guerra's literary contribution. In many publications of the screenplays Guerra wrote—as we can see in the Grove editions of Antonioni films—his contribution is reduced to mere personnel. Whereas, even though Fellini smoothed out many of these literary and dialect quirks to make *Amarcord* more filmable (and dubbable), once we read the novel we can understand how Guerra's collaborative contribution was fundamental to the success of the eventual film, and even stands as a literary accomplishment on its own.



NOTES

. . . it was also something stunningly new.

Alberto Bevilacqua, "Vive Anche A Parole," *Oggi* 8 Nov. 1973; Claudio Carabba, "Gli Incantesimi di Fellini," *La Nazione* 19 Sept. 1973; Pier Paolo Pasolini, "Federico Fellini e Tonino Guerra *Amarcord*," *Tempo Letteratura* 30 Sept. 1973, et al. in Giuseppe Ricci, ed. *Amarcord Raccontato dalla Stampa dell'Epoca*. Rimini: Edizioni Sabinae, 2023.

. . . gaining a reputation for mystical indolence.

This process would become even more complicated by his last film *The Voice of the Moon* in 1989. Fellini started with a book by Ermanno Cavazzoni, but trickled out the "screenplay" with scraps of paper delivered to the actors each day, adding more ventriloquism in the process of dubbing. Only when the film was finished was it transcribed as a "screenplay" and published by Einaudi.

I am an artisan who has nothing to say. . .

Roberto Carvelli, *Fellini E Guerra: Un Viaggio Amarcord*. Roma: Ponte Sisto, 2020. p.13.

. . . chalked it up to a publicity "stunt."

N.Z. "Sul Filo di 'Amarcord' Fellini e Rimini," *Promozione* Dec. 1973. in Giuseppe Ricci, ed. *Amarcord Raccontato*.

. . . the typical Felliniesque rallentandos.

Deleuze speaks of Fellini's *ritornellos* in *Cinema Two*, and so *rallentando* is my misremembering. However, I feel the *rallentando* describes how Fellini structures a scene much more accurately.

a race from box to box . . .

Claudio Carabba, "Gli Incantesimi di Fellini," *La Nazione* 19 Sept. 1973. in Giuseppe Ricci, ed. *Amarcord Raccontato*

. . . during the 1930s calling for "Un Amaro Cora!"

Roberto Carvelli, *Fellini E Guerra: Un Viaggio Amarcord*. Roma: Ponte Sisto, 2020. p. 10.

Amarcord: an assonance . . .

Ibid.

. . . scandalous thunderclaps in the sentimental material.

C.B. "Leggiamo 'Amarcord' Prima di Vederlo," *La Notte* 7 Dec. 1973. in Giuseppe Ricci, ed. *Amarcord Raccontato*.

There is some literature . . .

Davide Bagnaresi/Gianfranco Gori. *Amarcord dalla A alla Z*. Rimini: Edizioni Sabinae, 2023.

The author seeks, indeed begs, the viewer's complicity.

Pier Paolo Pasolini, "Schermi" (column), *Playboy* Feb. 1974. in Giuseppe Ricci, ed. *Amarcord Raccontato*.

[A]t the cinema I frequented, The Fulgor in Rimini . . .

Federico Fellini, *Fare Un Film*. Torino: Einaudi, 1974.

