RESUME 2008

Verónica Pamoukaghlián



INDEX

FILMOGRAPHY As Producer & Director As Producer

FILM STUDIES

FILM MASTER'S DEGREE

Degrees & Courses

LANGUAGES

FILM FESTIVALS & CONFERENCES

Awards & Non-Film Artistic Works

Employment Translation Teaching Research & Writing

Music Studies & Works

WRITING SAMPLES

I FILMOGRAPHY

As Director & Producer

SEXTHROUGH 1995 Short film Starring Marcel Fernández and Sabrina de León Produced by Cinemateca and Union Latina Montevideo International Film Festival 1996

EL SORDO CIELO 2000 Documentary Digibeta Produced by NEWMOON FILMS AND ARTS Havana Film Festival 2000 Documentary Film Prize Montevideo International Film Festival 2001

CIERRA MIS OJOS 2000 Short film DV format Starring Marcel Fernández and Valeria Lema Screened by National Television Shorts` Program

Agua Fiera 2002

Music Clip DV format Director of Photography: Hugo Díaz Starring Marcel Fernández , Nieves Pereyra, Fabiana Pamoukaghlián Screened by local television MONTEVIDEOCLIP contest TOP TEN music clip of the year 2003

Sin Red 2002

Music Documentary on the making of AGUA ABRAZADA 53 minutes, DV format Starring: Fernando Cabrera, Ruben Rada, Liese Lange, Martín Muguerza, Andrés Arnicho, Nico Ibarburu etc. Premièred at PACHAMAMA Published in MPEG format on the music CD

2002

Vamíbora

Music clip DV format Artist: Liese Lange Starring: the band plus Nicolás Ibarburu Screened by Tvciudad and Local Television Screened at Moncofa Film Festival 2004, Spain

CANDOMBE 2002 Musical documentary format DV, 15 minutes Director of Photography Hugo Díaz Sound Engineer Federico Lima Starring: Nego Haedo, Martín Muguerza, Martín Ibarburu, Noé Núñez, Fernando Núñez. AWARDED A YOUNG VIDEO PRIZE BY INJU and Coca Cola 2003

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FILMOGRAPHY

Fran Nico & Martín 2002

Musical documentary format DV, 6 minutes Director of Photography Hugo Díaz Sound Engineer Daniel Báez Starring:: FRANCISCO FATTORUSO Bass NICO IBARBURU Guitar MARTÍN MUGUERZA DRUMS

HELLFLOWER (EL PASILLO) 2004

Documentary on a women's maximum security Psychiatric Ward Script by DR- Pablo Trelles , Voice over: Margarita Musto Director of Photography: Verónica Pamoukaghlián Music by Verónica Pamoukaghlián and Pablo Damonte Format DV Running time 8min Premiered at Conrad Punta del Este Hotel International Psychiatric Conference Nov. 2004

TRES BALAS 2004 Music clip for La Sonora del Sur (BIZARRO RECORDS) Moncofa Film Festival, Spain, August 2004

Montevideo/ Modelo para armar 2004

An exploration of the intersections of the work of writer Julio Cortazar with the city of Montevideo. Starring: Noelia Hochbaum, Santiago Gutiérrez as Charlie Parker´s alter Ego "EL Perseguidor", Liese Lange as La Maga, Paula Delgado as "La Madre", Mauro Clavijo as " Oliveira". Music by VEROZONE-**DAMONTE, SANTIAGO GUTIÉRREZ.** Premiered at Moncofa Film Festival, Spain, August 2004 Screened at Tandil Film Festival, Argentina, October 2004 Screened as part of Cortazar 2004 exhibition, Buenos Aires Premiered at Sede del Gobierno del Mercosur, Montevideo

FRANCISCO FATTORUSO LIVE 2006 Starring Fattoruso,Ibarburu,Arnicho Recorded Live at Medio y Medio Jazz Club, Punta del Este

As Producer

JACINTA Y LA SANGRE 2007 Short Film Directed by Gonzalo Ladines HD Produced by Pamoukaghlian-Escalona-Peña San Sebastian Film Festival 2007 Produced by FIA-DAMA-Ibermedia

Próxima Parada

2007

Short Film Directed by Javi llombart HD Produced by Pamoukaghlian-Escalona-Peña San Sebastian Film Festival 2007 Produced by FIA-DAMA-Ibermedia

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II FILM STUDIES

	FILMMAKING WORKSHOP 1994 by Oscar nominated director Humberto Solás (Cuba) . Cinemateca Uruguaya	
	ACTORS`DIRECTION WORKSHOP 199 BY HUMBERTO SOLÁS ENCUADRES	94
	SCREENWRITING WORKSHOP 1994 by Beatriz Flores Silva Cinemateca Uruguaya	
	FILMMAKING WORKSHOP 1994 by Carlos Trobo and Beatriz Flores Silva Cinemateca Uruguaya	
	ACTORS` DIRECTION WORKSHOP 1995 by Lautaro Murúa (ARG) ESCUELA DE CINE DEL URUGUAY	
	Seminar on Film and Psychology 19 by Hans Joachim Schlegel Goethe Institut	94
	INTENSIVE ACTORS` DIRECTION WORKSHO 1996 by Valentin Tepliakov (Russia) July – August	Ρ
	FILMMAKING WORKSHOP by Gianni Amelio INSTITUTO ITALIANO DE CULTURA	1996
	Seminar on Film and Architecture by Hans Joachim Schlegel Architecture Faculty, National University	1996
Mercedes 1213 ap 301 Montevideo URUGUAY verozone@gmail.com	TV SCRIPT WORKSHOP by Mayté Vera (Cuba) CTC Productora	1998
www.youtube.com/verozone Phone: 598 95262505 Fax: 598 2 9007449	Soap opera Script Workshop by Mayté Vera CTC Productora	1998

II FILM STUDIES

	Film Editing and Dramatic Structure 1998 by Miguel Pérez (Arg) FONA
	FILMMAKING WORKSHOP 1999 by Pino Solanas (Arg) ESCUELA DE CINE
	SCREENPLAY WORKSHOP 2000 By Oscar nominated film screenwriter and director Beda Docampo Feijóo ESCUELA DE CINE
	FILM PRODUCTION WORKSHOP 2000 by Pepi Goncalvez ESCUELA DE CINE
	CURRICULAR SECOND YEAR COURSES 2000 Uruguayan Film School SUBJECTS: Research, Music clip, Sound, Editing, Music and sound, TV
	EXECUTIVE FILM PRODUCTION 2002 by film producer Fernando Epstein ESCUELA DE CINE
	MASTER CLASS: VOLKER SCHLÖNDORF 2005 Festival de Mar del Plata
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III MASTER's IN FILM

MÁSTER IBEROAMERICANO DE GUIÓN 2006-2007 SCREENWRITING MASTER'S DEGREE Fundación para la Investigación del Audiovisual Universidad Menéndez Pelayo Valencia, Spain Lecturers: J.L. Borau, Jorge Goldemberg, Fernando Castets, Julio Rojas, Alicia Luna, Lola Salvador, Michel Gaztambide Manolo Matji, Vicente Ponce. Joan **á**lvarez Ibermedia Scholarship Awarded

IV DEGREES & COURSES

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1980 - 1991 Primary and Secondary School Colegio Armenio Engineering Bac

1989 - 1991 Intensive French Language Courses Alliance Française Equivalent to first to seventh year regular courses

LITTÉRATURE FRANÇAISE ET TRADUCTION 1992 Alliance Française

1990-1995 Intensive and regular German Language Courses Goethe Institut Exam: Zentrale Mittelstufen Prüfung Grade: Gut

DIPLÔME D'ÉTUDES DE LANGUE FRANÇAISE 1993 Test d'equivalence International Examination Alliance Française, French Embassy

1993-1996

DIPLOMA OF ENGLISH STUDIES (CAMBRIDGE) FORMERLY CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY HIGHEST EFL DEGREE FULL PROGRAM COMPLETED LITERATURE A GRADE B LITERATURE B GRADE A LITERATURE C GRADE C LANGUAGE AND APPRECIATION GRADE B

Drama Workshop

1995

by Anthony Fletcher (Royal Academy of dramatic Art, London) Anglo Actor's training

IV DEGREES & COURSES

	SHAKESPEARE WORKSHOP 1995 BY ANTHONY FLETCHER
	ANGLO An Approach to Shakespeare´s plays from the point of view of Dramatic Art
	THEATERKURS1996Acting workshop in GermanGOETHE INSTITUTTAUGHT BY ACTRESS ANA BAZTERRICA
	LAUREL´S INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 1996 Three-day workshops for English Teachers
	TEACHER'S TRAINING COURSE 1998 Course coordinated by Exeter School UK SUBJECTS AND PROFESSORS: Methodology by María Emma Mira Language by US Master's Degree Holder (Lang. Education) Grammar by ANGLO TTC Prof. Phonology by Beatriz Batlle EXETER SCHOOL EXAMINATION "English Teaching Course" Grade B
	ARTS AND CULTURE MANAGEMENT 1999BANKBOSTON FOUNDATION DIPLOMAAverage: 88% Ranking First among '99 GraduatesScholarship Awarded for Top ScoreExam Results:INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL MANAGEMENT88%PLANNING87%HUMAN RESOURCES` MANAGEMENT85%COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING92%FINANCE AND ACCOUNTANCY79%FUND-RAISING AND NEGOTIATION100%PROJECT WORKSHOP82%
	ARTS` MANGEMENT WORKSHOP 1999 By Jan Hanvik, PAMAR FOUNDATION New York Sponsored by FULBRIGHT COMMISSION BankBoston Foundation
3 ap 301 JRUGUAY gmail.com /verozone	SUPERIOR GERMAN LANGUAGE CERTIFICATE 2001 Zentrale Oberstufenprüfung Grade: befriedigend Goethe Institut (German University Entrance Diploma)
95262505 9007449	

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V LANGUAGES

NATIVE COMMAND Spanish English French

Excellent Command German

F l u e n t Portuguese Italian

Basic Command Armenian Greek

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Gramado Film Festival and Market 1996 Mar del Plata International Film Festival 1997 1995-1999 INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, MONTEVIDEO PUNTA DEL ESTE EUROPEAN FILM FESTIVAL 1999 1999-2000 Sundance Conference Montevideo 1999-2000 Mercosur Film Festival Punta del Este MIDIA IBEROAMERICAN FILM MARKET 1999 Madrid, Spain HAVANA FILM FESTIVAL 2000 CUBA AL INVEST 2004-2005 BUENOS AIRES FILM MARKET & BUSINESS MEETINGS Moncofa Film Festival 2004 Valencia, Spain URUGUAYAN MUSIC CLIP SHOWCASE Mercedes 1213 ap 301 Montevideo URUGUAY NATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL TANDIL 2004 verozone@gmail.com ARGENTINA www.youtube.com/verozone MAR DEL PLATA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2005 Phone: 598 95262505

The Development of Competency in the Media 1995

FORUM: URUGUAYAN AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTION 1994

Universidad Católica

Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo

VII AWARDS &	, X
NON-FILM ARTISTIC	
WORKS	S

ORKS	FILM CRITICISM AWARD Compañía Central Cinematográfica	1991
	FILM CRITICISM AWARD Cine Universitario	1992
	HIMMEL ÜBER BUENOS AIRES Short story on a Peter Gabriel concert, published by sábado show, d iario El País	1993
	NUEVALUNA, SCREENPLAY FONDO CAPITALAWARD U\$S 2500 Funding, from Intendencia de Mor	
	LILACSEA, POEM selected by PROYECTO CULTURAL SUR Letras Uruguayas II Anthology, Bianchi Ed.	1998
	MUJERPARAGUAS ENGLISH PO selected in its Spanish translation by LA NAC as a winner of POESÍA EN EL SUBTE C ONTEST POSTED ON ALL BUENOS AIRES SUBWAY STATIONS LATER PUBLISHED AS POESÍA EN EL SUBTE BY EDICIO	Ión, b uenos Aires , for a week,
	FONDO NACIONAL DE LA MÚS U\$S 2000 aid for the production of a CD artist Liese Lange (The album was produced and released as AGUA ABRAZADA in 2002)	ica Award 2000
	ZAPATOS ROJOS, POETRY AW, Buenos Aires Published in Zapatos Rojos Anthology	ARD 2000
	SCHWANGER, THE GRAND SLA BEAUTÉ, DEADBIRD WINGS FOUR POEMS IN FRENCH, GERMAN AND ENGLISH SI LETRAS DE BABEL MULTILINGUAL ANTHOLOGY BY PROYECTO CULTURAL SUR. PUBLISHED BY BIAN	2000 ELECTED FOR PUBLICATION IN
	INHUMANSCAPES Selected for publication in anti-war Antholo	2003 DGY, USA
р 301	St BRENDAN´S SONG A song written for the IB School St. Brenda	2003 .n, Montevideo
GUAY ail.com rozone	INHUMANSCAPES II & III Published by Taj Mahal Review, India	2004

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VII AWARDS &	
NON-FILM ARTISTIC	
WORKS	InHu

	NHUMANSCAPES I Published by PRISM INTERNATIONAL, Canada	2003
	SPANISH POETRY Published by LETRALIA literary Magazine, Venezuela	2005
	KRONOS HOURS Published by The Big Times News, Puerto Rico	2005
S	SIN MÚSICA Selected for La Raza, Chicago, USA	2005
F	OR ESAS PLAYAS SIN NOMBRE Published by Vinten Editores , Montevideo Published by Revista Voces, Spain	2006
F	THE WORD Published by ARABESQUES REVIEW Magazine, ALGIERS, AFRICA	2006
	NHUMANSCAPES II Published by INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF WOMEN	2006 N
	LONDON BOMBING Published by MINDFIRE REVIEW, UK	2006
F	The Word and other Poems 2 Published by Sentinel Literary Quarterly ONDON	007
F	THREE POEMS 2 Published by POETRY MAGAZINE JS	2007

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VIII EMPLOYMENT

TRANSLATION

PARTENARIAT EU-MERCOSUR 1997 URUGUAYAN CHAMBER OF INDUSTRY ENGLISH, FRENCH AND GERMAN INTERPRETER FOR BUSINESS MEETINGS (LATU)

EUROPEAN UNION MONTEVIDEO 1998 AND THE URUGUAYAN CHAMBER OF INDUSTRY, ENGLISH-SPANISH INTERPRETER

1997-2001 ARTS CATALOGUES FOR NEW YORK AND MONTEVIDEO Artists: Daniel Umpiérrez, Martín Sastre, David Salamanovich

2000-2006 Media & Communications, Press releases and grants Newmoon films & arts

DE MATOS RODRIGUEZ, LA CUMPARSITA 2004 BY ROSARIO INFANTOZZI A BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR OF THE MOST FAMOUS TANGO OF ALL TIMES, TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH TO ENGLISH ED. DOBLECLICK 2004, MONTEVIDEO

MURALS OF POETRY ENGLISH POETRY TRANSLATED FROM ENGLISH INTO SPANISH MUNIR MEZYED, AUTHOR, JORDAN 2006

<u>teaching</u>

1998-2002 ST. CATHERINE'S SCHOOL Bilingual school teacher Kindergarten and Primary School English All levels High School and I.G.C. S. E. Literature I.B. A2 Higher Level Courses (Language and Literature)

ST. BRENDAN´S SCHOOL Secondary School English Literature Teacher

2003

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VIII EMPLOYMENT

	FILMMAKING WORKSHOP COORDINATOR 2003 St. Brendan´s School (IB School) Ages 17-18
	BUSINESS AND LITERATURE TEACHER 2003 IN-COMPANY COURSES AT KPMG MONTEVIDEO
	MUSIC AND LITERATURE WORKSHOP 2003 Uruguayan MENSA volunteer program Comedor LA CACHILA, Peñarol, Montevideo
	2005-2007 Youth Staff & International Hostess Celebrity Cruises, Miami, USA Youth Staff for Caribbean, Alaska, Hawaii, and European Cruises
	<u>research & Writing</u>
	The Montevideo Book Fair 1999 Independent Survey & Marketing Analysis Authors: Pamoukaghlian-Esquivel
	CORRESPONDANT FOR VARIETY, USA 1999 at Punta del Este European Film Festival Interviews and articles
	INTERVIEW OF PATRICE CHÉREAU 1999 Published by el país cultural, El país d aily Newspaper, Montevideo
	RESEARCH ASSISTANT 2003-2004 for Christine Ehrick, Ph.D. History Department University of Louisville, KENTUCKY
	BIKESTATION 2004 LOS ANGELES, USA Grant application writer
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	Waterware.com 2008 USA
Phone: 598 95262505 Fax: 598 2 9007449	Port articles and Travel logs for World Port Source Website

IX MUSIC STUDIES & WORKS

a works	Drums & Percussion Lessons uruguayan popular music workshop	2002
	2002 – 2003 Drums lessons With drummer Martín Muguerza	
	Percussion workshop Nana Vasconcelos (BRAZIL)	2003
	CANDOMBE WORKSHOP Daniel Tatita Márquez	2003
	ELECTRONIC MUSIC WORKSHOP By Grammy-Award winners Juan Campodónico & Luciano Supervieille	2003
	AGUA ABRAZADA 2002 By Liese Lange Produced by Pamoukaghlian-Losavio	
	DOS PASAJES PARA MARTE 2000 By SNAKE Management by V. Pamoukaghlian Producers: CAMPODONICO/CASACUBERTA	
	2000-2004 Music Management & Show Produ For: Trio Fattoruso Snake LA Sonora del Sur Liese Lange Kato , Spain Coxis, Argentina Righi-Muguerza-Labrada Ibarburu-Sarser	CTION
Mercedes 1213 ap 301 Montevideo URUGUAY verozone@gmail.com www.youtube.com/verozone	PRESENCIAS, CORTÁZAR 2004 International Exhibition in Montevideo Management Musical director Charlie Parker Tribute	
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PHILIPSBURG, ST MAARTEN

The port of Philipsburg, St Maarten is on the Dutch side of this island, which was amicably divided between the French and the Dutch in 1648. One of the Antilles, St Maarten/St Martin lies somewhere along the elusive border between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

A paradise of French sophistication, Dutch-style night-life, cheap electronics and endless beautiful beaches, St Martin has it all. The port is surrounded by a large shopping area, where you can buy cameras or IPods at really good prices, taste local drinks at the numerous outdoor bars and buy affordable souvenirs. After that, if you are not adventurous enough to rent a car and see it all at on your own, you can take the 6-dollar (both ways) water-taxi which will take you downtown in ten minutes.

Philipsburg has a main street that runs along the beach, so that it is very easy to combine shopping with swimming, or lunch at one of the barefoot bars. I specially recommend both food and drink at the relaxed colorful GET WET BAR, a very unpretentious structure made out of painted wooden planks, right on the beach, with friendly bartenders and cool reggae music.

As far as shopping is concerned, Philipsburg is a bargaining heaven, as salesman are used to it and price-tags are never carved in stone. Large electronics' shops will have any brand of digital cameras, iPods, accessories, stereos, DVD players, etc. A favorite for females is BEAUTY PALACE, any girl's dream of a cosmetics' store, with endless isles of anything you might desire at more than affordable prices. This is the place to get your Schwarzkopf hair products, your designer perfume and your Neutrogena moisturizers.

When you get a little hungry, and weary of shopping, you can choose to have lunch at the ShivaSagar, a traditional Indian restaurant. I don't know what any of the dishes are called there, but everything is delicious, and the atmosphere has a real Indian feel to it. I actually went there with Indian people who knew what to order, but if you just sample different items from their excellent menu, you shall not regret it. They also serve all manner of delicious drinks.

If tropical drinks are your thing, you will love St Maarten; they are cheap and delicious almost everywhere, specially at the beach bars. Their smoothies, daiquiris and margaritas will knock your socks off, in case you are wearing any, which, by the way, you shouldn't, although an umbrella might come in handy, as light rain comes rather unexpectedly sometimes on this very tropical paradise.

But your day won't be over yet; the very French St Martin will still be waiting for you just a few minutes away. Back at the port, you can join some fellow travelers for a taxi-tour that will take you to every single spot worth visiting on the island for prices ranging from 90 to 15 dollars, depending on the number of passengers. If you are a seasoned Mediterranean traveler, you won't shy away from the St Martin's famous nudist beach. Secluded and utterly gorgeous, this is a far cry from the bustling town of Philipsburg.

A little noisier but nonetheless gorgeous, the so-called Airport Beach will provide a rather unique experience. Lying on the side of a large airport, this beach offers spectacular views of landing and taking off planes. My friend Nelli told me that one day she could actually see the pilot's face, and he was waving at her, as she lay on the sand. If photography is your thing, this will definitely be the place for you.

Needless to say, water-sports are available all over the Island, and, last but not least, if you decide to visit Marigot, the French-side's capital, you can top off your fantastic day with a luxurious French-style dinner and some fabulous French wine, before you say goodbye to beautiful St Martin, and head back to the ship to set sail towards the next inviting shore.

LA DOLCE VITA



ITALY, 1960 DIRECTED BY FEDERICO FELLINI CAST: MARCELLO MASTROIANNI, ANITA EKBERG, ANOUK AIMÉE

BY VERONICA PAMOUKAGHLIÁN

THE MOST IMPRESSIVE THING ABOUT FELLINI'S MASTERPIECE LA DOLCE VITA IS MOST LIKELY HOW LITTLE EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED IN THE WORLD SINCE THE LATE 1950'S.

The film's episodic plot follows a tabloid journalist through night after night of excess, and morning after morning of existential hangover. The handsome, elegant Marcello (MARCELLO MASTRIOANNI) is allowed into the villas and palaces, as well as into the confidences of the rich and famous, and ultimately, the bored .

In the opening scene of the film, a life-size image of Christ hovers over Rome, his arms wide open, as if he were trying to encompass it all. The city looks magnificent from the air, and the Roman ruins remind us of the once powerful Empire and its decadence.

That past decadence is parallel to the city's cosmopolitan nightlife, as it is portrayed in the film, which lacks neither sex, nor cruelty, neither perversion, nor despair. In this improbable setting for such a quest, the high society chronicler is looking for answers, but every time he thinks he's found one, he finds himself in front of a Mirage: the refined literary man (Steiner), whose life seemed so perfect, tells Marcello that the most miserable life is preferable to one in which everything is pre-ordained; the foreign diva (Sylvia – Anita Ekberg) has no real friend, no place to go, and is in a lousy relationship; the aristocratic beauty (Maddalena – Anouk Aimée) is so deep in ennui that her marriage proposal to Marcello cannot be real; the Madonna that appeared in some little village doesn't bring miracles but tragedy. In short, nothing is what it seems, and everything is much more terrible than the surface allows one to fathom.

Marcello's false idol Sylvia is a empty as she is hypnotic. A voluptuous blonde who claims that she wears only Chanel perfume to bed, and smiles for the camera, even when there isn't one, Sylvia dazzles Marcello in such a way that he once tells her "You are everything, everything". He is looking for something superior, something higher, and, once more, he thinks it might be in her smile, or in the promise of her body.

The film has a deep religious feeling, in the broad sense of the word. For instance, when the crowd assembles at the place where two kids in Sunday clothes, all set for the front page of the news, claim to have seen the Madonna, an appalled priest cries out "Miracles are born from silence, not from this confusion". The priest's idea of finding God, is dramatically opposed to the God Marcello thinks he has found in his false idol Sylvia. But when he turns to the quiet Steiner for answers, he is disappointed again. In the shelter of an empty church Steiner tries to lure Marcello into the seemingly better profession of a serious writer. But Marcello cannot escape his own reality, to bury himself inside the novel he has most likely not even started writing. And he will later find out that a life inside the sheltered world of letters is no guarantee to happiness and the kind of peace of mind he so desperately needs.

Fellini also provides an insightful exploration of the roles of women in the life of man. Sylvia is the fantasy, Emma, Marcello's eternal girlfriend, is the mother, and Maddalena would be the equal, what Beatrice is for Benedick in Much ado about nothing, a woman who can share a deeper understanding with Marcello, who will be neither above him, nor below him. But perhaps it is already too late when they both realize about that possibility.

For a film with such a complex structure, so full of symbolism and philosophical depth, La Dolce Vita is surprisingly entertaining and fun to watch, and it hasn't dated one bit. Mastroianni delivered a once in a lifetime performance as a man detached from himself, unable to feel, who goes through things as if everything were happening to somebody else.

In the end of the film, just like in the beginning, there is another eye watching over with silent wisdom. It is the eye of a dead monster that washes up on the shore after Marcello's most desperate night of excess. On seeing the dead open eye he comments "Look how he's still watching". In this I see a metaphor for the eye of Nature, silently watching over the futility of human existence. Nevertheless, Fellini manages to end the film with a blink of hope.

LA DOLCE VITA IS A CLASSIC BECAUSE IT IS A FILM ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A HUMAN BE-ING, ABOUT QUESTIONS THAT HAVEN'T BEEN ANSWERED AND NEVER WILL BE. FOR, WHAT ARE WE BUT A CROWD RUNNING, DAZED AND CONFUSED, IN THE DARKNESS, UNDER THE RAIN, OUR FEET DEEP IN MUD, JUST LIKE THE FILM'S RELIGIOUS MOB, LOOKING FOR SOMETHING SACRED IN ALL THE WORLD'S CONFUSION?

ISTANBUL

I once saw the tip of Africa far away behind the mist, from Gibraltar. The only other time **I**'ve ever been between two continents, staring from one into the other, was one summer in the Port of Istanbul.

A CITY OF CONTRASTS AND A MEETING POINT FOR ASIAN AND EUROPEAN CULTURES, ISTANBUL'S QUALITY DOESN'T BETRAY IT'S PARTICULAR GEOGRAPHY. AS SOON AS YOU ENTER THE BLUE-GREEN BOSPHORUS, THE DOMES OF ITS GRAND MOSQUES DOMINATE THE SCENE, ENDOWING IT WITH AN ALMOST FAIRY-TALE-LIKE QUALITY; THIS IS A LAND OF PRINCESSES AND RICH PALACES, OF SULTANS AND THEIR WELL.GUARDED HAREMS, OF MAGIC CARPETS AND A THOUSAND FASCINATING TALES. WHEN THE SUN SETS AND THE NIGHT FALLS, THE SOUND OF PRAYER RISES AND FILLS THE AIR WITH DREAMY TONES AND MOURNING SONGS. IT IS JUST SHEER BEAUTY TO SIT OUT OF DOORS AND WATCH THE PURPLE SUNSET WHILE LISTENING TO THE BEAUTIFUL MUSIC OF THE MOSQUE.

When the song is over, you can do as I did, and walk the couple of blocks from the cruise ship terminal to the closest place of worship. But instead of going into the Mosque (I have only seen these from the outside), I would take a left and walk into one of Istanbul's most fascinating and traditional spots: the Nargile café area. Nargile is whatever it is that Turks smoke in their magnificent water pipes (always a favorite souvenir). They have all it in all kinds of flavors, all the fruits and spices of the world. The Nargile's effect on the smoker tends to be one of utter relaxation. This is where Turkish men will come to see the soccer matches of the world cup in big screens, sitting comfortably on the lush colourful pillows, gold, red, orange, green, around the low wooden tables, smoking Nargile, playing backgammon (or as my Armenian family would call it: tavli), in their traditional hats, with the long beards, and the westernized clothes. But there is one big difference between the endless succession of bars in the Nargile alley and a place like this anywhere else in the world; here there is no alcohol drinking. Turkish people will drink you under the table two blocks from there, but they will be dead before they have a beer by the side of the Mosque: in Muslim culture, "wine" is perceived as the enemy, and in ancient times, it was very easy to fall out of grace if one was perceived to have given in to its charms.

When you have already drank too much tea, as I did, or smoked enough Nargile, as my friend Nancy would, you have two choices in my book; you can either head to Galata Tower for a fabulous Turkish dinner, traditional music and a belly-dancing show, with the most entrancing view of Istanbul by night, or, if you are into night-life, you should take a 5 dollar taxi to nearby TAKSIM Square, the large pub and night-club pedestrian area, if you pay more than 5 dollars they are ripping you off, which most Turkish vendors will try to do, by the way. (Whatever you do, don't buy an overpriced carpet, and, if you are gullible enough, stay clear of the Bazaar altogether...) TAKSIM Square is like no other place I have ever seen around the world. It stretches for blocks and blocks of live music bars, restaurants and pubs with multicolored bean bags set all over the dozens of pedestrian streets, where Istanbulians and tourists alike, walk around en masse from one locale to the other, stopping here for a drink, the refor a dance in one of the terrace discos, where you can dance to the latest Western and Turkish hits, until the more than the more than back to the date to the latest Western and Turkish hits, until the more than back to the date the provide the discover the more than back to the discover the more than streets by the terrace discos, where you can dance to the latest Western and Turkish hits, until the more than back the date to the date the terrace discos.

After you have sweat it out on the dancefloor, come sunrise, if you have get hungry, you can have some of the delicious jumbo mussels and corn-on-the-cob that are always available, as you walk around the still lively Tak-sim.

If you take the subway to go back to Taksim the next morning, you will find a busy shopping area, abundant in fancy clothes, big bookstores with English sections, thank God, where you can find lots of Turkish writers in translation, and Music stores to buy the divine Turkish music CDs. Families and friends will come here for lunch, and you should too: fast-food-type Turkish restaurants are a delight, and rather inexpensive: don't miss the dolma (rice-filled vine leaves), the zuberek (cheese pastry) and the kefte (minced meat and wheat).

During my time in Istanbul, I didn't visit Mosques, Palaces or Museums, I enjoyed the atmosphere of the city and its people, I made friends who took me places, played mini-golf on the street at 2 AM, saw a beautiful wedding party on the top floor of the ancient Galata tower and fell in love with all of it.

Yet two things, two moments will remain in my memory forever. One was the moment when I realized that, in spite of the conflict between Armenians and Turks, the Turks had the same faces as Armenians, they ate the same food, their music was undeniably like ours, and I realized that somehow I had found more familiar things in Turkey than in Armenia many years before. The other moment is my treasure, my sacred thing that I stole from the generous city which had given it all to me. One night I took an aimless walk, I wandered past the Nargile alley and the Mosque, into empty indistinct streets, away from the shops and restaurants. Among the ugly buildings and soiled sidewalks, I started hearing traditional Turkish music, with a persistent bass drum, and the unmistakable sound of the typical wind and string instruments. I started looking around dark frightening alleys, searching for the source of my pleasure. Alone in a strange place, wandering through the bad part of town, the last thing you wanna do is glide into a dark alley. But, so I did, lured in by the entrancing music. As it turned out, I ended up casually eavesdropping on a family celebration.

My friend Nancy who was always making friends with old men in square hats named Ahmed, who, of course, told her stories, had told me about the Turkish circumsition ritual. Turkish boys were circumsized at the beginning of puberty, when it was not exactly a painless affair. To celebrate this, they had a big bash, where the boy in question would wear a colorful traditional outfit. One look at the alley crowd, the boys in tall hats and blue-golden costumes, the women with jingly scarves tied around their waists, the musicians with their traditional instruments, the garlands and the coloured light bulbs around the yard, and I knew I was at a circumsition feast. In the middle of a big circle of neighbours, relatives and onlookers, women and children were dancing. The music, the joy of the people, the spontaneity and the reality of it all were such a gift to me; the women were not skinny and blonde like the belly-dancers at Galata, but they were unquestionably much more beautiful, and, except for myself, there wasn't one tourist in sight.

This was the last I saw of that magnificent city before I sailed away, the dark-haired women in vaporous white skirts and lavender and silver jingly scarves, surrounded by their children in red and blue and gold, gracefully dancing into the depths of the cool Istanbul night.