

CINEMA PARADISO REVIEW

By Carolina Zarama

Since its creation, the big screen has been one of the most significant artistic spaces for humanity; what better way to pay homage than through cinema itself. This is how the work *Cinema Paradiso* was born. However, Giuseppe Tornatore (its creator and director) would not be satisfied with just this, as he would take on an even greater challenge: to explore human nature from childhood to adulthood and the relationships forged through life itself: friendship, love, memory, death; in fact, for Tornatore, it would be the perfect excuse to reflect on and understand his own life. His driving force: nostalgia.

Salvatore Di Vita will be the life model used by Tornatore to convey his message about cinema, love, and humanity in its journey through the world. Thus, the film begins with a scene near the end: an adult Salvatore (or as he preferred to be called, Tot), acclaimed for his great work as a film director, learns of the death of his old friend Alfredo, a projectionist in his hometown of Sicily. This event plunges him into a sea of memories about his life, his friendship with his mentor Alfredo, his burgeoning love for cinema, his childhood and adolescence, and his infatuation with the beautiful Elena, as well as his harsh departure to war. Thirty years after his departure, the memories of his life in Giancaldo return to him, forming a significant part of the film's framework.

First, it is worth highlighting its narrative style, which is primarily based on a linear progression but supported by a structure of flashbacks. Furthermore, regarding the determination of its genre, although it is confusing due to the subtle notes of comedy, considering the film's theme and the various characteristics that compose it—such as the incorporation of instrumental music, the strong emotional weight, its realism, and human connotation—these are signs that lead us to deduce that *Cinema Paradiso* is a dramatic piece.

Definitely, *Cinema Paradiso* is the kind of endearing film that is very difficult to forget and that challenges us about both our lives and the seventh art and its influence on humanity. I must acknowledge that one of the most devastating scenes was that of the cinema's demolition, along with the emotional glances and reactions of the inhabitants of Giancaldo, in whose faces one could glimpse those days of joy, sadness, hope, and even lust. Seeing its culmination and comparing the story with reality and observing how cinema has lost that magic and social significance is regrettable. It is not just a means of entertainment; it is a way of life, a space of escape from the harsh reality that was post-war Italy, but today is poverty, inequality, misery, and corruption. However, its most important legacy and the reason why I

now add *Cinema Paradiso* to my list of life films is its teaching about memory, about never forgetting who we are and where we come from. If we forget, we will be condemned to the 21st-century disease from which we can hardly recover: the lack of memory. With it, we are doomed to failure, loneliness, and stagnation.

REFERENCES

Tornatore, G. (Direction). (1989). *Cinema Paradiso* [Movie]. Italy.