

Sedotta e abbandonata [Seduced and abandoned] (1964)

Regia: **Pietro Germi**

Attori:

Stefania Sandrelli: Agnese Ascalone

Aldo Puglisi: Peppino Califano

Saro Urzì: Don Vincenzo Ascalone

Lando Buzzanca: Antonio Ascalone

Lola Braccini: Amalia Califano

Leopoldo Trieste: barone Rizieri

Umberto Spadaro: cugino di Ascalone

Paola Biggio: Matilde Ascalone

Rocco D'Assunta: Orlando Califano

Salvatore Fazio: don Mariano

Oreste Palella: maresciallo dei Carabinieri Polenza



Wed 18th May 2022,

H.6.30 pm,

Soggetto: Luciano Vincenzoni, Pietro Germi; **Sceneggiatura:** Agenore Incrocci, Furio Scarpelli, Luciano Vincenzoni, Pietro Germi; **Fotografia:** Aiace Parolin; **Musiche:** Carlo Rustichelli; **Montaggio:** Roberto Cinquini; **Scenografia:** Carlo Egidi; Produttore: Franco Cristaldi, Luigi Giacosi.

English version

Sedotta e abbandonata is not completely a comedy, maybe it is not even a comedy at all. The director, Pietro Germi was a serious and rather lonely man, with very few friends, even among movie critics. He made his name in the Fifties with titles such as *In nome della legge* (1949), *Il cammino della speranza* (1950); he also acted in some of his films such as *Il ferroviere* (1956) e *L'uomo di paglia* (1958). In those movies there was nothing comical, there was instead the drama of social injustice, or the melodrama of the poor and the exploited ones. So, how was it that he arrived in 1964 to the contemptuous satire of *Sedotta e abbandonata*?

The stylistic turning point had occurred a few years before, in 1961, with the huge world success, the Oscar and the other prizes of *Divorzio all'italiana*, a true comedy masterpiece with Stefania Sandrelli and Marcello Mastroianni. In this movie, Germi attacked the typical myth of the so-called “crime of honour”. Italy was changing in the Sixties, the country was at the beginning of post-war industrialization and an economic boom, and

Italians were increasingly choosing to live in the cities. In this specific context, Germi had realized that irony and satire could be more effective than any dramatic depiction of social change. Comedy did not mean for him to present comical human types but rather was a sort of magnifying lens to exaggerate, to ridicule Italian vices and virtues. His photography presented close-ups of faces, of expressions very often grotesquely rendered. The public could initially laugh at these faces, but after a while, the feelings would mutate into something else.

In *Sedotta e abbandonata* therefore Germi wanted to criticize the infamous Penal Law n.544 which incredibly stated that marriage could “cancel” the crime of rape or sexual abuse. The Sicilian setting of the movie was not casual. Already in *Divorzio all’italiana*, the sun-drenched and rural scenery of the island had provided a critical representation of Italian conservatism and patriarchy. A scenery that could become violent and heartless within families and therefore get into the pages of newspapers. In *Sedotta e abbandonata* therefore Germi’s criticism is complete: the head of the Scalese family is intensely played by Saro Urzi’. He is in fact the “padre-padrone” of all his daughters, custodian of their virginity to the altar. The wonderful ballad composed by Carlo Rustichelli accompanies the semi-comical misadventures of Mr Scalese until the tragic end.

In *Sedotta e abbandonata* there is a specific moment in which Germi despises the anachronistic and unjust Italian society he is depicting: it is the moment when the local Commisario (the head of the police in town), raises his hand to cover the island of Sicily on the map behind his desk. He is trying to imagine if Italy would be better without the society that he knows too well. He is also after all a Sicilian. But his expression betrays the awareness that nothing will ever change – in his town, in Sicily, in Italy – if the people do not want to change first. Germi’s moral denunciation usually does not touch the law and the institutions, but all the other sectors or levels of society are completely affected. The solution between Agnese (the seduced) and Peppino (the seducer) will of course be the “shotgun wedding” of the two, an appropriate term in this movie. The honour of the Ascalone family will be saved and the whole town will witness the ‘honourable’ solution publically played out in the open, in front of the church. Nothing special ever happened because the two lovers put right what they did during that hot and sleepy summer afternoon.

Fernando Porta (May, 2022)