FILM QUARTERLY

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THE COVER: Shirley Clarke shooting *The Cool World* (from the novel by Warren Miller). [Photo: Leroy McLucas.]

Editor's Notebook

Seminars

For the true cineaste the ever-proliferating film festivals can be a source of annoyance as well as delight: the few outstanding films are spread too thin, hoopla pushes out serious discussion, and the prevailing tone tends toward gossip rather than analysis. Film seminars usually manage to avoid these problems; and it ought to be possible to increase their number sharply. We have had the annual Flaherty Seminars, and a variety of others: in 1961 the University of California Extension presented "A Weekend with Jean Renoir" in San Francisco (and now plans a seminar on film comedy); Monterey Peninsula College in 1962 had Andries Deinum and Pauline Kael present their opposing views; this summer the Canadian Film Institute and McMaster University at Hamilton sponsored a week-long seminar with James Card, Andrew Sarris, and Ernest Callenbach holding lectures and discussions, and Richard Ballentine (co-producer of *The Most*) organizing a film-making project. The Aspen Film Conference is in progress at the moment. These seminars provide delightful (if exhausting) periods of viewing and discussion of an intensity which can otherwise hardly be found outside the industry or the film world in Paris, and can provide the occasion for personal contacts and exchanges of views which are too rare because of the country's vast distances. It appears that they can be organized wherever a few film enthusiasts can interest a university or museum in the project, and it would be enormously useful if annual seminars could be set up in all our major metropolitan centers.

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THE COVER: Shirley Clarke shooting *The Cool World* (from the novel by Warren Miller). [Photo: Leroy McLucas.]

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From the experience gained so far, the following guidelines seem reasonable. (1) Some kind of specific focus for the seminar is desirable, at least for the selection of films, despite the temptation to program primarily for rarity or novelty. (2) A practicing film-maker should be included on the staff, whether or not a production is part of the seminar. (3) The size of the group should be kept down, probably to around 50, to facilitate protracted and repeated personal contacts. (4) The participants should be housed in the same place where the sessions take place; going outside for food and lodgings wastes precious time and costs money. Ideally, the site should be outside the distractions of a city, yet near enough to obtain same-day film processing. (5) If advance publicity is early enough and intensive enough, participants can and will afford to pay fees which will cover the operation—even as high as $15 per day or thereabouts.

Many film-makers and critics are interested in serving as seminar staff members, and *FQ* can provide some liaison help.

Age of Specialization?

Too few English-language critics specialize in the work of one or two directors, exploring the ramifications of their work in depth. Authoritative director pieces, dealing in substantial aesthetic issues rather than combative listings or gush, are the greatest single need of film criticism. They are also the hardest to research and write, and we always give prompt and full replies to writers proposing such articles; if this were the best of all possible critical worlds, we'd have one in each issue.

New Cinema 16 Catalogue

A 48-page catalogue, listing more than 240 films by more than 140 film-makers, has just been issued by Cinema 16, 175 Lexington Avenue, New York 16, N.Y. The annotated entries offer a wide-ranging sample of American and foreign experimental work; indexed by categories and producers. 50¢, refunded to customers.

Periodicals

The British National Film Catalogue (published at 55a Welbeck Street, London W.I—£6.6.0 for six bimonthly issues and an annual cumulated volume) is the outcome of a UNESCO-International Film and TV Council study designed to set up standards for film cataloguing. Fiction, educational, technical, and newsreel films are classified by the decimal system, and are said to include *all* films produced in Britain. Full cross-reference indexes, credits, and synopses or summaries.

Contributors

PETER COWIE is the author of a monograph on Bergman published by *Motion*. PETER GOLDFARB is a graduate student of film at UCLA, and has directed and produced for the stage. JACK HIRSCHMAN is a poet who has published *A Correspondence of Americans;* he teaches at UCLA. NEAL OXENHANDLER's novel *Change of Gods* was published in 1962. HARRIET POLT spent much of the past summer observing the European film festival scene.

FILM CLASSICS

. . . for film societies . . . for entertainment

ANATOMY OF A MURDER—USA, Otto Preminger's study of justice and personality; James Stewart, Lee Remick, Ben Gazzara.

MYSTERIOUS ISLAND (color)—Jules Verne's celebrated novel.

MEXICAN BUS RIDE—Luis Buñuel's sexy comedy of country matters.

BROTHERS KARAMAZOV — Germany; Anna Sten, Fritz Rasp.

SYMPHONIE PASTORALE—France; Jean Delannoy's touching film of the André Gide novel.

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François Truffaut—An Interview

Translated and condensed by Paul Ronder; reprinted by permission from "Cahiers du Cinéma," No. 138, December, 1962.

What do you think of the situation of the Nouvelle Vague in France today?

It changes from day to day. Now the situation isn't all that it might be, but don't forget that when the situation was good, it was good beyond all expectation. Toward the end of 1959, it was almost like living in a dream: conditions existed that were unimaginable two years earlier.

For example, I remember an article by Marguerite Duras, in *France-Observateur,* in which she described working with Alain Resnais on *Hiroshima Mon Amour.* She quoted Resnais as saying: "We have to operate on the principle that if we manage to get this film shown, it will be a miracle." And the international success of *Hiroshima* in relation to the modesty of this beginning (even admitting modesty is a characteristic trait of Resnais) seems to me significant.

I think it was the same for all of us. While shooting *400 Blows,* I was terrified to watch my budget of $56,000 edge up to $70,000. I panicked; I had the feeling I was embarking on a project that was bound to fail. But once finished, with the Cannes Festival and the foreign sales, the film more than made its money back. For example, in the States alone, it was bought for $100,000.

You can imagine our euphoria then, in 1959, when the situation was so extraordinarily good. And you can imagine the dreams aroused by such a situation — dreams which seem now perhaps a bit excessive. Even the producers began dreaming: they began to believe that the secret of success lay uniquely in youth, novelty, etc., and they themselves dashed out in search of new talent.

Much has already been said about that. However there is something well worth recalling: the first failures began with compromise. A producer, faced with an inexperienced director, might say to himself: "All I have to do is give the boy a good cameraman." Now it's a very serious mistake to give an experienced professional cameraman to a debutant director: the resulting film is sure to be deformed. . . . The same mistake occurred in other ways as well, such as imposing traditional scenarios or star actors in films that just weren't made for them. . . .

As for the film-makers, we too formed some wrong ideas about the best way to make films. . . . Briefly, our mistake was to assume that it was in the producer's interest to make films cheaply. We forgot about that old law of the French film industry which decrees that the producer isn't the man *with* the money, but the man who finds it, and that his only assured revenue is a certain percentage of the film's budget. . . . The bigger the budget, the bigger this percentage. This explains why so many films are made here for $400,000 or $600,000 when they should cost half that amount, and why at heart so many producers don't really care what kind of film they make.

Ideally, the directors of our films should have been their own producers, so that there would have been no conflict between the commercial and artistic interests in the films.

Do you think it true that the present crisis in French film-making is a crisis of the young film-makers?

It's true. But it's no less true that it's a crisis of the older generation. In other words, the crisis is general. As for saying that this crisis

is the defeat of the Nouvelle Vague, that's absolutely false. . . .

Don't you find the system of film distribution in France ineffective and outdated?

Definitely. At the same time, I am personally opposed to making any sort of discrimination between films. I wouldn't at all like to see a chain of theaters established to show *only* "Nouvelle Vague" films, or any other kind of films, for that matter. I believe that a film must not be limited in its appeal: this seems to me contradictory to the goals of the cinema. Being popular art, all films should have popular appeal. Popular appeal established, then artistic miracles are possible.

The publicity for *Marienbad,* which consisted of distributing notices at the entrance to the theater informing the spectators that they were going to see a rather special film, and asking them not to search for any precise meaning but simply to appreciate the film's mood and atmosphere — this was something very loyal to the film. At the same time, it seems to me unfortunate, because contradictory to the very idea of film as "entertainment" — that no matter who, no matter where (all too often it's also no matter when or how) can go into a movie theater uncertain of what they'll see, but certain it will be entertaining.

Personally I still believe in the stills displayed in front of movie theaters. Now everyone says that people, even in the provinces, know ahead of time what kind of film they are going to see — but I still think that most of them choose a film simply by looking at these photos — as I did when I was a kid. . . .

And what about those Nouvelle Vague films considered, rightly or wrongly, as uncommercial?

These films all end up being released — one by one. What happened here in 1959 was so extraordinary that it gave birth to a good many excesses. Actually I believe that a film must not be experimental on all levels at once; that even in the most avant-garde film there must be something which ties it to the older, more classical films: a strong plot, an important star, etc. I can't help feeling that too many modern films have been made haphazardly, without discipline or craftsmanship. However, taking wild chances doesn't always work. And among the films that fail, one always finds too large a gap between the intention and the result — the whole problem, I believe, lies there. . . .

Nevertheless, I don't really believe that there is much injustice in the public's response to films. Perhaps this is partly because I am more prone to notice justice than injustice. In the majority of cases, I believe that if a film is unsuccessful with the public, it deserves to be; that in the long run, quality is respected. Thus I find it right that *Moderato Cantabile* should have been much less successful than *Hiroshima,* even though it pretended to be its successor — without, of course, being anything of the sort.

As for me, I've only had one misunderstanding with the public: *Shoot the Piano Player,* and I consider myself fully responsible for it. . . .

Before beginning to make films, you wrote film criticism for the periodical Arts. *How would you evaluate your former critical beliefs today?*

In my articles in *Arts,* I would essentially repeat and popularize the critical positions taken in *Cahiers.* This happened especially at the start, for little by little my criticism became more personal, especially since I began to be interested in films that wouldn't have interested *Cahiers* in the least. At the same time, I learned to submit myself to certain obligations. In *Cahiers,* telling the story of each film could easily be dispensed with. In a weekly journal, the story must be told, and for me, this was an extremely good exercise. Also, I think that in *Cahiers,* the critic feels the obligation to criticize each film on its own level, that is, to try and adapt the critical criteria to the film. For one film it may be necessary to speak abstractly of the directorial conception, for another, to analyze the scenario it-

self — each film demands its own particular treatment.

In any case, the necessity to tell the story of a film every week was very good for me. Before that, I didn't really see the films. I was so intoxicated with the idea of "cinema" that I could see nothing but a film's movement and rhythm. In fact at the beginning I had such trouble summing up the stories that I had to consult a plot synopsis. This experience helped me to realize the faults of certain scenarios, certain gimmicks, certain easy ways of telling a story. I began to recognize anything in a film that had been copied from another film. For me this was an immensely worthwhile period — my experience in it corresponded with what must be the experience of a scriptwriter. It helped me to see things more clearly, and to become more aware of my own values, tastes, and proclivities.

However I ended up becoming much too cutting in my criticism. During my last year with *Arts,* my criticism was no longer that of a film critic, but already that of a film director. I would only get excited by those films related to what I myself wanted to do. I became too partisan, and, as a result, too vicious.

Paradoxically, in my directing today, there remains something of the critic's frame of mind. For example, when I've finished working on a scenario, I feel that I know, if not its faults, at least its dangers — especially in regard to what is trite and conventional in it. This knowledge guides me, gives me a direction to take against these dangers during the shooting.

With each film I have done, the danger has been different. In the *400 Blows,* the danger was becoming overly lyrical about childhood. In *Shoot the Piano Player,* it was creating too much hero-worship for a man who was always right. In *Jules and Jim,* it was portraying the woman as an exquisite shrew who could do no wrong. I was well aware of these dangers while shooting these films, and a large part of my work then consisted of trying to keep each film from succumbing to its inherent weakness.

It so happens that my efforts in this direction caused all three of my films to end up being sadder films than planned, since seriousness, it seems to me, permits greater sublety of expression. Something that becomes more serious becomes more true. If one were to read, for example, the original scenario of the *400 Blows,* one would discover the plot of a comedy. And in *Shoot the Piano Player,* where the danger was having the central character become too sympathetic, I tried so hard to point up his artist s egotism, his desire to isolate himself from the world, and his cowardice, that I made him finally rather hard and unattractive — almost antipathetic. Doubtless this is one of the reasons for the film's failure. The same thing happened with *Jules and Jim*: since I didn't want the audience simply to adore the character played by Jeanne Moreau, I rendered her finally a bit too hard.

Nevertheless, my improvisation on the set has always been in an effort to counteract the danger I sensed while reading the finished scenario. That's what still remains of my formation as a critic.

Even when you made The 400 Blows, *did you have this kind of considerations in mind?*

I made that film in a very instinctive way. The story determined everything else: such a thing had to be seen by the child, therefore it had to be filmed in such a way. Besides, much of the film was essentially documentary, and

Jean-Pierre Léaud in THE 400 BLOWS.

this necessitated an enormous neutrality on my part.

In fact, lots of cinephiles here were very disappointed with *400 Blows,* since they are only interested in and excited by the form of a film. And the film I made was without form, neutral — since my direction of it was as objective as possible and corresponded almost to a self-effacement. When I see the film now, I too find in it a certain simplicity and clumsiness, yet the effects I wanted to obtain were themselves often very simple. It's a film that has left me with much nostalgia: I have the feeling that I will never again find a subject as direct, as strongly felt, nor one which provides me with so little choice. There were some things in that film about which I felt so strongly that I simply could not have done them any differently. In addition, now that I tend to work with scenarios that are more sophisticated (the word isn't laudatory since I don't think it necessarily implies an advancement), I have begun to miss terribly being able to create situations that in their simplicity could touch a whole audience at the same time. . . .

As for the art of directing, I first became really aware of it while doing *Shoot the Piano Player.* At the same time, in the midst of shooting, I began to feel sorry for having chosen so inconsequential a story, and decided to have some fun with it.

Essentially, my writing of reviews was based on the same principle. People say: "Truffaut's films have nothing whatever to do with what he used to write." I can't tell you how untrue that is. For example, I have the reputation for doing much cutting of my films just before they are released — often for cutting them even between the preview showings and the premiere. Now when I would write an article for *Arts,* I would often cut out a third of it before delivering it, for I was terribly afraid of being boring. Sometimes I would go so far as to replace long words with short ones. The first draft I would write nervously and rapidly, then I would cut one sentence out of every three so that the article wouldn't drag and would demand attentive reading.

I would invariably review a film while thinking of its director. I wanted to try and touch him (but when I tore apart a film, my way of trying to touch him would become vicious); I wanted above all to convince him. In writing my review I would say to myself: "Using this word will win him over better than using that one." This is also why my last year of criticism had less merit: alongside of evaluating what the director *had* done in his film, I began to explain what I thought he *should have* done.

Now that you experience film-making from the "inside," don't you find your understanding of it different?

Certainly my judgment has changed. If I had to return now to criticism, I would definitely write differently, but for another reason. The kind of film-making that I believed in and advocated has arrived. And now I see its disadvantages — there were bound to be some. This is why it is so annoying to hear people still quoting some of my early writings. For example, once just after seeing *And God Created Woman* at a film festival, I wrote enthusiastically in *Arts*: "Films today no longer need to tell a story — it is enough that they tell of a first love, that they take place on a beach, etc." But today films like these have become such commonplaces that I wince to hear my words quoted now. In fact, in the films made since then the scenarios have been so mistreated that now I find myself longing to see a film with a well-told story. At the same time, let's not assume we must return at all costs to the kind of cinema that existed before the Nouvelle Vague.

I made *Jules and Jim* somewhat in reaction against mistreated scenarios. For example, I was told that I would have to modernize the period of the original book; and in substituting the second World War for the first, the transposition would have been simple. But since the film was to be about a woman and love, I refused. I was anxious not to have my film be like all the rest made today on these particular

topics: with a sports car (there would have had to be one in the film, on the bridge), lots of scotch, and of course a high-fidelity set, as compulsory equipment. Had I done this, I would have been in complete conformity with the rules of the "nouveau cinéma." However I chose to remain faithful to the period of the book, and try and pattern *Jules and Jim* after some of the small films made by MGM during the 40's, like *Mrs. Parkington* and *The Green Years* – films whose only fault was being conventional, but films which succeeded marvelously in creating the mood of a huge 800-page novel, of many years passing, of much white hair arriving. You see, I didn't want to follow the fashion, even a fashion that has produced so many films I love. . . .

Then if you had to return to being a critic?

I would be like everyone else: I would have lots of trouble. And I would lack serenity. The critics I find I like best today are those who are a bit outside the pale of film-making. . . . One senses that they don't know any of the directors and that they are simply pleased that there are more interesting films than ever before. Therefore they try, with a maximum of benevolence and a minimum of complaisance, to convey the feelings a particular film gave them, objectively, as though they were writing about a film classic. That's the attitude one must have today. Perhaps I seem to contradict myself, since we used to be very heated critics. But at that time it was necessary; since we had to tear down certain ideas and build up certain others, we had to make lots of noise. Today, however, I think it necessary for a critic to be very calm.

Then it would be much harder to be a critic today?

Much. . . . It seems to be almost a general law among critics that they form into factions to defend unequivocally their own positions. Sometimes the animosity between factions results in articles which are unbelievably vicious, and which even the authors themselves seem to regret later on. But instead of indulging one's passions in one's criticism, one must at least try to be critical with some purpose. Today especially, taking sides is worthless. What is worthwhile, yet difficult, is analysis. . . . What is interesting is not pronouncing a film good or bad, but explaining why. . . .

Charles Aznavour and Nicole Berger: TIREZ SUR LE PIANISTE.

Today I understand much better what makes a film interesting. Yet in making my own films, I readily admit the necessity of considering the public, for I believe that a film which is a popular failure cannot have been an artistic success. At the same time, I could never consider *Lola Montès* a bad film, or that Bresson was wrong because he had a popular failure. But then these are my personal theories, and I don't claim that they are valid for all people or for all films.

Then you would not make a film without thinking of the public?

No, I couldn't be enthusiastic enough about making films for myself. I wouldn't have the desire to make films if I knew that they weren't going to be seen. I need that knowledge: it gives me impetus. I must create a kind of "show for others." I know I wouldn't be able to write a novel: that kind of creativity would be too abstract for me. I would much rather be a singing coach, or better still, the director of a whole vaudeville show. It's necessary to me that my work, collective even in its origins, be seen by the public, and judged by it. . . .

Nor would I be able to make a film which

I felt would automatically be a success. Each of my films has been a kind of gamble. For me, shooting a film should be taking a chance —and winning.

Lots of people didn't like the scenario for *Jules and Jim*. The distributors said: "that woman is a whore," "the husband is going to seem pretty grotesque," etc. The gamble for me was to see if I would be able to make the woman sympathetic rather than whore-like (without making the film itself melodramatic), and if I could keep the husband from seeming ridiculous. I love trying to show something by the end of a film that wasn't obvious at the start. The same thing happened with the *400 Blows*. But there the gamble was a false one: the film was a success from its very inception. Only I didn't realize it; I started out unimaginably innocent. As I saw it, the gamble was having for my central character a boy who did something surreptitious every five minutes. Everyone told me I was crazy, that the boy would seem awful, that the public wouldn't stand for it. In fact, during the shooting, it did make quite a bad impression to see the boy stealing things right and left; I must have given the impression that I was making a documentary film on juvenile delinquency. Unfortunately, I was somewhat influenced by all these warnings to be cautious — now I regret it.

For in fact everyone forgot, as I did myself, that a child is forgiven everything, that it is always the parents who take the blame. I thought that by favoring the child, I was balancing the film. Little did I know how out of balance it already was in his favor! I was very naive, yet the film ended up being, in its naivety, very shrewd.

I realize now, four years later, that the film is Hitchcockian. Why? Because one identified with the child from the first shot to the last. . . . As I see it, the subjective camera is the exact contrary of the subjective film — since as soon as the camera is substituted for a given person, it becomes impossible to identify with him. A subjective film can only exist when the actor's gaze meets that of the spectator. Thus

Jeanne Moreau and Oscar Werner: JULES AND JIM.

if the public of a film feels the need to orient itself (as happens when the film is shot without any point of view imposed by the director), it will automatically identify with the face it sees most frequently; that is, with the actor most often photographed from the front and in close-ups. This is what happened with Jean-Pierre Léaud. In doing a documentary of him, I thought I was being objective. However the more I filmed him straight-on and close-up, the more I gave him an existence, and the more I helped an audience to associate with him. I realized this only by seeing my film in public, and hearing people cry (as they often do at Hitchcock films) when the boy's mother appeared behind the classroom window. It's true that I had worked very carefully on this scene in advance because of its difficulty, rath-

er than improvising it in front of the camera as I often did. Even so, I am convinced that the audience's sentiment resulted not from my skill but from their natural empathy for the boy. They are moved then — as they are when the boy realizes his mother is dead — simply because the boy *himself* is moved.

Thus the film was completely naive — made in total ignorance of certain laws of the cinema; yet at the same time, it was unconsciously contrived, much more than any of the films that followed it.

In a way, I made *Shoot the Piano Player* in reaction to *400 Blows*, for the film's success, and its terrible one-sideness that I only later discovered, dazed me so much that I said to myself: From now on you must be very careful not to fall into demagoguery. Still, I'm not quite sure what did happen with *Shoot the Piano Player*. Finally I guess I remained too faithful to the book. Also, I was too sure of myself after the success of *400 Blows*. But it's always like that for a second film. Thus *A Woman is a Woman* (because of the banning of *The Little Soldier*, I consider this Godard's second film) was made in the exuberance of the success of *Breathless*, while *Vivre Sa Vie* marked a return to control.

For the first film, one really plunges in: "O.K., I'll risk everything; afterwards maybe I won't make any more films, but now I want to see just what I can do." The reaction of the public to the first film is very important. If it is successful, the director is always astonished — and the second film shows the effects of this. Even *Marienbad* exhibits a great self-confidence born from an unexpected success. All second films have this in common: they are less complete than their predecessors, in which the director wanted to say everything at once. The second film is intentionally more modest in its ambitions. It's the third however that is the most interesting: it's a reconsideration of the other two, and marks the start of a career.

Look closely at *Shoot the Piano Player*, and you'll see that the scenario simply doesn't stand up under analysis. It absolutely lacks an organizing idea, which my other two films nevertheless both have. In *400 Blows*, I was guided by the desire to portray a child as honestly as possible, and to invest his actions with a moral significance. Similarly, with *Jules and Jim*, my desire to keep the film from seeming either pornographic, indelicate, or conventional guided me. The trouble with *Shoot the Piano Player* was that I was able to do anything — that the subject itself didn't impose its own form. Aznavour has a marvelous comic ability — I could have made the film comic; he has great authority — I could have made the film tough. But at the beginning, I didn't know what I wanted to do — aside from a mad desire to *use* Aznavour, because of *La Tête contre Les Murs*. Of course I should have waited until I knew him better.

The gamble I took in *Shoot the Piano Player* was using flashbacks, knowing that doing this was something unpardonable, something an audience would never forgive. . . . And in fact, the flashbacks *did* mess things up. It's almost a law: one simply can't intermix things which are basically distinct. It's impossible to be in the midst of one story and in the midst of another at the same time. With some work, I am sure I would have been able to tell the story chronologically. It just would have taken more work! As it stands, there are some nice bits in the film, but it can't be said: this is the best work on this particular theme. There isn't any theme.

Couldn't one say the theme was this: a man is caught in the wheels; first he tries to fight, finally he resigns himself to it. Courage, then cowardliness . . . ?

Even then there are problems of consistency. And there is also the problem of the director, who had to resign *himself* to be caught in the wheels of the gangster film! It hadn't occurred to me beforehand, but while shooting *Shoot the Pianist*, I realized that I detested gangster films. No longer will I write glowing tributes to *Rififi*. No longer will I consider the director's job simply to create gangsters who are

moving — tough guys who cry, or simply to set the good guys against the bad. The result is a film where all the bourgeois conventions are simply transported into the gangster world. This is why I suddenly decided to make my gangsters funny: making fun of them became the only way for me to keep from being conventional. Nevertheless to balance the film, I had to let my gangsters be frightening sometimes — this was accomplished by the kidnapping of the boy and the killing of Marie Dubois. These scenes woke up lots of people who otherwise might have thought they were watching a bunch of shadow puppets. However it's dangerous to change conceptions in the middle of a film. One should have an idea at the start and solidify it, as I did in my other two films, though the central ideas were vaguely expressed in the original scenario. Also, if I had known beforehand that Aznavour and Nicole Berger (no other actress I tried could come near her) would make such an extraordinary couple, I would have made a film just about the two of them.

Don't you think the change of tone in Shoot the Piano Player *also bothered the public? This has characterized many failures — for example,* A Woman is A Woman — *and is something the French public has never tolerated.*

Yes, it is hard to make a change of tone acceptable to an audience. Nevertheless, in America people liked *Shoot the Pianist* only they understood it differently — they laughed all the time, even at the serious passages. The first song in the film *was* supposed to be funny, but they also laughed at the second, which theoretically *wasn't* supposed to be. . . . A change of tone simply needs to be worked out carefully — it's a gamble that sometimes must be risked. Renoir tried it, and he succeeded.

But Rules of the Game *was a popular failure.*

Yes, but *Rules of the Game* is one of those rare cases where a great film passed over the heads of its public. . . . I'm convinced that sometimes a film-maker must violate his public. I honestly believe that pleasing people is important, but I also believe that every film must contain some degree of "planned violence" upon its audience. In a good film, people must be made to see something that they don't want to see: they must be made to approve of someone of whom they had disapproved, they must be forced to look where they had refused to look. One could build a whole film around the idea of making people understand what marriage, love, and adultery would be in relation to some criminal act. . . .

Resnais would never say: I think of the public when making a film. As a matter of fact, I don't think he does. But he *does* think of his films as "spectacles." I am absolutely sure that *Marienbad* is made with consideration given to such matters as people's emotions, the sweep of the scenario, and the equilibrium of the finished film. Otherwise, why not have the film last eight hours? Resnais isn't Stroheim; his films last an hour and a half, and they are constructed in a systematic and methodical fashion. Now from the Resnais films certain young film-makers draw a lesson of courage instead of drawing a lesson of skill. Right after *Hiroshima,* they began to say of Resnais: he's marvelous, he proves that everything is possible. But that's not true. He proves that everything is possible for Resnais. In the basic idea of *Hiroshima,* one finds all the things that shouldn't be done: intermixing adultery and the atomic bomb, that is, a very small problem with a very large one, a very personal one with a very political one; and attempting to equate the huge disgrace of the bomb with the small scandals of the liberation. To attempt such a combination is really playing with explosives; to have made it work is a phenomenal success. Nevertheless that doesn't mean that everyone should try to do what Resnais, alone, knew how to do.

Many films made today have been "inspired" by *Hiroshima*: films which no longer consider the plot or the public. But Resnais considered them. He knew very well that by having Riva do this or that in *Hiroshima,* he

would create this or that emotion in the spectator. Only a naive film-maker could have been encouraged, instead of being discouraged, by *Hiroshima.* I don't say that *Hiroshima* necessarily must be discouraging, but one must remember the great skill it demanded, and not simply think: "The fad's begun. All I have to do is follow." I think Resnais would render a great service to film-makers if he would stress the *difficulties* he has had, instead of letting them think they can do whatever comes into their heads. . . .

The success of certain unusual films can be attributed to their being so completely unusual, their being esteemed as such, and their being seen specially for their strangeness. Resnais, since he is considered a specialist in the off-beat, even as having something of a patent on it (for me this doesn't diminish his genius in the least, but rather increases it), has the right to be off-beat. But if he suddenly were to decide to make a normal film, that would have serious consequences for him. . . .

It has come to this: everybody wanted a change. Now the change has come, and they are irritated if the results are too special.

Even toward Antonioni (whom I don't like) there's a great ill-naturedness. People are delirious over his first two films, then turn on him with might and main. That was the case with Bergman, and also Losey. It begins in Paris, then spreads. It's specially sad for Bergman, since his last film is much better than his earlier ones.

The case of Godard is particularly interesting to me since he is an unconventional film-maker who could, if he wished, easily integrate himself. Yet his is a special case, since what interests him most is creating a complex mélange of styles: at the moment one of his films approaches the fictional, he quickly makes an about-face toward the documentary, once arrived there only to rush off again in still another direction. Nevertheless there is great logic in his career. Just look at his criticism in *Cahiers*: from the start one senses a disdain for complete fiction, coupled with an admiration for those films in which the plot is destroyed in the making. However his own personality is so strong that he never need question what he does: he does it, and it becomes right.

Do you think the conventional and unconventional film-makers could get together?

What is common to both is the desire to do good work. No one is happy doing a lousy job; actors, for example, are unhappy when they make bad films. It's something to re-

Homage to Renoir: JULES AND JIM.

member, and something of a weapon for our side.

On the other hand, we mustn't be 100% daring. This remark could easily be misunderstood: what I mean is that we must think out our extravagances and measure out our audacity. We must have our trump card from the start, and try not to show all our tricks at once. . . .

As a director, what do you think of American cinema today?

In relation to the American film-makers, I think we French are all intellectuals, even me, and I am the least intellectual of my compatriots. But we mustn't cheat, we mustn't pretend to be rough or simple if basically we're reflective or analytical. We mustn't try to be what we're not. This is unquestionably where a film-maker like Melville makes his mistake: in trying to imitate American brutality and rusticity. But if we believe that the cinema is a popular art – and we all believe it, having grown up nourished by American films – we can arrive at another alternative: that of a discipline in our work sufficient to permit our films to be complete on several levels at once. And what better example of this, than the films of Hitchcock.

He is one of those rare film-makers who is able to please everyone. I am convinced that his procedure is applicable to our films, or to be precise, to those which are made "coldly." Resnais works a great deal on his films, yet I don't believe that he created in *Marienbad* emotions or successful effects that can't also be found in *Vertigo*. Nor do I believe that *Vertigo* is made interesting to the general public through concession or compromise, but rather through supplementary discipline.

Are you suggesting that instead of working for a year and making Marienbad, *Resnais should have worked for a year and a half and ended up making a* Vertigo?

No, I maintain that Resnais was absolutely justified in making *Marienbad*. But if one isn't Resnais, if one doesn't have his extraordinary degree of control, I think it's better to be more modest. I'm not suggesting limiting one's ambitions, but simply being more modest in the way they are realized – that is, making films which are simple in appearance. Personally, I don't believe for a moment that the world needs either me or my films. I believe I must make the world accept me, and that only by hard work will I succeed.

I believe that today we must reverse our way of thinking about film-making. Formerly our object was to cut away everything considered extraneous to the underlying subject of a film in order to obtain a slender basic framework. But this slenderness is terribly annoying for all those who fail to understand the film's central idea (and there will always be those people). Therefore films should really contain two subjects: the genuine, plus another which everyone can understand. But today in France, this kind of cleverness is lacking. . . .

I like spectacle, music halls, variety shows, but I also have preoccupations which aren't interesting to the majority. The problem in *Jules and Jim,* for example, interests very few people. On top of that, out of every ten people who see the film, nine consider divorce scandalous. For me to ask these people to sympathize with two grotesques who do nothing all day, and live together with the same woman, is almost pure insolence. Therefore I must offer them something in exchange, like a moment of high emotion, a moment when the actors let loose – as they did in the crying scene (which was improvised) between Werner and Jeanne Moreau. I don't want people saying to themselves on the way out: "It was scandalous"; I'd be the first to suffer. Of course it's impossible to satisfy everyone, but it *is* possible to keep from completely ruining anyone's evening. If people say on the way out: "Well, at least there was that song," or: "At least there were those lovely landscapes," or: "At least there were all those shots from the war," – well, even that's better than nothing.

A director should know exactly what he wants to obtain in a film, and above all, he

should not try to obtain more than *one thing at a time.* He must know how to create emotions: before each film, each scene, and each shot, he must stop and ask himself how he can create the particular emotion he desires. Everything in the film, the scene, or the shot which does not help to answer that question is parasitic and must be cut. We work in a domain which simultaneously is literary, musical, and spatial, and one in which we must always simplify to the uttermost. A film is like a boat: it's just asking to be sunk. And I swear that with both, it's a hundred times simpler to have a catastrophe than a success. If a film-maker doesn't understand this law, he's cooked. If he believes in luck and likes to take things as they come, he's irresponsible. The only film-maker I could admire would be one personally courageous enough to recite a poem by Rimbaud in the middle of two circus acts at Barnum and Bailey. . . .

Also, the massive arrival of the new French film directors created great competition here, and pushed the French system closer to the Hollywood system. It became much harder for directors to escape a sort of type-casting, and much harder for them to survive a failure. At present, it's better not to have done anything than to have made an unsuccessful film. . . .

It seems to me there is a balance to be found. The Hollywood system was in balance. And how awesome to witness the terrible fall of Hollywood when the old framework broke apart. All went well when the movies were mass-produced, when the directors weren't permitted to have opinions, when the scriptwriters were paid by the year, when films were edited by specialists without ever consulting the director, etc. But as soon as the screws began to loosen, everything fell apart. . . .

But the Americans had one inimitable quality: they knew, in each branch of their work, how to make what they did come alive. And often their scenarios were marvelous. Recently I received a scenario written by Philip Yordan, and everything's already there, even humor — it's ready to be shot without changing a

***From Truffaut's episode in* LOVE AT TWENTY.**
(Jean-Pierre Léaud, right)

thing. The American cinema was both the finest and the worst: it was most often brilliant with conventional films, but there the result was marvelous.

Finally, no one merits total freedom. Many new film-makers here are immature and make terrible blunders. The majority of the films I see are really badly edited: through complacency, lack of critical sense, or mere laziness, their makers are reluctant to cut. Once I made fun of Jacques Becker who said: "Le cinéma, c'est très compliqué." I preferred personally those who said "c'est simple," but saying this is a luxury not everyone can afford. . . . In television they resort to lengthy shots and almost never achieve good *champs-contrechamps.* In films therefore, by reaction, it's good to cut a lot, to return to classical cutting. Five years ago, when I was still a critic, French films were ugly. That's why the first films of Vadim and Malle were so important: simply because they exhibited a minimum of good taste. Today, everyone has taste and films, in general, are more handsome. Now we must begin to aim still higher. We must try to make each of our films clear, interesting, intelligent, moving, and beautiful all at once. We must try to shoot each, to quote Ingmar Bergman, "as though it were our last." In short, we must compel ourselves to continue making progress.

COLIN YOUNG

Conventional—Unconventional

You haven't allowed it to become a drama in the normal sense.
My idea is to suggest the things and the feelings also.
What do you expect the audience to bring to your film?
Not their brains but their capacity for feeling.
Do you expect them to know the facts of the trial? Is that why you don't explain who the various participants are?
I never explain anything, as it is done in the theatre.
—Robert Bresson, as interviewed apropos *Le Procès de Jeanne d'Arc* (*Movie*, February, 1963)

It is almost impossible to form any clear idea of what is happening in European cinema from this side of the Atlantic, and it is not until you are subjected to a barrage of recent works that you can even begin to see to what extent the French cinema has moved once again into the avant-garde. I had such an opportunity last year by attending the Venice Festival (which invites, out of competition, films of interest from other festivals and also organizes an Opera Prima competition for the first features of new directors), and the London Festival (which is, properly, a festival of festivals—recently taken up in New York); and also through the courtesy in Brussels of Jacques Ledoux at the Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique, in Paris of Pierre Barbin at the Journées du Cinéma, and his friends; in Poland of Jerzy Toeplitz; and in Denmark of Ib Monty of the Danish Film Museum. There were others, but these men and these two festivals allowed me a chance to see a large, representative number of films from a period, a director, or a country. Thus I was able to catch up on the Polish cinema since 1945, to find out what was happening in the Scandinavian cinema beyond Bergman, and to fill in gaps in such well-known directors as Bresson, Godard, Antonioni, Resnais, Visconti, Wajda, Kawalerowicz, and Bergman. Perhaps more significantly I was introduced to the work of dozens of others, most not represented at all in the U.S.: for example, in Paris alone, the works of Agnès Varda, Jean Herman, Chris Marker, Jean Cayrol, Henri Colpi, François Reichenbach, Jacques Baratier, Jacques Becker, Jacques Demy, Jacques Rozier, Marco Ruspoli, Jean Rouch, Michel Drach.

What stands out in all of this viewing is the variety of styles which can be found in the French cinema. It is almost as if the propaganda of Astruc, Truffaut, and Godard for the "personal cinema of the director" has in fact borne fruit. Each of the men I have named has a distinctive style—the work of Rouch is already somewhat known but his admirers here, familiar only with the early works like *Fils de L'Eau* or *Moi, Un Noir* are perhaps not prepared for the sheer virtuosity of some of his later work, especially *Chronique d'un Été*. Also working in the realist cinema is Jean Herman who has produced a well-known short, *Actuatilt*, and an astonishing first feature, *La Semaine de la Mauvaise Route*, in which his shooting mixes interview material with reconstruction (his subject is a young Parisian gypsy and his mistress), while in the editing he forgets about the nice-

ties of visual continuity in order to be able to stay close to the emotional development of his narrative. It is a simple enough point—but few people, in interview or over a longer acquaintance, reveal themselves in any coherent or consistent fashion. For biography then, the film dramatist traditionally has the task of shaping and forming and exaggerating those elements which "lend themselves" to dramatic treatment (we have the recent case of *Freud* and Huston's candid admission that the shape of the film is that of a thriller). Herman has given us another approach—one that is much simpler. He has shot his characters in simple interview scenes. But in the montage he arranges the order of his material in order that the revelation will be meaningful and will have impact. In one interview, the girl is describing the night when her lover was missing. As she remembers, she begins to cry and her tears smudge her mascara, which begins to track down her face. Herman also shows us reconstructed material—the girl searching through the cafés, asking her friends. Then comes the revelation that he had been arrested.

During the scene we have suddenly become aware that Herman has chopped up the continuity of his interview material. In one shot the mascara will be running and in the next the girl has not yet started to cry—even though the sound carries over consistently and coherently.

Also beginning with realism, but again departing from it in his own way, is Reichenbach. His portrait of a Negro boxer in Paris, *Un Coeur Gros Comme Ça,* is his best work to date. This is not a biography. He did not set out to get the story of this man. He begins with the man, and then gives us *his* view of him, at times a little romanticized, but always fascinating, and with the germ of actuality running through it, giving it life, giving it credulity. Ruspoli, in his two films *Les Inconnus de la Terre* and *Regards sur la Folie* (especially the former) also explores the interview. But, in *Inconnus*, unlike Herman, he does not suppress the interviewer—we see him from time to time, popping in and out of frame, we see the sound technician, in long shots, holding out the microphone for the peasants as Ruspoli questions them. But always he allows himself to come and go within this convention which itself allows the freedom to form a contrived structure, but also begins and ends with the real event.

Among the others there is the work of Marker, an essayist (his sound tracks are published, very successfully, as *Commentaires*) who has found ways of carrying the essay form over into the cinema. He himself does not consider very highly his earlier work—*Lettre de Sibérie, Dimanche à Pekin* [see *FQ*, Fall, 1959], or *Description d'un Combat*, and thinks that his accomplishment begins with *Cuba Si!* which *is* a remarkable work. It is one of the very few successful political films—one in which we feel ourselves at all times in the hands of *a* view of something—a situation (the revolution), a man (Castro)—which is intensely controversial, without, however, feeling that we are being taken advantage of. We receive a highly personal view, but not propaganda. Should we complain that Marker still sees Castro as we all did before he was successful?

There is also Cayrol, author, editor at Editions de Seuil (publisher of Marker's *Commentaires*), screenwriter (the narration of *Nuit et Bruillard,* and the script for Resnais' present project *Muriel*). His work with Claude Durand seems to begin with the assumption for cinema of all the strengths of literature (which are then carried over into the sound track) and then searches out the most delicate of photographic imagery. Their films belong, like those of Marker, to the intellectual cinema, but as we know from *Night and Fog* Cayrol's words have a way of sneaking up on you from behind.

By comparison the work of the young Italian directors, although just as polished, is less provocative, while the Scandinavians have produced only a handful of new directors—among them Vilgot Sjöman *(Älskärinnan)* and Palle Kjaerulff-Schmidt whose film *Weekend* is the most interesting Scandinavian film for years. In Poland we find film-makers working as if several steps behind the present moment—only during the Stalinist period could the story of the turbulent 'thirties be adequately told, and

only after 1956 could Polish film-makers explore the confusion caused by bottling up the strongly nationalist feelings which had been unpopular during the Stalinist period. There are many individual works which fascinate in their own right . . . but still for the moment the mind returns to France. On the present evidence it will be many years before the lessons of recent French cinema are absorbed by film-makers in other parts of the world.

One small aspect of this is found in the work of Robert Bresson and Jean-Luc Godard. Bresson's *Pickpocket* has recently started a faltering life at the American box office after initial exposure through Cinema 16 and various campuses. His latest *Le Procès de Jeanne D'Arc* and several Godard films have not yet appeared at all—*Une Femme est Une Femme, Le Petit Soldat, Vivre Sa Vie, Les Carabiniers.* In the present article I will concentrate on *Pickpocket* and *Vivre Sa Vie.*

In each of the three films there is an almost one-eyed concentration on the central character. Bresson's protagonist in *Pickpocket* is a young man who, for reasons not immediately apparent, becomes a thief. In *Vivre Sa Vie,* Godard's heroine in a somewhat similar way slides into prostitution. And, finally, the central debate of *Le Procès de Jeanne d'Arc* comes not only from the inability of Joan's inquisitors to believe her story but just as much from their inability to understand it. In each case then we have a drama of a character who is apparently self-martyred. There is "no good reason" for the conduct of Michel, Nana, or Jeanne. No reason, that is, save the necessity of character. But the films have more in common than this—they also share an approach which might best be called antiromantic, and antimelodramatic. They do not look like the work of one man of course, but in *Vivre Sa Vie* Godard develops a style surprisingly close to that used by Bresson in his two most recent pictures. I will be taking them in chronological order. First *Pickpocket.*

A young man becomes, apparently uncharacteristically, a pickpocket. This so preoccupies him that he forgets everything else, leaving his ailing mother in the hands of a stranger—Jeanne, a young, pretty girl, who happens to be a neighbor. Michel, young and intelligent enough "to know better," as they always say and as his friends and the police clearly think, carefully and painstakingly immerses himself in the profession of petty theft. To do so he removes himself from any possible friendship—first with Jeanne, then with a young man who loves her, Jacques. He also rejects his family.

Michel and Jeanne: Bresson's PICKPOCKET.

Thus the subject—the wilful self-incrimination of a young man, and his possible redemption—through Jeanne's love.

We recognize it as a Bresson film by the playing. Everyone carries a weight of some sort—Michel of course, but also the police inspector who watches him (afraid of fanaticism?), Jacques, who worries about him, (fearing lunacy?), and Jeanne herself (afraid of her own feeling for Michel which leads her to allow Jacques to love her and leave her with child). Not once does Michel smile.

The style is quiet—the distance is that of an intimate observer. We are made to look and listen with Michel, not at or to him. This begins with the opening shots, at the racetrack, a favorite of pickpockets. And when Michel first climbs up to his dreary little apartment, there is an empty frame; we hear his steps; he comes into frame, crosses it and goes out—again we hear his steps. The next frame is handled in the same way. By the time he reaches the top we are in the habit of listening. By other devices, largely by making us watch Michel's eyes, we begin to look for the things Michel is watching. Thus, with our ears and our eyes, we are with a pickpocket who is obsessed and is afraid.

After a recent UCLA showing of the film I heard the comment, "If I had seen him go up one more staircase, or through one more door, I would have screamed!" For such a person the film has remained outside the character—there has been no revelation because no apparent insight. And yet these same devices created in me a tension of a completely respectable sort. I am reminded of the first Hollywood reactions to *Pather Panchali*—"the work of an amateur," was a frequent comment immediately after the special screening, attended by Ray, at the Screen Directors Guild. "He just throws these images up on the screen and asks us to do all the work." "At no time, and by nobody, are we ever told what these characters want and whether they get it." I am also reminded of a conversation outside the Academy theater last year, after a showing of *La Notte*. A member of the selection committee said, "What's the matter with that guy—he's a successful writer isn't he?" The film, like *Marienbad*, was not nominated that year for the foreign-language award. France learned her lesson, and this year sent Bourguignon's *Sundays and Cybele*.

"One man's motivation is another man's poison," as the editor of this journal remarked at the time. Why this should be deserves serious consideration. We know that films are moving away from the conventions of the well-made film, which itself borrowed heavily from the devices of the well-made play, in which exposition is usually handled by rather blatant devices. In Noel Coward a character speaks on a telephone while someone else (and the audience) eavesdrops. This is a modern version of Molière's device of reading a letter (aloud, of course) while someone just happens to be under the table. Seeing them again now, films which we remembered for their tight structures often look awkward and forced—everyone is explained in *Asphalt Jungle*, and when we see it again we notice only how neat it all is—although perhaps not so blatant as *The Informer*, where the police reward for betraying an Irish rebel just happens to be exactly the same as the cost of a boat ticket to New York. If we think of others, we might remember Kubrick's *The Killing* as introducing each character, and giving his motivation, quite expertly, but if we were to see it would we still think so? Exposition of this sort belongs to a day and age when we believed that people did things "for reasons." Contemporary literature (and drama) sometimes seek to emphasize that life is not quite so simple—that people *are* strange—they do things which surprise us and are inexplicable and if there are reasons they are often not the reasons which first suggest themselves. The well-made play, though different in some essentials from the earliest (Greek) forms, owes much to these forms, which were written in an age when it was common sense to assume either the existence of some order, or the possibility of producing order out of chaos. In fact, the Aristotelian theory of drama (based on analysis of Sophocles rather than Aeschylus or Euripides) assumes not only order but also the possibility

of absolute value. (Another part of Greek drama, however, as Hugh Gray points out, is that it repeatedly emphasizes the futility of action in the face of danger or hazard.) The well-made play in its more modern application came to its richest fruition, in France and elsewhere, at a time when "Victorian" bourgeois optimism was still part of the common sense—we believed, not so much in order, or absolutes (universals) as still in the possibility of explanation and prediction. Thus drama was a system of causes and effects—even if an oversimplified one.

In *Pickpocket,* Bresson moves away from this, and away from what we usually think of as dramatic necessity. Because, I would have thought, he does not wish us to think of dramatic necessity at all—but only of the necessities of his character. Of course Michel's final arrest always seems inevitable—it is in fact, finally, self-willed. But like all other potentially "dramatic" moments in the film, it is underplayed, almost thrown away. The action we are given to watch is of another kind—the action within a man's mind, as it can be deduced from his movements and his actions. Thus Bresson is not interested in dramatic climax—he concentrates on the spaces in between. Some of the "climaxes" even occur off screen.

His style is conventional in the sense that he excludes all material which is not relevant, but he goes much further in limiting the "dramatic action" than is usual in the well-made film, which often still permits subplots or a change in point of view. This film is single-minded. It has the mind of Bresson of course, but it emerges as the mind of Michel. Since we see almost nothing which he does not see, and hear almost nothing he does not hear, we rarely know anything he does not know. But by the end we come to feel we never know any less.*

The film seems the natural precursor to Godard's *Vivre Sa Vie*, a film made out of twelve tableaux, a film also single-mindedly fixed on one character—Nana (Anna Karina). Godard divides his tableaux with "chapter" headings—"un bistro—Nana veut abandonner Paul—l'appareil à sous" and later—"le magasin de disques—deux mille francs—Nana vit sa vie—" Bresson has tableaux but they are not so definitely set apart. Both Michel and Nana write letters and speak of themselves, but Bresson leaves us alone with his character longer than Godard chooses to. Thus, since for so much of the time Michel is not speaking with others, our senses must be developed to the point where we can see and hear with Michel. Nana does not get our attention in that way. We are caught by her, she is rarely off the screen but Godard, as we shall see later, does not rely on her so totally. Bresson always works through his cast. Again he is well served (by Martin Lasalle).

As in Dostoievsky and, more obviously, as in the Sanders' *Crime and Punishment, U.S.A.*, Bresson's character believes that a superior group of people exist and that to them must belong certain privileges—among them, self-determination. He says as much to the police, much in the way that the Sanders' character does, but less impertinently, with less interest in "winning" an argument. He thinks he has been asked for his opinion, and he gives it. There are other comparisons we can make with Dostoievsky, but Bresson is only to a limited extent interested in the inspector/suspect relationship—he wishes us to see Michel alone. Thus even the arrests (there are three in the film) are played down—the first two off-screen and the second in a close-up of a handcuff being snapped on Michel's wrist.

I have said that Bresson stays away deliberately from the dramatic necessities. What then is to be made of the ending of the film in which Michel, now in prison, is visited by Jeanne, now abandoned by Jacques? Michel realizes Jeanne's love for him and he is, by this single fact, suddenly and totally redeemed. It might occur to us to question and to reject the banality of such a dénouement—we have sat through a game of hide and seek only to discover that

* For a sympathetic discussion of Bresson's search after the interior of his characters, see Marjorie Greene's article in *Film Quarterly*, Spring, 1960.

a woman's love for a man will make him pure? It is not, of course, as simple as that. We might think of it as a sop to the conventions, or we might say that Bresson, having avoided the usual devices of exposition, is simply giving us a central piece of explanation (motivation) at the end, rather than at the beginning where we usually get it. Sibelius surprised everyone in his later symphonies by reversing the usual order of theme and variations by stating the full theme only at the end. In a way, this is what Bresson has done here—and to some it seems dull, to others amateurish. Ah well.

There are other views, however, which take the film more seriously, although one of them—Eric Rhode's in *Sight and Sound* for Autumn, 1960—finds fault with Bresson for not providing us with a motivation for Michel's obsession with theft. Describing this obsession in various ways —"uncontrollable weakness," "vice," "inexplicable guilt," he goes on to ask, "What in fact is the weakness which drives him to an adventure for which he was not made'?" Is it for erotic satisfaction, as Rhode suggests? He is correct in saying that it is not for financial gain. But why is it not enough to *discover* that he has a (neurotic?) need to place himself in danger and then rescue himself by sheer physical dexterity, and nerve? If we need a label, if we need a reason for his "neuroses," then of course we raise, as Rhode does, the possibility of an answer from sociology or psychoanalysis, the latter no doubt providing us with a "cause" of the neurosis, while the former might describe it as some kind of a manhood rite. But it might also be possible to take the neurosis simply as given, and to take further as given that we shall not receive or discover a cause of it. Instead of that we will learn that something else (Jeanne's love) will complete the circle. This does not *explain* Michel (in the way physics can *explain* how we see a straw bent in water) but it acts instead of an explanation. We will never know more—the character will never know more. Is this too little for drama?

Rhode would feel easier if the film had been built around a conflict. (Apart from the problems of motivation and exposition, this also was held against *Pather Panchali* and *La Notte* in Hollywood.) Failing, correctly, to find conventional conflict, Rhode then concludes that we have been betrayed. "At first one may be impressed by the mystery surrounding these characters until one realizes that they are only mysterious because they are unable to create their own destinies. . . . They remain puppets manipulated by their creator. . . ." This is very odd. I would have thought it sufficient that they are mysterious for the reason he gives, and it is not unsatisfactory or anticlimactic to learn of their incapacity to direct themselves. But to go on and say that they are *therefore* only the puppets of their creator is to confuse the issue. We know Bresson works in certain ways—that his actors do not express themelves, they express Bresson . . . and so on. But that does not by itself invalidate a film in which, as it so happens, his puppet (the actor) plays in another sense a puppet (the character).

The famous stairs: PICKPOCKET.

Richard Roud in a later issue of *Sight and Sound* (Spring, 1962) takes Rhode to task for his review. Roud begins with the assumption that most films are criticized from the position of the nineteenth-century narrative novel, although film-makers in recent years are moving away from this form. He then accuses Rhode of rejecting *Pickpocket* because it is the wrong *kind* of film, and goes on to argue that it should properly be thought of as nonrealistic, an allegory or fable. This raises other problems, which I shall take up next, but first to finish with Rhode. He, to my surprise, rejects Roud's version of what he had been doing, saying that he

did not argue against the film on the grounds that he rejected the convention chosen by Bresson, but for the more general reason that Bresson ignored the nature of conventions in general. "The truth in fact is that it is impossible to describe the convention within which *Pickpocket* works. . . ." I do not know whether or not my notes above constitute a description of Bresson's convention, just like that, but they provide what I consider an adequate description of the ways in which the film seeks to establish itself with an audience. This differs, I have argued, from the methods of the well-made play (and/or the methods of the nineteenth-century novel) in certain specific and quite tangible ways. Perhaps the difference between us then lies in our understanding of conventions. Rhode says about this: ". . . when you set out to make a film (or write a novel or play) you soon find that your material sparks off a large number of questions, many of which are irrelevant to your intention. As an artist, it is part of your function then to frame the work in such a way that these irrelevant questions are suppressed, while the ones that interest you remain open to exploration. This, as I understand it, is the process by which conventions are established."

Two things can be said right away—first that Rhode may be, for good reasons or bad, unclear as to Bresson's *intention* in this film. From this it would follow he could not decide which questions are relevant and which not. But perhaps more important, and less uncharitably, I suppose that when he speaks of the establishment of conventions he is thinking only of such a process from the point of view of the author, while he ought also to consider how conventions are established for an audience. An audience, unless it has contrary information, will assume that a film is made in the prevailing convention. By and large, if it appears to be a "drama" they will assume that it will be played out (at this historical moment) according to the habits of the well-made play (or novel, etc.). Generally speaking, there are two ways in which an audience may be led to expect something unconventional—first there may be publicity about the film (reports, criticism, and so on) which has prepared them, and second the film itself may be so framed as to reveal its convention to an audience directly. There are many examples of the first—*Shadows* and *The Connection* and perhaps even *Hiroshima Mon Amour* and *Marienbad* come most easily to mind—for which audiences and sometimes critics too have been carefully prepared. And there are other films which reveal their intentions as they go along—*Chronique d'un Été* is an obvious example, Norman McLaren's *Neighbors* is another, and perhaps also in this group are the two Resnais films mentioned above. *La Notte* to take a contrary case, develops clearly enough in a traditional form—the whole hospital scene is exposition and establishes the conflict which sustains the remainder of the film. It is only that this is done more subtly than in most films. *L'Avventura*, on the other hand, is full of false trails. *A Bout de Souffle* reveals itself as it goes along—its device of following a general idea of an action rather than slavishly reproducing it whole is presented in the opening sequence, even before we meet the Seberg character. And I would have thought that *Pickpocket* makes its own way too, as does *Vivre Sa Vie* and *Le Procès de Jeanne d'Arc*.

How is this difference with Rhode to be resolved? I have admitted that Bresson has made a film which raises questions about its protagonist's conduct, and which does not answer these questions in any traditional way, but have argued that this is not damaging to the film as a whole. Rhode argues, in a passage following his discussion of conventions, as follows: ". . . questions arise—as for instance over the confusing and contradictory explanations for Michel's past—which in their context demand a realistic answer and which Bresson refuses either to suppress or to respond to."

This, I think, is the nub of the argument. If we think of the context as being that of apparently natural settings, and apparently natural events, we would then, in conventional drama, expect either to get realistic answers or, if not that, to learn from the film (usually *via* a character) not to expect them. But to apply this

reasoning directly to *Pickpocket* is to beg the question of the film's convention. For if it is not a conventional drama we may either not require realistic answers, or we may be satisfied with the answer we get—as I have already argued, the answer of Michel's redemption through love. I have also argued, of course, that there are many signs that the film *is not* a conventional drama (lack of interest in dramatic action, etc.) and further that there are other signs that we should not expect information about the character which the character does not have of himself (the film's point of view, etc.).

It is crucial in discussions of this sort to ask of a film, Does the author *promise* us specific sorts of answers to the questions which his film raises? For the reasons given above, in this case I would say he does not. Conventional drama *does* deal in promises, just as common-sense physics does. But there is nothing in *Pickpocket* which promises conventional dramatic solutions. If Rhode sees a promise, is it not possible that he is bringing the need for it into the film with him?

Roud, on the other hand, argues that *Pickpocket* is an allegory (like *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne*), that Michel is not a character so much as an anonyme, standing in for various possible characters, and finally, that *Pickpocket* does not make any sense on a literal level. All this, as should be clear already, I find somewhat odd, too. I am not sure what is meant by saying that an allegory does not have literal meaning. If, as Webster's Dictionary has it, *Paradise Lost* and *Faery Queene* are allegories, do *they* not have literal meaning? The *Encyclopedia Britannica* (11th edition) gives a very clear definition: "Allegory is a figurative representation conveying a meaning other than and in addition to the literal." If *Pickpocket* makes no litteral sense then how can it have allegorical sense? (*Marienbad*, which he also speaks of, may be obscure but this is not the same as saying that it is meaningless). If we find a literal meaning in *Pickpocket*, on the other hand, then the discovery that it also works as allegory enriches our understanding of the film.

Bresson shooting his PROCÈS DE JEANNE D'ARC.

Later in his article Roud makes himself clearer by saying that in *Hiroshima Mon Amour* there was a split between the apparent and the real subject. In this sense then it could be argued that the apparent subject of *Pickpocket* is what Mr. Rhode and I have been bothering about, whereas the real subject is a more general one (to paraphrase Roud): "It is only through love that a sinner can be redeemed." As to that, I am still at a loss, since I am content with *Pickpocket* on a literal level, but this may be a trivial difference of view, since Roud's description of the real subject, which I have summarized, stands in relation to what he calls the apparent subject as a general statement does to a particular one—and this process of generalization is always possible with good drama. If I were less concerned to follow Bres-

son through Godard to his own latest work, I might be more tempted than I am at the moment to examine *Pickpocket* as allegory (or fable) and be led by Roud through *Pickpocket* to *Marienbad,* which he considers further along the road to the fable.

In the *Monthly Film Bulletin* review, October, 1960, R. V. (Robert Vas?) keeps himself clear of this sort of discussion but ends with a rhetorical question of his own: "Its mystery is not one of paradox . . . but of spiritual experience. Just as it is no longer a question of 'how Bresson does it' but of where such cryptic, fastidious extremism will finally lead him." The answer of course, as we shall come to later, is a minor masterpiece—*Le Procès de Jeanne d'Arc.* And by what route? Perhaps alone, for he is not an eclectic man, but perhaps in some mysterious way *via* Godard's thoroughly intelligent and provocative little film about a prostitute—*Vivre Sa Vie.* Godard is the only one of the younger directors in France who has been known to receive Bresson's praise. This sometimes means little more than that one man has found someone else is working in his way. What this way is, for Bresson, will become clearer with a study of the Godard film.

The press book for *Vivre Sa Vie* handed out at the Venice festival (1962) included part of an interview given by Jean-Luc Godard to Guy Allombert of *Cinématographie Française.* Asked what he wanted to say in his new film he replied: "The story of a young girl who scrapes together a livelihood with difficulty, and who allows herself to become a prostitute. It will be a study of the road from amateur to professional status . . . I would like my film, if successful, to do for prostitution what *Pickpocket* did for the world of thieves. This film will be concerned with the 'interior,' for it is the development of a personality which I wish to show and explain, since a person of this sort interests me."

In another part of the press book he is quoted as comparing his method to that of others: "It will not be a question of spying on the girl (Reichenbach), trapping her (Bresson), or taking her by surprise (Rouch), but simply of following her; thus nothing else but being good and true (Rossellini)." We have to see what he means by "following."

Vivre Sa Vie was the only thoroughly intelligent film in competition last year at Venice, but after one viewing I reported it as being too slight to merit a *grand prix*—adding that this meant none should be given. I suppose that what prompted me to write this was the romantic notion that the winners of a *grand prix* ought to be grand, but having had time to reflect on some of the grand films given prizes at various festivals, I am now grateful to Godard for the intelligence of his little film.

The French voices heard in the foyer after the Venice screening were angry. Ostensibly chosen to represent the "young French cinema," Godard had scandalized his own countrymen. "Mais ce n'est pas du cinéma," complained one gentleman, "et surtout ce n'est pas de la France!" He was wrong on both counts.

Later, the Paris press was mixed, and a second or third viewing was needed to make clearer this mysterious thing called Godard's style, which, since *A Bout de Souffle,* through *Une Femme Est Une Femme* (I have not seen *Le Petit Soldat*) has been becoming more and more simple . . . so simple that the Venice audience felt betrayed. It is in many ways a bad-mannered film, not only discarding conventional devices of exposition, motivation, characterization, and construction, but also not stopping long enough to explain its own devices as it goes. In *A Bout de Souffle* we are gradually instructed as to Godard's method. Although the continuity of the opening sequences with Belmondo is visually truncated we gather from the uninterrupted continuity of the sound track that we are watching the unfolding of a chronology (although I heard one person in the audience say she was not sure we were watching the same person in each scene). And in *Une Femme Est Une Femme* we soon learn that we are watching a

Jean-Luc Godard's Vivre sa Vie.

fairy tale which we must permit a certain kind of freedom of continuity we would not countenance in a conventional drama.

But the opening scene of *Vivre Sa Vie* confused many who saw it and argument about it raged in the bars, from all accounts also in the jury, and later in the film columns in France and elsewhere (e.g., *Movie* # 8).

It had been preceded by the credits, printed over various shots of the protagonist—Nana (Anna Karina). She is "artistically" lit, seen in this profile or that, or from the front. She keeps her eyes perfectly still, or doesn't; she moves her lips a little as if to moisten them, or doesn't, keeping them perfectly still. She is like the model for a postage stamp, or for the face of a coin, already abstracted, but also still breathing. The effect, for Anna Karina is a beauty, is of highly refined sensuality, but at a distance. Music starts, and stops again—the leitmotif of the film. Then we are on the first of several "chapter headings"—*A café—Nana wishes to leave Paul—The pin-ball machine;* and we are into the first scene. Most of the scene is played on the backs of Nana and Paul. We have a dim view of Nana in a mirror, but if we had not seen her in the credit sequence we would have had to wait until near the end of the scene to have a good look at her, and we still must wait to see Paul.

Right away this device makes us concentrate on what is being said by these people, since the image is not very rewarding in itself. (The opposite is to be found in Fellini's *8½* in which the image is sufficiently complex that we require more than one viewing to know what has been said). And what is being said by Godard? His characters are at the end of an affair and Nana does not know how to express herself. Later (in Scene 11) Nana strikes up a conversation with a philosopher (Brice Parain) and they talk about the difficulty of finding the right word for a thought, and the relationship between thinking (and speaking) and living. Later in this first scene, and again with Brice Parain, she says "The more we talk, the less meaning the words have." Unsatisfied with the words she hears herself say, she prefers to remain silent.

There are other things in this scene, of course, but immediately we are in the presence of, at the same time, a character (Nana) and a style (Godard). If we cannot see Nana, then we will listen to what she says. If she does not trust what she says, then we will become accustomed to silence, or at least we will not expect any lengthy explanations of mood or ambition. In fact, as the film advances, we find that when she does talk about her situation it is in such abstract terms that we are still not, in the easy causal sense, being given a simple "plot" motivation.

In the scene, Nana has asked for 2000 francs, and Paul has refused to lend it to her. It is this lack of 2000 francs (an amount, we discover in the next scene, she has loaned to a friend) which will have her thrown out of her flat, arrested for attempted stealing, and eased into prostitution. They also discuss their child (the photos are of their son, given to foster parents). But in neither case is the essential point underscored. The characters know what is important to them; we must discover it, but rather than force the scene for the purposes of exposition, Godard underplays his hand. The scene then is "real," in the sense that the dialogue is weighed in a way similar to actual conversation. But from the discussion in various film columns we get the impression that it is also opaque. In the *Movie* discussion the implication appears to be that, given such sparse dialogue, it would be better to see the characters' faces—for at least then we would have been taken behind the words. They speak of his method as being one of false economy—getting an effect by such economy as to defeat itself. But I would have thought that Godard is not only able to make us feel his characters' estrangement by keeping us at a distance from them—he is also able to prevent our becoming too involved in Paul as a character, while at the same time giving us all the information we need to know that they have been close (they have a child, and Nana makes the effort at rapprochement), but that their affair is at an end.[1]

It is interesting to compare Godard's handling of this with the opening of Antonioni's *L'Eclisse*. *L'Eclisse* opens with a scene of about the same length, but it concentrates entirely on the break between Vittoria (Monica Vitti) and her lover of some years, Riccardo. Nothing is said which does not relate directly and obviously to their affair and the reasons for its failure. The break is shown in detail, although this scene is obviously being played out at the end of a long night of argument and dissension (the room is in disorder, a vase has been broken). However, although more explicit than *Vivre Sa Vie,* it still gives people trouble.

The difference in approach to a scene whose apparent content is the same in each case cannot be explained by individual stylistic preferences. They can only be understood as being derived from the uses to which the director wishes to put his scene. Thus, if we look closer, we find that the openings are only superficially alike in content. Paul is not very important to *Vivre Sa Vie* since *Vivre Sa Vie* is not a study in the end of an affair but a study of Nana for whom that ending is a beginning. We need to know only that it happened and that she is now free. We wait to discover what she does with her freedom. But in *L'Eclisse* the subject is not the same at all. It is a study in relationships—the sort of relationships Vittoria permits herself and is able to consummate. Thus, we must be made to feel a wrench at the outset. But we are so accustomed to clean-cut exposition that Godard's opening, just as consistent with what follows as, in their way, the scene in the other film, is considered irritating and unnecessarily obscure.

Throughout Godard's works we are asked to approach his characters and his themes on his terms, not in the terms of other movies and plays and novels which have shaped our attitude towards drama. *A Bout de Souffle* is dedicated to Monogram, but it does not look like a Monogram picture. Godard may have liked the Monogram style, and it may have affected him in his choice of characters, but it did not give him a style for his movie. He has been criti-

Godard at work.

cized for taking short cuts in his films, although great liberties were taken with our willingness to suspend disbelief in the gangster films of the 'thirties and 'forties. We did so willingly, because we were caught up in a genre of movies which developed its own narrative styles, its own gestures towards credulity and verisimilitude. Godard expects us also to be caught up, but in life as well as the cinema. Antonioni also asks us to start with something —if he has made *L'Avventura* he should be able to expect us to remember what was said there when we see *La Notte*. Pauline Kael argues against *La Notte* (in *Partisan Review*) that it assumes the alienation of its characters but does not demonstrate it, but can we not argue back that if every film has to begin at the same point we shall be limited in the kind of films we can expect? *Jules and Jim* "proves" its characters' alienation, but its action covers 20 years. *La Notte* occupies less than a day.

And of course Godard seems to have a very personal world from which he draws in his films. His characters in *Vivre Sa Vie* are not so much alienated as separate. We never feel they have been very close to each other, so that alienation would be for them a mysterious and luxurious tragedy. The alienation in which Godard deals is between audience and subject. This takes many forms. At its simplest it appears in the division of the film into "chapters," each with its titles. These titles are usually only capsules of the up-coming scene but on some occasions there is also some editorializing. Scene 9 begins with the heading—*A Young Man—Luigi—Nana wonders if she is happy*. But we do not see her "wondering if she is happy." We see her with Raoul, the pimp, and performing an extraordinary peahen dance around a young man in a billiard saloon, while Raoul confers with a friend.[2] But more important than this is the distance Godard keeps us, throughout the film, from Nana and the other characters. When Nana takes up with the young man in the billiard room, Godard uses subtitles instead of audible dialogue—again presumably to keep us from coming too close to the young man.

Simone de Beauvoir has written (in her book about Bardot) that distance is a necessary quality of desire—the distance of age, or class, for example. Godard wishes us to respect his character, and keeps us also at a distance. We know from his critical writing that he understands the mechanics of conventional dramatic structure, but oftentimes the academic devices no longer carry conviction. A director who makes our throat go tight in his film when we don't want it to usually loses us from that point on. Many contemporary film-makers, so suspicious of mechanical victories, eschew the academy altogether. Thus, the days when a dramatist can easily enlist our sympathy, play on our bathetic impulses, and then take our allegiance for granted are now num-

bered if they are not yet gone. (I am not speaking of the general audience, yet, for it still likes the mawkish and banal—e.g., *Lilies in the Field, The Ugly American, The Nutty Professor, Cleopatra*). If Godard respects the old convention at all in *Vivre Sa Vie* it is only to the extent of giving us the three portraits of Nana behind the credits. From then on the familiar sands are shifting; we must keep awake.

The average dialogue scene, even when well written, is ingratiating to the extent that it seeks to maintain our sympathy for or antipathy towards the principal characters. A principal ingredient in such writing is banality—as in the four films mentioned above. Godard squanders his opportunities for this kind of allegiance by making his character's actions appear whimsical and arbitrary (and we saw that Bresson did the same in *Pickpocket*). Why then do we take Nana seriously? For is drama not destroyed if we cannot take its characters seriously? Much of the appeal of *Jules et Jim* was more apparent than real for many so-called intellectuals who had trouble with the woman (she was so "unattractive") and with the men (they were so "dull").

Part of Godard's trick is to cast a woman (his wife) whom he hopes other people will find attractive and "sympathetic" in herself. He is dealing, as most conventional film-makers do, in personality, and he is relying on his ability to use a personality correctly. But he does more. We take Nana seriously, in the end, because although she appears to be moved by whimsy we are never in any doubt of *her* seriousness. In Scene 7, Raoul the pimp will propose to her that she join his squad, and in Scene 6 she meets him for the first time, and he tests her. To prepare us for this a banal script would explore her motivations, would make us at that moment dramatically aware of her circumstances (shortage of money, separation from Paul) so that we would feel, in some way, the pressures upon her. Godard gives us something else. She meets a friend, Yvette, also a prostitute, who tells how she was abandoned by the father of her children.

NANA

So things are not very happy then?

YVETTE

No, it is sad. But I am not responsible!

NANA

(favored by the camera)

I believe we are always responsible for what we do. And free. I raise my hand, I am responsible. I turn my head to the right, I am responsible. I am unhappy, I am responsible. I smoke a cigarette, I am responsible. I close my eyes, I am responsible. I forget that I am responsible, but I am. No—it is as I say. To want to avoid it is foolish. After all, everything is beautiful. You have only to interest yourself in things to find them beautiful. After all, things are as they are—nothing else. . . . A face is a face, plates are plates. Men are men. And life, is life.

YVETTE

That man I said hello to on the way in wants to meet you. Do you mind?

NANA

No—that's fine.

The man is Raoul, the pimp. In the next scene he finds her writing to a woman with an establishment out of town. He easily persuades her that she will make more money working for him. She accepts. She is responsible.

The effect of all this is to force the audience to suspend its usual expectations, in melodrama, of "tragic flaws," of "Achilles heels," of "alibis for failure or compromise"—of excuses, in effect. When we see Nana behind the credits we do not at once think of her as a whore. When we see her at the end we still do not think of her as a whore, but we know she has been one. For Godard wishes us to feel two things. The first is expressed by Montaigne and is given as a title at the opening of the film: "You can lend yourself to others, but give yourself only to yourself." The second is given by Godard in his interview with Allombert: "In *Lola Montès* Max Ophuls tells us in a song of Lola—'You give your body, but you keep your soul.'"

So we are not asked to observe a character in the midst of classical tragedy, but to witness a woman in a contemporary situation, living her life. At her job (salesgirl in a record shop)

one of the girls reads to her from a romance magazine—the heroine is scolding her lover for attaching too much importance to logic, and then savors the bitter victory of her own words. Nana goes to the cinema to see Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc* and Joan is confronting her accusers. The "great victory" will be her martyrdom, and her "deliverance" will be death. The word "death" is held on the screen, and Nana cries. Escaping from her companion after the film, she keeps a rendezvous with a journalist who will take publicity pictures of her. He shows her a "prospectus" of one client, photographed in various poses, mostly nude. "Why do that?" asks Nana. "You send them around to everyone connected with the movies and two or three days later maybe they'll telephone you." "I don't think I like the idea of undressing so much . . ." But he convinces her, and to pay for the photos she stays with him for the night.

Next we see her in a police station, a policeman almost hidden by the typewriter which he uses to fill out the report. She has tried to steal 1000 francs. "What will you do now?" the policeman asks. "I don't know," Nana replied, as the leitmotif comes in again. "Something else." In the next scene she is with her first client, but she does not let him kiss her on the mouth. Later, in the café with Yvette, she is responsible. Elsewhere in the café, a soldier sits with his girl. Raoul approaches and talks with Nana, but for the moment nothing comes of it. They are interrupted by gun-fire, and a man runs into the café with blood streaming from his head. Later, with Raoul again, she is complimented by him, exposes herself a little in return, and then appears to regret it.

In *Pickpocket* Bresson gives us almost a ballet of hands as the pickpockets work. Godard prepares us for a sequence of the prostitutes at work in a different way. We see Nana in Raoul's car. She questions him about her work and as Raoul replies we are shown material of the girls on the street and in their rooms. The standards of work, the statistics, the hours, medical inspections, days off, risks of conception, action in case of pregnancy, in case of interference from the police, the scale of prices, the weekly take. The two things go on at once—the dry, matter-of-fact tone of Raoul, and the girls earning their bread. "It

Anna Karina at work.

has happened that a girl has more than 60 clients on a Saturday or on holidays."

By now we may be expected to doubt her seriousness. She says she is responsible but for 2000 francs she takes to the streets. When she dances in the billiard room is it to attract the young man—or to annoy Raoul? When she passes Raoul and his companion they do not laugh or smile or look angry. They are amazed. And the effect of the scene, as a whole, is once again to make us regard Nana without preconceptions. We are forced to accept her as she is.[3] And then, perhaps to reinforce this feeling, we are later shown Nana in an impromptu discussion with the philosopher. Reading, and thinking about his reading, is his profession, but he also has trouble with words. They talk about the need to know and the difference between knowledge and belief, truth and falsity. Then, abruptly, Nana asks him what he thinks about love. The leitmotif comes in again and the philosopher gives her a most abstract answer. "It is necessary . . . to introduce the body . . . Leibnitz introduced the contingent—contingent truth side by side with necessary truth, that is the life of every day. More and more that is what comes out of German philosophy—that is to say that we have to think with the limitations of life, the errors of life. We have to put up with that, it's true." Nana asks if perhaps love is not the one single thing that is true. "Yes, but . . . love must always be true . . . but it's often all mixed up. You need maturity to be able to love completely. You need research. That is the truth of life. That is why love is one solution, but on condition that it is true."

In the next scene she declares her love for the young man, is sold by Raoul to another pimp, and is accidentally shot. I suppose we have to be, in a certain way, soft to feel any connection between Nana and Jeanne d'Arc. They are both delivered by death, although neither wishes death. But Nana, being an ordinary person, is not martyred. Her death is arbitrary and stupid.

This ending is itself a sort of litmus paper for audiences and critics alike. Many have found it unsatisfactory. Instead of seeing it as the representation of the arbitrary death of a character, they describe it as an arbitrary end. They want endings to mean something more than Godard appears to give here. But if Tom Milne is correct (see note 1) and our attention is concentrated on Nana's reactions, then, with her death, there is no more to contemplate. However, Milne and others are not content with this, and draw a parallel with Poe's "The Oval Portrait," which the young man reads to Nana—in which a painter becomes obsessed with the portrait he paints of his wife. Gradually the portrait takes on the luminosity and the appearance of the woman herself and, the portrait finished, his wife dies. Godard uses his own voice for the voice of the young man, and he interjects into the reading the thought (expressed by the young man) that this is their story (but then, actually, really the story of Godard and his wife, Anna Karina). And therefore, just as Godard's portrait of his wife is completed, she is killed.

But presumably this is all too misty for some viewers. Some time ago *Sight and Sound* printed some reflections on the Nouvelle Vague by Jacques Siclier (Summer, 1961). Siclier, although acknowledging the brilliance of Resnais and the intellectuality of some of the others, including Godard, criticizes the new-wave films on a mixture of moral and commercial grounds. The commercial grounds are always, like Gabriel, with us, and although Godard has denied, from time to time, that he is ignoring the needs of an audience in his pictures Siclier concludes that the lack of discipline and irresponsibility of the *Cahiers* group (except for Truffaut) will damage the cinema generally. "In the conquest of a new language, the cinema is being led—as the novel has been—into a kind of formal abstraction which is likely to cut it off from the mass public." Siclier had not seen *Vivre Sa Vie*, made the following year; Godard does not think all film-makers must aim at the mass public, as does, say, *Ben-Hur* (his own example). And yet the objection is likely to stick in some quarters. "Irresponsible," "uncommer-

cial," "unpatriotic," "un-American," "Communist"—these are all bad labels. The film-maker is supposed to avoid the first two, and everyone the last three. But should critics throw labels of this sort around? Godard has said (in a Unifrance Film press release, if nowhere else): "Who do I go back to? I go back to Griffith. Everybody does. He has, however, discovered everything, without even looking for it. Since Griffith the cinema is nothing but a long and more or less rich reflection on his work. But with *Hiroshima Mon Amour* and *Pickpocket* something else, perhaps, has started, as with Klee in painting." This something else is the new language Siclier was writing about, and you would think that critics would not run away from the job of protecting a new language, long enough for them to understand it, long enough for others to support it. It is odd if everything in the cinema must be put to the commercial test, even by its supporters, just because a film is more expensive than a book.

Most of the editors of *Movie* did not like much of *Vivre Sa Vie* (see the discussion "Movie Differences" in *Movie* #8) but they printed Fieschi's favorable review in an earlier issue, and one of their number, Paul Mayersberg, hotly defends it before his colleagues, although sometimes, I thought, for the wrong reasons. And even he is worried about the structure of the film: "I'm not sure that the pattern is completely coherent. For me this makes the film something less than a masterpiece. Though I've seen it a number of times I haven't fixed the order of chapters in my mind perfectly; and it's not clear why the episodes should be chaptered in the way they are." As for the last point, Tom Milne's answer is good enough for me, but we might also argue, against the first point, that there is no reason at all why such a film should, at first or even second glance, be completely coherent. To expect coherence is to go after the wrong experience, is to expect the well-made film or play.

Perhaps sharing Andrew Sarris' love for lists, these writers are too worried about whether or not the film is a masterpiece or a near-masterpiece. This is less important than being clear about its intentions and deciding if and how these intentions are realized. In *Cahiers du Cinéma* for December, 1962, Godard is asked why he divided his film into 12 tableaux.

"Why twelve, I don't know—but why tableaux I know very well—since this stresses the theatrical side—the Brechtian side. I wanted to present 'The adventures of Mlle. Nana Untel.' And the end of the film is very theatrical—the last tableau had to be more heightened than the others. Furthermore, this method of division corresponds to the outside of things, which then gave me a better chance to show the feeling of the inside—the opposite of *Pickpocket*, which is seen from the inside. How do you represent the inside? As a matter of fact by staying wisely outside.

"The biggest of tableaux are portraits. Velasquez for example. The painter who wishes to reproduce a face deals exclusively with the exterior of his subjects; and yet something else happens. It is very mysterious. It is an adventure. The film was an intellectual adventure—I wanted to try to film a thought in the process of development . . . but how to do that? It is not always possible to know.

"In any case, something happens. That is why the cinema of Antonioni, with its element of noncommunicability, is not mine. Rossellini has told me that I brush up against Antonioni's 'sin,' but that I just barely avoid it. I think that when we face this kind of problem, it suffices to be of good faith. To say that the more one looks at something the less one understands it is, I think, false. But, obviously, inevitably, if we look at people too much, we end up by questioning the value of what we are doing. If we spend ten hours watching a wall we end up by asking questions about the wall—although it is nothing but a wall. We are just making problems for ourselves. That is also why the film is a series of sketches: it is necessary to let the people live their lives, not to study them too deeply, for if we do, we will end up by understanding nothing."[4]

No doubt if Godard had had to write this

down, instead of spilling it out in a lengthy interview which covered the whole range of his work and many other subjects, he would have said all this more concisely. But the points are clear. First, the element of theatricality in the movie is emphasized (see also Milne's interview with Godard in *Sight and Sound*, Winter, 1962-63); and second, we are given a rationale for the obvious sketchiness of the film's development. We see his character in flashes, which is how he sees her, disjointedly, but progressively. An audience may or may not be interested in the flashes, but a critic should not accuse him of leaving things out (the obligatory scenes of well-written drama), any more than we should ask Velasquez to tell us a story.

NOTES

1. Tom Milne in *Sight and Sound*, Winter, 1962-63 also discusses the camera placement in Scene 7 (Nana talking with Raoul) when, for the most part, Nana's face is obscured until the conversation takes a surprising turn, and then suddenly we see her face, registering surprise.
2. Milne adds to this: "By this means (use of titles) attention is drawn away from the dramatic progress of Nana's story, and concentrated on her reaction to each event as it occurs."
3. Godard says, in the Venice pressbook: "Since the film is rather sad, then perhaps as with the law of contrast, dear to Renoir, Nana is often gay." Fieschi adds to this in his *Movie* review (#6) In *Une Femme Est Une Femme* "the moments when Angela smiles . . . are beautiful, or true (it is the same thing) because in the next shot she is crying; and vice versa: an alternating beauty and truth that is found again in *Vivre Sa Vie*."
4. Godard's use of close-ups to stay close to his actors and to give the sense of portraiture is discussed by Fieschi, *Movie* #6, and is taken up by Godard in his interview with Tom Milne in *Sight and Sound*, Winter, 1962-63.

NEAL OXENHANDLER

Marienbad Revisited

There is no key to the film

Marienbad criticism has tended, even when most favorable, to some kind of reductionism, that is, explaining the film in terms of something else. Even the excellent article by Jacques Brunius (probably the best introduction to the film in English),[1] is guilty of a reductionist approach. After first stating that *Last Year at Marienbad* is the greatest film ever made, Brunius proceeds to analyze it as a structure of images, linked by various types of logic, and explained ultimately by a psychological key. This key is the notion of the recurrent dream. He presents some plausible arguments for this interpretation. The very first words: "Once again—I walk on, once again, down these corridors . . . " suggest a recurrent phenomenon. But are the recurrent images intended as dreams? Brunius adds: "The fact that, in the Narrator's recollection, several successive dreams are sometimes combined to reconstruct a single sequence of events, is, of course, sufficient to explain some sudden changes of light and unexpected changes of costume. They always signal the passage from one dream to another." Brunius convinces us of what we already know, namely, that the screen is admirably adapted to portray psychic life, and that in *Marienbad* we are inside somebody's mind—but there is no good reason for believing that this mind is dreaming. In fact, as we shall see, there are no literal answers to the questions: *whose* mind are we watching and *what* is going on inside it?

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In his definitive study of Robbe-Grillet,[2] Bruce Morrissette summarizes a number of theories that attempt to reduce the film to some kind of schema. He finds most useful that of Claude Ollier who sees the film typologically in terms of memory-images, desire-images, pseudo-memory-images, etc. Morissette adds other types of mental images such as hypnotic suggestion, concretized fantasies, mental blocks and resistance. Ollier proposes a "plurality of solutions" including the following: "X, already certain of his triumph, will carry off the young woman as soon as the play is over. When he enters the theater, the coincidence of his own words with the text of the play causes him to automatically recall past events . . ."

Morrissette's summary of overlapping and contradictory interpretations makes it clear that *there is no key to the film.* This rules out hypotheses such as those of François Weyergans who sees in the film the myth of Death (Albertazzi) who has come to carry off his victim after a year of grace.[3] The Chinese game of Nim played by Albertazzi and Pitoëff would be the traditional game of skill with the victim as stakes. Resnais says of this: "Yes, one can, of course, think of the Grail myth or anything else." A better analogy that has not been suggested is that of the Mystical Marriage. The Soul and the Divine Bridegroom can achieve union only after a lengthy courtship and, at last, a "dying" to the world. This once popular theme is, of course, alien to the minds of both Resnais and Robbe-Grillet. Resnais concludes: "But the film is open to all myths."

Weyergans also sees the film as a waking dream in which id, ego, and super-ego struggle, until the pleasure principle wins out. Resnais has told us that *Marienbad,* like *Hiroshima,* might conceivably be taking place in a mental institution. Albertazzi might be a psychiatrist and Mlle. Seyrig a patient suffering from amnesia. But an attempt to attribute sexual anomalies or neuroses to the characters is futile, although the use of symbols and the secretive behavior of the characters encourage such analysis. Brunius imagines that Pitoëff is either the brother or father of the Heroine and that their relationship is incestuous; his evidence is ingenious but unconvincing.

The use of mirrors and photographs point to narcissism. Albertazzi's fascination with shoes indicates some kind of fetishism. Resnais says of all this: "There is a conscious utilization of psychoanalytic themes: for instance, the excessively large rooms, indicative of a tendency to narcissism. At one moment, Albertazzi heard shots, indicative of impotency. I finally cut them while mixing, because they didn't correspond to my idea of the character."

There is a *Gaslight* view developed at length by Morrissette who stresses that Albertazzi acts upon Mlle. Seyrig by hypnotic suggestion. Morrissette rejects the idea that Albertazzi may be an adventurer of the Svengali type as well as the possibility that he is a psychiatrist and Mlle. Seyrig his patient; this would be using an external key or grid to explain a work whose ambiguity is of another order. But hypnotism has familiarized us with mental states like those shown in the film; hence, our knowledge of hypnotism reassures us that the film takes place in the realm of the possible. Morrissette also speaks of the theatrical and hypnotic effect of Albertazzi's voice.

Despite all these apparent "clues," we must not be misled into thinking that the film is a maze. If we look at *Marienbad* as a series of corridors that *must* lead somewhere, to some literal place, we will be disappointed. The corridors lead only to other corridors.

Emotion is the guiding principle

Nothing is harder to talk about than "emotion" (traditionally called in French drama criticism the *je ne sais quoi*), and that is one reason it is hard to talk about *Marienbad.* There are, of course, many aspects to emotion in a film. In *Marienbad* we have to talk about emotion as it is incarnated by the characters and then as it is reincarnated by the spectator.

What the spectator feels is closely related to the over-all tone of the film, what Resnais has called the "paralogic" that helped him and his actors as they searched, with sleepwalking lucidity, for the right feeling in each sequence. The entire film is based on a dominant chord that is intuitively heard if the spectator will "allow himself to be carried away by unusual photography, the voices of the actors, the sounds, the music, the rhythm of the picture . . . " For it is "a film aimed solely at his sensitivity and his ability to look, listen, feel and be moved."[4]

While Robbe-Grillet and Resnais are in agreement about the over-all tone of the film ("a rather ceremonious solidity, a certain slowness, a sense of the 'theatrical' and, at times, even those fixed attitudes and that rigidity of gesture, dialogue and scenery which seems to be a strange mixture of sculpture and opera . . . "),[5] they have different views about emotion *as felt and conveyed by the characters.*

Resnais is primarily interested in "the play of sentiments." Not having waged Robbe-Grillet's campaign against the novels of Balzac, Resnais does not mind sounding like a nineteenth-century novelist interested in the "mechanics of passion." Where a nineteenth-century novelist (e.g., Balzac) assumes that the inner life is intelligible, Robbe-Grillet assumes that it is not; where Balzac assumes that dialogue is the rhetoric of passion, Robbe-Grillet assumes that dialogue falsifies passion; where Balzac assumes that action reveals character, Robbe-Grillet assumes that action conceals character. In all of their statements about the film, Resnais is closer to Balzac on this subject than he is to Robbe-Grillet.

Resnais wants to analyze character, he wants to make connections; he believes that something really did happen at Marienbad.[6] Robbe-Grillet, on the other hand, maintains only that we can perceive a series of "emotional states" that cannot be connected up in any rational way. The only kind of axis he avows in the film is a "persuasion" that we watch through a series of distorting lenses. We can never know whether or not anything happened at Marienbad because we can never pass from the "inner" reality to the "outer" or vice versa. For Robbe-Grillet, the "logic" of the film lies in the progressively intensified emotions of the Narrator. The contained eroticism of the opening sequences builds slowly through various kinds of psychic images: memories, anticipations, repetitions, etc. The numerous "pairings," for example, would be an example of associative images. The actors in the play, the couple overheard by Albertazzi, the statue, the girl and Franck several times referred to, underline and amplify the anxieties of the main couple. The film culminates in a series of evocations of the bedroom and an explicit sexual act. But Albertazzi does not merely remember this act for himself, he must force Mlle. Seyrig to remember. When at last she submits, the film moves to a new emotional plane of acceptance and reconciliation (already prefigured at the start of the film by the actress in the play-within-the-play who says "Now I am yours").

From scene to scene there are three kinds of connections to be made, emotional, formal and literal. The film is worked out with great precision in respect to emotional and formal transitions. Robbe-Grillet has made a careful mosaic of images and events ("objective correlatives")[7] whose emotional "charge" builds the classic emotional line. For instance, the first premonitions of the bedroom come in the bar. There is hubbub, a sense of social pressure; the bedroom memory flashes through like a guilty thought instantaneously repressed; the solitude of that room contrasts with the crowded bar. There is a clear antithesis here operating on several levels.

The images connect in all kinds of formal ways—as visual patterns, by rhythm, by play of light and dark; and surely it is thanks to Resnais that we feel a supersensory awareness of one character by another.

But obviously the literal meanings will be out of phase. The attempt to connect them up is only the vestige of bad habits, a kind of

mental literalism, a debris that must be swept away. We must learn instead to take for granted the "de-chronology" of the mind and emotions.

It is for temperamental rather than theoretical reasons that Robbe-Grillet creates characters who are withdrawn, aloof, and addicted to their own compulsive thoughts. They experience "fantasies of tragedy" and imagine rape, murder, suicide. Other people appear to them as automatons. Resnais has only partially overcome the paranoid tendencies so typical of Robbe-Grillet's novels. He only partially succeeds in giving the characters a mystery and charm that compensates for their coldness.

This brings us to the question of the spectator's emotions. What do I feel as I watch the film? First, a reaction to the over-all tone, a feeling of increased suggestibility and of being caught up in the meters of a litany or a spell. Blending with this and contributing to it, there is esthetic excitement at watching the unfolding of a marvelous construction, for I both submit to the spell and, at the same time, experience the intense concentration of mental energy that is stored in the reels of film. But what do I feel for the characters? Empathy, identification—love? Their coldness rules that out. Do I fear for them? Do I share the emotional anguish of the young woman who is making up her mind? Do I feel that Albertazzi is really offering "love, poetry, liberty"? His behavior is too rigid and formal, too compulsive, too reserved to tell me what that liberty might be. In fact, the atmosphere of the film is just the opposite of liberty. It is weight, oppression, anxiety.

I find *Marienbad* an extraordinary film but it fails for me precisely where Robbe-Grillet says it should succeed. It does not move me. This failure of the film to be a truly moving experience, to break down my resistance (not so great, after all, to experimental art) and to cause even some momentary shift of value, unlock some even fugitive but positive response is a tenuous but telling argument against the film; for what else does anyone have to go on?

The film is a revelation

Marienbad is, first of all, the revelation of a method or a strategy or a tremendously well-organized and brilliantly executed esthetic maneuver. We witness the creative mind functioning at peak efficiency in a very complex kind of area.

But we have seen that the film is meant to reveal mind or psychic life in a different way—as it is in itself. The basis for this concept of psychic life (not at all easy to pin down and, I suspect, confused when you get to the bottom of it) is the phenomenology of Jean-Paul Sartre. Resnais has betrayed on several occasions that he does not fully share this view, as for instance when he says, like some medieval metaphysician, "It is a film on the degrees of reality . . . in the first quarter of the film, there are things that possess a considerable degree of reality; one withdraws from these as the film unfolds; and it is possible that at the end, these elements begin to converge, that the end of the film may be the truest part." Robbe-Grillet, on the other hand, has continually emphasized that there can be no distinction among degrees of reality. There is only one reality and it is shared by things and by persons alike.

The walls, the ornaments, the statue, the garden, the bedroom furnishings are all neutral. The people who move through these halls are also neutral, mere statues or reflecting surfaces. They have no life of their own. Yet as the camera lingers on these objects and these people, we are somehow drawn into their mute existence, as if there were life there after all—but it is a life that the camera itself gives to them. The ambiguous role of the observed world, in Robbe-Grillet's novels as well as in the film, is not to be explained merely by viewing objects and other characters as "supports" or objective correlatives for emotion; but rather by the fact that they are introduced into the order of mind where they are infused with the dye of consciousness. In the film, it is the shadowy luminosity of the

filmed image that contains this dye. As this dye spreads, meanings emerge in the observed world, they fuse and disappear like a phosphorescent emanation upon the surface of things. The time sense changes, events assume the rhythm of memory or desire, a half-forgotten fear rises out of glands and nerve cells. Yet though this world is in a sense created by mind, by the camera, it remains a prisoner of objects, of setting, of other persons. It is a prisoner of things and they of it. Finally, there is only one reality—the phenomenal world—the reality of appearance, and people are no more or less appearances than things, except perhaps in this, that emotions radiate *out* from people, while they merely cluster around things or glance off in other directions.

But if this is the reality that is being revealed, have Robbe-Grillet and Resnais invented an adequate mode of expression? What conventions have they developed to convey this new sense of psychic reality?

André S. Labarthe has seen *Marienbad* as a form of neorealism, a series of fragments without logical links: " . . . all the parts of the film are situated on the same level of realism . . . it is the viewer who structures the film, who establishes differences of reality." He is following Robbe-Grillet who says that "by its nature, what we see on the screen is *in the act of happening*, we are given the gesture itself, not an account of it. . . . The essential characteristic of the image is its presentness." The degree of pastness must therefore be interpolated by the viewer.

Perhaps the term "irrealism" points more accurately to the character of images that cannot be placed once and for all on the coördinates of a specific realism. Images invented (or remembered from a distant "real life") by Robbe-Grillet, mysteriously reinterpreted and vivified from a verbal into a filmic medium by Resnais and his actors, reach us and are infused with our own dye of consciousness, so that a complex exchange takes place. The creators picture a world and picture themselves through the world, and I, in turn, as I open myself to the film may (if the film is truly a revelation) rediscover the spontaneity and freedom of my own consciousness. I should, in other words, experience the quality of my own existence through the film. But here is where the film fails for me. I cannot find the quality of my own inner experience through *Marienbad*.

The conventions may not yet be adequate to psychic reality; or, if they are, the concept of psychic reality is a false one. Since I admire *Marienbad* without liking it, since I feel revulsion at the human image I receive from the film, my judgment on it goes against what I consider to be a false psychic content, a phony revelation.

Is man a surface or a center?

Robbe-Grillet has attacked those film conventions like the flashback, exposition, explicit motivation, etc., that situate the film in some specific so-called reality. He has chosen to abandon these props. The story doesn't happen "out there" in the "big world." The screen is now "inside the head of the Narrator." It shows us his imaginative, mental, and emotional life. Sometimes also, he is looking with the eyes of others, for the camera will occasionally adopt the Heroine's view or that of one of the bystanders. This is done without any conventional "sign" to alert the spectator. The net effect of the conventions invented by Robbe-Grillet and Resnais is to suggest that mental life is a series of detached mental states. The film evokes a flux of perceptions around an ambiguous and shifting focal point. Is man a surface, at best a locus for passing emotional states, or is he a center? There is a nihilistic attack on the human person here and a deliberate evasion of the most obvious evidence from introspection, reflexivity, memory, and the convergence and continuity of inner experience that man is not a mere surface but a center.

While Robbe-Grillet has reopened all the most vital questions about narration, time and space coördinates, characterization, etc., he has

done so in the name of a retrograde metaphysics (avowedly influenced by Behaviorism) that refuses personality, value, and even finally meaning in the name of a self-limiting "humanism" that is no humanism at all.

I do not see how Resnais, capable of the outcry of *Hiroshima mon amour,* can say that this world without context, without rootedness, without confrontation is *his* world. I know that it is not mine. It isn't possible for me to care whether these two sleek mannequins get together or not. But it isn't merely that they are sleek, suave, and from that *dolce vita* café society nobody can take seriously anymore. It is that, as *persona,* I can't reach through them any sense of human interiority, nor any sense of the value-creating center that each of us is for himself. The complexity of personality is equated to time-space relations. But memory, as Proust rediscovered it, creates not merely order—it creates the good and the beautiful. It creates *value.* Love, which is supposed to be the subject of this film, is precisely a value that is inexplicable in terms of what is seen on the surface, it is precisely the discovery of what is inside the skin, *beyond* appearances. Look hard at these characters. What can you see through them? Where can they go when they leave this place? This woman has given up her freedom. She hasn't found it. Neither has Robbe-Grillet.

Antonioni

Our special issue containing Ian Cameron's monograph on Antonioni is now out of print, but reprints of it, somewhat more fully illustrated, have been printed in England through Cameron's journal *Movie;* in the U.S. they are available for $1.50 from Art Film Publications, Box 19652, Los Angeles 19, Calif.

NOTES

[1] Jacques Brunius, "Every Year in Marienbad," *Sight and Sound,* Summer, 1962.

[2] Bruce Morrissette, *Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet,* Les Editions de Minuit (Paris, 1963). Several of the essays in this volume have previously appeared in the U.S. The essay on *Marienbad,* however, has not. This book poses in thorough and objective fashion the questions opened up by Robbe-Grillet's renewal of the esthetics of the novel.

[3] *Cahiers du cinéma,* No. 123, September, 1961. In addition to articles on *Marienbad* by Weyergans and André S. Labarthe, this issue contains a lengthy interview with Resnais and Robbe-Grillet. My quotations from Resnais are from that interview.

[4] Alain Robbe-Grillet, "L'Année dernière à Marienbad," *Réalités,* October 6, 1961. Catharsis or audience reaction is different for different types of spectacles and different cultural settings and, of course, much more than a matter of being "moved."

[5] Alain Robbe-Grillet, "Introduction," *Last Year at Marienbad,* Grove Press (1962).

[6] "According to Resnais' diagram reproduced backwards in No. 123 of the *Cahiers du cinéma* and then correctly in No. 125, p. 48, the action that we actually see takes place between a Tuesday and a Sunday, cut by flashbacks that cover Monday to Saturday evening of a week past, this complicated by several more flashbacks to the second power and passages through a timeless zone. Without recutting the film, it seems at first impossible to exactly phase this schema with the text of *Marienbad,* unless one understands that the two actions, evoked in a parallel montage, evolve in a general movement 'toward the future' up to the last scene. This fits with Resnais' belief in a real past relationship of X and A, a belief that seems to have guided him while making the film. But Resnais willingly admits that the result, that is, the finished film, in no way requires this concept of the plot, and that in the last analysis this famous diagram was only a guide-line." Translated from Morrissettte, p. 193.

[7] T. S. Eliot's term, somewhat discredited by American critics, has been taken over by Robbe-Grillet.

[*Marienbad* is now available on 16mm from Audio Films.]

Jack Garfein: An Interview

ALBERT JOHNSON

At the moment, Jack Garfein might well be America's angriest young director. The critical reception given to his second film, *Something Wild*, has been singularly controversial and the film deserves closer attention because it is one of those semi-independent projects involving talented artists, faithfully adapted by the author and director from a favorably reviewed novel—the sort of motion picture which was all the more disappointing to most critics because of its failure, after so much promise.

Something Wild (based upon Alex Karmel's novel, *Mary Ann*), tells the story of a college student, Mary Ann Gates (Carroll Baker), who is raped one evening by an unidentified vagrant in a park near her home. The film opens with this episode, after a series of stunning title designs of New York City by Saul Bass, and then proceeds to describe, with scrupulous detail, Mary Ann's psychological turmoil, and her dazed flight from the middle-class reality and security of her home, ruled over by indifferent parents to whom she could not possibly reveal the assault. Garfein's approach to Mary Ann's journey toward self-rehabilitation in the New York slums is in the story-documentary tradition. Mary Ann works briefly in a five-and-

ABOVE: Carroll Baker, Ralph Meeker, and Jack Garfein on the Williamsburg Bridge shooting SOMETHING WILD.

ten-cent store, but flees when she cannot control a neurotic sense of physical withdrawal which causes a group of jealous shopgirls to attack her in the locker room. In a state of exhaustion and self-disgust, Mary Ann attempts to leap from a bridge, but is prevented from doing so by a truck driver, Mike (Ralph Meeker). Mike takes the girl to his neat, tiny basement apartment, where she peacefully sleeps and shyly accepts some food from him. They are separated from each other emotionally because of inner fears: Mary Ann, because of her fear of men, and Mike, because he is afraid that any ungentlemanly move toward this strange, beautiful girl, suddenly thrust into his loneliness by chance, might cause her to just as suddenly run away and destroy herself. As a result, he keeps her locked in the apartment while he is at work during the day. One evening, he comes home drunk, and while trying to persuade Mary Ann not to fear him, she accidentally kicks out one of his eyes in a moment of panic. The next day, Mike believes that he has been involved in some drunken brawl or fall before coming home, and Mary Ann does not have the courage to tell him the truth. Eventually, she manages to escape and goes on a lengthy walk across the city. Her release has a healing effect upon her tortured conscience, and yielding to this force of nature and the city itself, she returns to Mike's apartment and tells him that she is responsible for the loss of his eye. Mike forgives her and makes a touching proposal. Several months later, Mrs. Gates (Mildred Dunnock), who has given up her frantic search for her daughter, receives a letter from Mary Ann. She rushes to Mike's apartment to find the two happily married, with Mary Ann expecting a child. "What has happened?" she asks, hugging her daughter with nervous ferocity and tentative joy. "What has happened?" she repeats to herself, as the film ends.

From this sketchy description, it is obvious that *Something Wild* is exactly that; it is beyond a doubt one of the *wildest*, most dynamically personal American films made in 1961. The visual conception is superb (the cameraman is Eugen Shuftan) and the film is graced by one of Aaron Copland's best film scores. The subway sequence, in which Mary Ann feels that she is being asphyxiated by the rush-hour mobs, is the best of its kind in cinematic terms, and the performances of Carroll Baker and Ralph Meeker are highly intuitive portrayals, certainly *understated* beyond the expectations of the audience, which leads many spectators to echo the final words of the film with a cry of "What *has* happened?"

It seemed imperative to talk to Jack Garfein about his reactions to the outbursts of hostility toward *Something Wild*. He has not done a film since then, and he forewarned me that he was somewhat bitter about this, yet, as we talked together, his pleasant, philosophical manner belied any hints of truculence. "I've found that only people from abroad, like Truffaut or Marcel Marceau, were really interested in my two films, *The Strange One*, called *End As A Man* overseas, and my most recent one, *Something Wild*," Garfein began. "Frankly, I haven't been offered a film since *Something Wild;* it hasn't even played in Chicago at all or in three-fourths of the major cities in the United States. I went to Europe for the Stockholm opening of the film and one of the newspaper headlines read: "Is Jack Garfein the American Ingmar Bergman?" In Italy, Alberto Moravia reviewed the film, and in general, European critics paid attention to the film. I'm not really what you can consider a newcomer. *The Strange One* was made in 1957. I met Guy Green once in New York, and when he found out that I was the director of *Something Wild*, he looked very surprised and asked me, "Why aren't you making more films?" I had to laugh when I thought about answering his question." Garfein himself was apparently taken off-guard by the American reception to his film and disillusioned by the negative dismissal it received, without detailed analysis or discussion by any single critic. "I was born in Europe," he said, "I came here in 1946 after being liberated from Belsen. I now feel that the kind of film I'm interested in making cannot be done here. I'm not interested in my films making millions

of dollars, after all. On my last film, I brought Shuftan over for thirteen weeks and my costs were about $350,000, but part of the reason why I felt this had to be done was because we felt it's possible to shoot in rooms, and a lot of the so-called limitations of the camera can turn out to be advantages. If you have actors who are willing to use themselves as people rather than as stars, you can do anything. That's what bothers me so much about the big productions in American film-making. You don't need a lot of wardrobe people, etc., running around, following the stars and all that stuff. There're just too many unnecessary people around and this all seems terribly distasteful and creates an atmosphere of immorality—the actors become mannequins. As of now, I'm working on a script, the theme of which is sex and love, but I'm trying to approach this from a completely new point of view for me, the theme of having one who knows all the outward forms of what love is supposed to be, the *play* of love, and I want to get a character interested in just this purely sexual approach, without even knowing what love *is*. I rely on character development now, that is, character developing from what the characters *say* rather than on concentrating upon the environment around them (as I did in *Something Wild*). In this script we have a 22-year-old boy who is so much a part of the enlightened young student population of today, exposed to the enormous world of paperbacks, and with a terrific grasp of the world today, with Rome, Paris, London, Tokyo and oh, everywhere at his fingertips, but *still*, there is the atmosphere of things unsaid—the greatest things in life are the things that are *unsaid*. In this story, the young man doesn't know what love is, but he does know what sex is. He comes across a girl from the back country who is attracted to what he has and is, and he is only attracted to her physically. There is, however, something that neither of them can express, and you realize that I am one of those directors who feel that films don't need words to express everything, but audiences aren't ready for this—anyway, the theme is linked to these deep, unsaid things in man.

"Alex Karmel and I once wanted to do a film called *Magic*, but the theme of wanting to get the *key* to everything was difficult to work out. We had a girl in the working district of Detroit or Chicago, and the film concentrated upon the lack of drama in everyday American life, which is dramatic in itself. People in American audiences are not interested in rape, they're not interested in making love, they don't want to see themselves as they really are. *Something Wild* may be much more successful in five years, but this doesn't help me now. The studio executives were shocked by Mildred Dunnock's character in the film. "That's a *mother*?" they'd say, not knowing that we live in a world where many mothers and fathers are indifferent to the feelings of their children, and that things are *not* the way audiences want them to be. The whole idea of the heroine being happy in the basement apartment of a big, hulking, one-eyed truck driver is not hard to believe, but it went against the basic romantic image set up by American films. In *Magic*, our heroine worked in a factory that packs TV dinners—I thought that was wonderful! She wants to be a ballerina, always listening to ballet music on the radio, and finally, she becomes an old magician's assistant. The opening sequence showed a weatherbeaten station wagon rolling up before some huge, ultramodern buildings. Then, a man exits from the car, enters the buildings, and there are long, very exciting shots along the corridors until finally, you come into a room filled with paraplegic veterans watching this beautiful young girl in a bikini doing her magic act. It would be shocking, but it would be *true*. The girl later meets a rich young Chicagoan, but her dream is to play Radio City Music Hall, and finally she goes off to New York on her own. Naturally, nobody understood this script; the agents wouldn't even handle it. I finally submitted it to United Artists but the fact that the boy and the girl *didn't* understand each other and get together at the end did not seem convincing. People have forgotten that there are those in America who dream of the magic of New York. Producers never remember what's happening.

If you talk about life, most producers have absolutely no conception of what you mean, producers don't *know* it, they're not prejudiced against it."

I asked Garfein to comment upon the charges made against his films regarding their preoccupation with violence. *The Strange One*, in particular, presents the military school as a background for violence and sadistic domination by one of the cinema's most fascinating young monsters, Jocko De Paris, brilliantly acted by Ben Gazzara, in his screen debut.

"I am a product of violence myself," said Garfein. "By the age of 15 I'd been through Auschwitz and Belsen and my family destroyed. We got dressed to go to the synagogue one day and by that same evening we were in a barracks made out of a brick factory, the next week my grandfather was dead, and my family separated, all half-destroyed. Without motivation, without *warning*. One's whole life is literally changed by making oneself cope with violence. The force cannot destroy the sensitive. You can get married, have children, even though violence may strike again. Now Hollywood producers are not able to see that there is a difference between violence and sensationalism. Actually, violence is the essential truth of the gangster film, but in that case, without theme or a point of view. Even Beverly Hills is affected by the imminent violence of having a freeway built through it. I recently saw *The Strange One* on television and the violence was entirely cut out of it, but the beatings were as necessary to that film as Mary Ann's walk through the park in *Something Wild*. We live in an age of violence. Tennessee Williams believes that violence destroys sensitivity but I don't believe this—we go on, the life force goes on in spite of it. At the end of *The Strange One*, I felt that after the boys had the courage to face this young Hitler called Jocko De Paris, their treatment of him had to bring out the whole question of honor, and that's why I wanted them to throw him into a *segregated* railway car, and you'll remember, I had the Negro characters just sit calmly and watch this violent action of a white cadet being manhandled by his fellow cadets, and being thrown into the coach with them. One of the Negro women looks at Jocko as if to say 'Well, the white people have their troubles, too.' But no attempt is made to help Jocko, and I wanted the sequence to stand as a comment, not only upon the environment but *upon the cadets themselves*. Anyway, Sam Spiegel didn't like the idea of bringing the segregation of the South into the film, but I insisted upon shooting the sequence. He was furious when he learned that I was going ahead with it and called to say he was coming down there to halt it. Well, he arrived, but before he got to the location, Pat Hingle came up with the idea that we should circulate a rumor that the area was infested with copperheads, so I had some extras hide in the bushes and make noises and finally Spiegel wouldn't come near the place. The point is that evil exists, because it's *there* and you can't explain Hitler by explaining his mother and father or his home life; the poetry of living has to be explained for the hero as well as the monster, but to try to do this for somebody like Jocko De Paris in *The Strange One* would have ruined the motivation of it all. *The Strange One* introduced many actors to films (Gazzara, George Peppard, Geoffrey Horne, Pat Hingle) and I always cast people myself, whether they have agents or not. I stayed at the military school, The Citadel, for about two weeks to get a sense of routine and atmosphere, but the trustees wouldn't let me film there, so I went to Florida and found a place that used to be a military school. I hired four West Point cadets who were on vacation to come down and train the boys I'd signed for the film. Aside from the actors, I'd advertised in the local newspaper for boys to be cadets in the picture and we formed three battalions and they were thoroughly trained by the West Pointers; I set up competitions with prize money, to intensify the competitive spirit that is a part of all military schools, and it was amazing how those boys went through drills and perfected their marching. At any rate, the perfect atmosphere was created for telling our story. *The Strange One* was denounced by a

Eugen Shuftan and Jack Garfein.

U. S. Congressman as an 'un-American' film, but in Paris, a critic wrote that if anyone doubted that America was a free country, then they should go to see my film. 'Could you possibly imagine a French director doing such a film about St. Cyr?' he wrote. I'd personally love to see a French film that makes a social protest; I'm sure that there must be some, but they're not shown here, because Americans have never accepted a film without a hero.

"I think that *Something Wild* is a little *too* subtle. After the criticisms, it was a shattering experience for me as a director. Finally, I looked at it as objectively as I could and wondered 'What crime have I committed?' One New York critic said that if *Something Wild* had been released after *Last Year At Marienbad* and *La Notte,* it would have made a better impression. I was asked: 'Why does Mike want Mary Ann?' Well, first of all, you'll notice how lonely he is. What does he do? Cuts out clippings from newspapers and puts them in a scrapbook. He cuts out pictures of society girls– now *where* would he ever meet a girl like this? He tells Mary Ann that she's his last chance to ever meet someone like her–he *has* to go out and get loaded because he doesn't know what to say. It was felt by many people that there should have been a sequence in which Meeker would actually *say* his yearnings, something like 'I've never met anyone like you," etc. but *I wanted to tell it through image,* not through words. Now, I suppose I should have made it more verbal, yet, when I've studied some of Bergman's recent films, I felt that he was a bit too flowery for reality. But I said, well, I guess I failed because I should have given an audience a clearer impression and let the film aesthetes say I was too obvious. I really believe that films are an outgrowth of great painting, and I suspect that Michelangelo would have been a great filmmaker because his works are always looking for movement. The film audience does not follow action and imagery alone, or at least not enough. I went to see *La Notte* at a distributor's screening in New York. By the end of the picture, there were only three people left in the room, but I was so excited! I had done *Something Wild* already, and I wondered whether people would understand that some of Antonioni's techniques had been sympathetic with mine.

"While I was working on *Something Wild,* the Screen Actors Guild closed me down for a day because I went down the street on which we were shooting on the Lower East Side and talked the actual people on the block into portraying themselves. The excitement of making a film lies in using people in their neighborhoods, and capturing the actuality of drama going on without people being aware of it. The people were much better than extras. They didn't give a damn and paid absolutely no attention to the camera. I went down and found that grimy rooming house, rented the room for six dollars a week, and the landlord didn't even care who I was or Carroll was, or why she wanted to live up *there.* The indifference of the big city dweller is a very real thing. He didn't even seem very impressed by the fact that we were making a movie there; just as long as he got his rent. But by shooting on actual locations in the city, the visual essence of what *might* happen to Mary Ann on those streets, when walking through those neighborhoods, adds to the tension of the film. In the bridge sequence, our whole approach was even *against* suicide. We wanted rather to convey Mary Ann's resignation and fatigue.

Finally she gets so hot and looking down, there was this wonderfully cool water. There was only actual sound, there was no dubbing; I wanted Meeker to talk above the sounds of the trucks, so that the music is heard only while she is in her semidelirious state, sitting on the pavement of the bridge. When she leaves with Mike, the music stops, the real world comes back, with all the traffic noises on the bridge.

"When Mary Ann's concepts of life change, during her long walk, the city takes on a totally different feeling. All she knows is that suddenly, she has changed. One doesn't necessarily control emotional reactions to environment, and it's very important to realize that Mary Ann doesn't know *why* she has to go to the park, but that brief communication with nature has healed her mentally. I'd always admired Aaron Copland's music and when I called him to ask him about doing a score, he didn't feel that he had any real role as a composer for films. We talked about creating through music, the inner emotional turmoil in Mary Ann, and enhancing the importance of the city sequences, especially during the walk, and the subway sequence. Copland looked at the film, liked what he saw and felt he could contribute to the atmosphere of it."

I asked Garfein why the score had not been recorded, since it was Copland's most recent work and his first film score in fourteen years. "Well," Garfein explained, "Copland had a meeting with the studio executives and tried to convince them there would be many who would be interested in getting a recording of the music, but they were unimpressed, and I wonder if they knew that Copland was one of America's great composers, no matter what I might have told them, and so Copland was summarily dismissed, and just afterward, one of the same executives insisted that I listen to what he considered the greatest piece of music he'd ever heard: the theme from *Birdman of Alcatraz*. You asked me about how I managed to get Eugen Shuftan, well, again I looked at all the camerawork of the men in New York at the time and I wasn't particularly interested in straight documentary photography. None of us directors have been *trained* as cameramen (with few exceptions) and I felt as lost as most directors are. If I stay out here in California, I'm going to take a course in this. Anyway, I ran into Sam Shaw, the excellent stills photographer and he told me about Shuftan in Paris. I was very surprised that Shuftan was still active in cinema and that he could work over here, we have such a dog-eat-dog union, but it turned out that Shuftan had been made an honorary member of the A.S.C., the *only* European cinematographer to be given this tribute, and I suspect, even though Shuftan's genius is well known, that the union never thought he would ever *want* to work in New York! I sent Shuftan the script and asked him if he would consent to work on *Something Wild.* He wired back: 'The script is so modern, I'll do it.' Once, when I mentioned to him my whole feeling about films being an outgrowth of painting, he said to me: 'Man, you're talking to the *pupil* of Rembrandt!' We did the entire sequence of the walk through the streets and the park in half a day, but the scenes in Mary Ann's house were extremely difficult technically, but you felt that those places were lived-in. In the rooming house, we stayed there in that narrow room for a week, everyone was on edge because if you were just one dimension off, you'd see flats. For the subway sequence, we worked in the morning after 10 a.m. The Transit Authority let us use a train, and I'd hired about 200 extras, but I'd take a hat off of one and put it on another or make these two people change coats so that everyone looked more real, and got an actual Mitchell camera with sound, set it up in one of the subway cars and went ahead. As the train came into the different stations, real passengers got on, totally unaware that a movie was being made. They mingled and jostled with the extras, although the people directly around Carroll were mostly extras. Only a few takes were spoiled, and usually because someone would recognize Carroll."

I then asked Garfein if Saul Bass had done a live-action prologue to the film which he might have intended to use instead of the final title-designs. "No, we didn't intend to do any long

prologue, although Bass did shoot a lot of New York footage for a film of his own," said Garfein. "There was an opening sequence in which Mary Ann is seen at choir practice, singing a Bach chorale. I wanted to open *Something Wild* like a Frank Capra film—Mary Ann singing in a choir, but this was changed, of course. The film has been cut in some cities and the final scene with the mother is considered sentimental by some (when Dunnock says 'What has happened?'). Well, there'll be no violence in my next film and suddenly everybody will be asking me: 'What happened?'

"What is terribly disillusioning about creative American film-making is that one feels so alone. People say why don't you go out and raise money, but how many times can you go out and try to raise $150,000 to make a movie? I'd rather volunteer for a coal-mining job and that's the hardest work I can imagine. There's no interest, no encouragement, there's no constructive creative climate. We do a film and then everybody forgets about it here, it makes no difference. I'm inclined to agree with Billy Wilder who says that the only kind of films we make in Hollywood is what-he-don't-know-is films; you know, this guy gets a job, see, and he meets a girl and WHAT-HE-DON'T-KNOW-IS that she's the boss's daughter!

"I hope there's a new audience growing up, and the success of the foreign films testify to this. What disturbs me is that sometimes, in order to be a part of this regime which looks for heroes in American films, we get guys who do the obvious. They have no point of view and one cannot be *in* with the heads of the studio and do a film that breaks taboos. There aren't enough interesting bad films, there's nobody in production who is saying, 'Hey, I want to do something new!' It's like the man who went to New England to sell matzoh balls just because they 'love 'em in New York.' America is the most contemporary country in the world today, every city, every town has the twentieth century stamped upon it. In New York, you'll have Rubenstein giving a concert and down the street, a stabbing. America is a virgin as far as films are concerned. They've never even shown Hollywood on the screen yet; I met a young girl a few weeks ago, beautiful, not more than 20 years old, terribly innocent looking, sitting in a coffee shop. It turns out that she's had six abortions! What does Hollywood mean to her, could her story be shown as a part of Hollywood, along with the violence and monstrosity of the world of the young unknowns struggling, and on the higher level, the wealthy film people whose only communication with nature is sex. *None* of this has been touched, told, or seen on film. *Lied* about—yes. Hollywood films are images and their goddesses dare not be human; surely Hollywood is a part of America, but its images are what producers think America wants to see. Everything is super-characters, super-sets and I don't know how long they're going to stay on their merry-go-round. Now I know why the bowling alleys are doing so well. You look at some of these men, nothing matters to them, and I'm convinced that money can do the most wonderful things or it can be the most corrupt thing. Beverly Hills is a great place in which to live because it is so visually beautiful, but you have to admit that it is separated from American life completely. Most of our biggest producers live here, and these are the men who are trying to show American life, its sense of humor, its tragedies, but through *their* eyes. Do you know who was ultimately blamed for the failure of the film *The Brothers Karamazov?* Dostoievsky! He's poison at the box office today, and you mark my words: there won't be another Dostoievsky film done in Hollywood for the next twenty years!"

I asked Garfein if there were any other projects in which he might become involved, and he mentioned a possibility of directing John Hersey's *The Wall*, to be filmed in Poland, but negotiations are still indefinite in various phases of production. It seems to me that such a venture would be an admirable one for Garfein, although his devotees among film critics in America would rather have him do *the* film on Hollywood, from an original script. The fact that Carroll Baker (Mrs. Garfein) is now star-

ring in MGM's film about "behind-the-scenes" Hollywood, *The Carpetbaggers*, is rather ironic.

"There's one more thing I'd like to tell you," he said. "You know, for *Something Wild*, Carroll actually worked in the five-and-ten for a time. All the time she was there, the girls kept trying to persuade her to quit being a shopgirl and go out to Hollywood. Then finally, one day, a postman who had been sort of keeping an eye on her, asked her out to lunch, and they were sitting at the counter when he said confidentially, "Listen, you know you're much too pretty to be working in a dime store. You ought to be in the movies. Why don't you go to Hollywood?" When she told me this, I said 'Aha! You're wrong for the part!' And we burst out laughing."

Film Reviews

8½

Director: Federico Fellini. Scenario: Fellini, Ennio Flaiana, Tullio Pinelli, Brunello Rondi. Photography: Gianni di Venanzo. Music: Nino Rota. Art director Piero Gherardi. Editor: Leo Catozzo. Cineriz.

At certain points in history, in the history of each century or, if Time is lucky enough, of certain generations, works appear which in their powerful presence sum up the whole past of a particular medium and alter the course of the medium's future. Joyce's *Ulysses* was such a work, for in bringing the idea of a novel to a head, it was able to contain the myriad experimental styles contemporary with its own time while simultaneously opening the door to future writers.

And now, for the film, there is Fellini's *8½*.

It is, to my mind, the motion picture motion pictures have been waiting for. It contains—without parody, with almost loving strokes of homage—virtually everything that has been aspired to in films from Griffith to 1963, and in such a way that these "influences" are never overt but latent and necessary parts of the overwhelming personal vision of this Italian director.

Simply, Fellini has successfully arrived at the heart of what the film (as poem, painting, book, play) was destined for: the question of illusion and/or reality.

The same heart as that of Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Picasso, Proust, Joyce, Kafka, Genet, Beckett.

8½ is perhaps Fellini's most directly autobiographical statement; perhaps the first film that has about it the kind of personal touch of autobiography that one finds, mostly, in poems. Very simply, its story is of a film director who, having done some films which have brought him to "despair," finds himself at a mineral spring spa where (1) he must rest and (2) he cannot rest; he has a corps of movie people set up office there; he is struggling to find an idea for his next film.

This struggle is, in fact, the picture. But it is an artistic or cultural one only insofar as it is also a personal one. For the action is taken up with how what the observing film director perceives "outside" gets mixed up with his own imagination (i.e., memory, wish) in its struggle to come to "form."

So that what we see is that struggle projected in images and episodes that, by conventional narrative standards, might appear chaotic.

And the "Idea" never comes. At least not as Idea. What happens at the end is that through his personal involvement with, via his imaginative invention of, all the characters and episodes in the film, the director

magically is able to be let go from those very characters and episodes, and in the most moving moment of the film, a moment of epiphany in which those very characters who have bugged him, and who have *had* to bug him, appear in the white of their essentially

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untouchable existence, purged, seeable, that is, loved.

So the end of the picture is the beginning of a return to earth which is celebrated in the final dance of life and tragicomic shots of the child bandleader and clown band.

And the film the director struggled for is the film the epilogue crowns.

The random and chaotic episodes were not random and chaotic, neither in and of themselves nor by virtue of the final illumination.

They were images, i.e., film—finally held tight by the point of view of the wandering director.

At the end of which, after all, we have seen a very tightly organized film about a film which IS the film.

Which of course sounds like Pirandello, as well it may, but which comes closer to another Italian's (Croce's) idea that the taproot intuition of a poem, before it gets organized by the mind on paper, is the purest of poetry. Fellini *does* get his film on film, but in such a compositional way that we are made to feel it shot through with that taproot intuition, which is the process of creation itself.

This process is seen to have a rather traditional (as though Fellini were suggesting that nature works in the way of) beginning, middle, and end. The death dream at the start of the film, one of the most breathtaking episodes in all of the film, comes full circle round to the dance of life which closes the film. The director's fouled-up personal life—he has his frowsy mistress join him at the spa; then, out of a deeper need that mirrors, whore/sex, and make-up paint, he calls for his wife to join him; and throughout the film there is also an image of Claudia, who may or may not be a movie star, may or may not be someone he has loved as a woman, but who appears as an image of inspiration, a kind of muse of innocence—I say, this personal life, which does not exclude invented or real affairs with all the other women in the picture, (I should say invented AND real affairs, for Fellini takes it for granted that for his film director, the real and the invented are one) this personal life does come to a final circle, at the point of the director's revelation, at which point he promises himself to his wife in a moment which (masterfully) may or may not be believed.

For the over-riding fact of *8½* is that for the hero, as for any man—if any man let go of his mind—reality may not exist except as the imagination invents it,

which invention paradoxically has no other purpose than to affirm that reality does exist.

8½ finally affirms this and imagistically builds toward this affirmation by means of its episodes. That we are at all times in a world where invention and so-called reality are tensed against one another is everywhere illustrated. The opening dream sequence is an obvious illustration. More subtle is what Fellini does with the accepted idea of realistic surface, as distinct from dreams, internal visions, and the like. For example, early in the film, when the director enters a toilet, lights come on and transform the scene into a "stage"; later, when the crowd of film people are leaving a magic show and the director is accosted by the magician—an old friend—the spotlight on the magician is projected forward to embrace the group of film people, placing *them* in the spotlight for a moment. In fact, there are no scenes in *8½* when something of this sort does not happen, for in Fellini's world, as well as in the world of the film director-hero of *8½*, everyone is an actor, every scene belongs to that of the human comedy being filmed now (rather than staged).

And that is part of Fellini's greatest triumph with this film.

For he has, as it were, come free of that awful psychophilosophical air which pervades *La Dolce Vita*, that smelly kultural fog whose shallowness is merely an excuse for poor insight. In *8½* people are on earth not because they are destined to be trapped by cultural despair but because they are destined to play out the roles of their individual realities.

The director confuses reality and illusion, and so gets involved with the women of—and outside—his films because that's the way he acts in reality. His wife, bitter because of the

pain she has suffered in the past, and now further humiliated because he has asked her to join him at the spa without telling her that his mistress also is there, also acts out a chosen role. "Freedom" certainly could be hers, that is, Fellini cagily avoids the sentimental possibilities inherent in their having children. No. No children. Then why, for crying out loud, as the American said, why does she go on living with the guy? And Fellini's answer seems to be a smiling shrug that says, She loves him? He loves her? Really? Really.

There is, of course, no "real" answer at all. Even the director's final words to his wife, as he asks for her hesitant hand and leads her into the company of living dancers ("Accept me as I am. Only then can we begin to discover ourselves.") may be interpreted egoistically. The point, however, is that Fellini has returned—and ever more brilliantly—to his portrayal of human beings not to the exclusion of psychology but to the subordination of it to something more generous and human: the acceptance of human beings for what they are, for the roles they have chosen (are destined) to play (a whore in *Cabiria,* Zampano in *La Strada,* and in *8½* a whole host of characters).

Which is not finally to put down *La Dolce Vita,* which now, despite that cultural overlay, appears as a necessary part of the continuity of a man's (Fellini's) coming to terms with himself.

And which now can be seen as a film of magnificent jugglery not yet returned to the earth of the personal self,

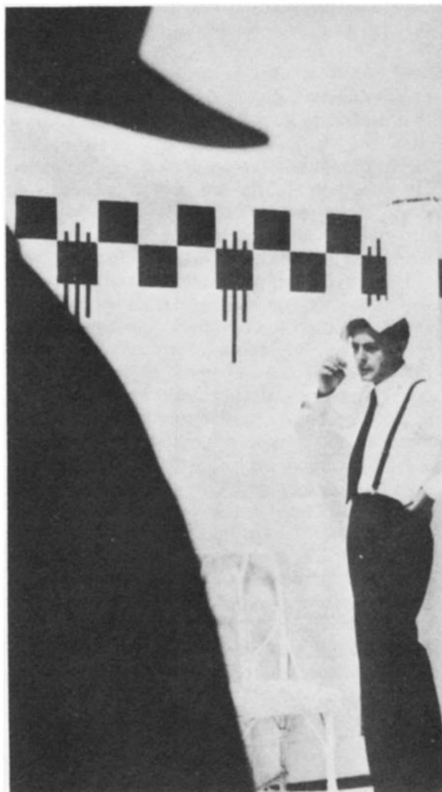
which homecoming is what *8½* is,

and why it is truly, as a film friend John Fles said, "Tolstoy" in expanse of canvas, strokes of character,

and why it is so generously acknowledging of other great film-makers (Griffith and Resnais in the spa sequence; Truffaut in the director's fantasy of his wife and mistress dancing; Bergman in the final dance of life) without becoming for one moment pedantic.

Finally, something should be said for this man Mastroianni, who plays the film director in *8½.* His role, somewhat an extension of the observing writer in Antonioni's *La Notte*—except that now we see what he's observing transformed by the human process of imagination—is actually terrifically difficult to play because of what looks like a lack of action on the surface. But Mastroianni has so perfected the art of film acting, where *economy* of expression can turn into sheer gold, that the slouch of the crook of his shoulder, or the mouse in the corner of his mouth become tall as the Empire State Building and unforgettable as everybody's Giant. And that, by turns of film sequence, he can be transformed from a

Marcello Mastroianni in Fellini's 8½.



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—JACK HIRSCHMAN

MONDO CANE

Producer-director: Gualtiero Jacopetti. Photography: Antonio Climati and Benito Frattari. Music: Nino Oliviero and Riz Ortolani. Emerson.

It is difficult to comprehend why *Mondo Cane* has been touted as such a highly controversial film. Quite to the contrary, producer-director Gualtiero Jacopetti makes it more than clear that he wants absolutely no dispute over what he has to say. It is, in fact, precisely because he sticks with such grim determination to his unilaterally negative point of view on things that the film fails. Had Jacopetti presented sufficient visual evidence in support of this view, one might at least respect his effort. He does not. In the spirit of a modern day Panglosse-in-reverse he scans various parts of the globe in an effort to prove that this is the worst of all possible worlds. As often happens with such *a priori* assumptions, he has a rather hard time proving it and, like Panglosse, must resort to preposterous false logic and misrepresentation. But think how much more fortunate Jacopetti is, having, as he does, the entire resources of the motion picture at his disposal. Consider, for example, this formula for a Panglosse-type syllogism:

Go to Singapore. Shoot some footage inside one of the homes for the aged and incurably ill. Call it the House of the Dead because that sounds more ominous. Make a big to-do about having sneaked in there, because that means you've got integrity even though you're naughty to go where you shouldn't. Then shoot some more, this time of people (still in Singapore) celebrating and having a good time; but that doesn't prove anything so why not say they're the relatives of the dying men and women? Finally, intercut the two sequences, add a spicy narration, and what have you got? (1) Men and women are dying of old age and incurable diseases in Singapore. (2) Others, their relatives among them, continue to thrive and enjoy life. *Conclusion* (according to Jacopetti-Panglosse): The people of Singapore throw their loved ones out of the house and leave them alone to die whilst they live it up.

When other sequences in the film do not lend themselves quite so easily to editorial distortion, the director employs other devices. Consistent with an approach which never lets things appear as they are for fear that they may not be so bad after all, Jacopetti makes abundant use (or abuse) of music to churn up the otherwise unchallenged emotions of the audience. Indeed the more innocuous the subject matter on the screen, the more the music strains at significance. When, for example, we are accorded a view of a remote primitive tribe, carrying out their modest chores of everyday life, aside from being assured by the narrator that the cameraman would be torn to pieces if he were discovered (it's called suspense) the music pounds away with foreboding innuendos, funereal bass, bathetic strings, and so on ad nauseam. There is even a good old-fashioned theme-song in the film, subject to interminable variations of which the most happily melodic is hummed by Katyna Ranieri in the spirit of one whose virtue has been violated and is enjoying every minute of it. But, alas, the promise is again unfulfilled.

The example of the primitive tribe brings to mind another point. To make even a false rationalization of human behavior, one must at least be aware of its differences from society to society. Jacopetti, on the other hand, has no regard for the customs, habits, and mores which distinguish one culture from another independent of any one system of values. Despite frequent attempts at paralleling the behavior of certain primitive cultures with that of more modern ones, a great deal of the

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interest in either is depreciated by his lack of understanding and sympathy for all sources in the film which, because they are unfamiliar to the eye of the modern European or American, can be exploited for sensation. But even if one were to overlook the director's ethnocentricity it is still difficult to ignore his outright inaccuracies. For example, there is the sequence wherein the giant sea turtle struggles to the shore to lay her eggs in the sand. Under the intense heat of the sun and handicapped by the enormous weight of her own body on land, she is unable to make it back to the sea, loses her way, and dies of exhaustion. Although this excruciating ritual has been reenacted for as long as the turtle has been on this earth (which is probably longer than we have), the loss of direction and its consequences is attributed, in the film, to the ill-effects of nuclear tests on animal life. Nuclear tests, doubtless, do hurt animal life—so why not a true example?

Lest the above view appear as "unilaterally negative" as the director's, it is only fair to state that much of the material presented in *Mondo Cane* is *in and by itself* interesting and enlightening. Neither is it completely lacking in warmth, humor, or satire. If only, to repeat, the director had not tried so desperately to squeeze it into a frame which it did not fit. This may be the worst of all possible worlds, it may be the best, it may be neither. But please, Mr. Jacopetti, next time let us cultivate our own garden.—PETER GOLDFARB

MONDO CANE

STRANGERS IN THE CITY

Strangers in the City (or just *Strangers*) deals with an impoverished Puerto Rican family trying to make do in New York's Spanish Harlem. Although it is in many obvious ways an inept piece of work, it has certain unusual strengths which make it worth seeing, including some really evocative location camerawork by director Rick Carrier in Harlem and, less integrally, in Coney Island. In its first half hour, the film develops a mounting impression of urban agony which only the simplistic characterizations and leaden playing tend to vitiate. Later it loses control amid bursts of amateurish, time-marking melodrama, and a second-rate stand-up comic named Kenny Delmar is required to celebrate himself at length as if he were Peter Sellers. But midway through, we are granted a street fight between two adolescents which has such freedom, energy, and even humor that ugliness gives way for once to the genial lyricism that is often inherent in natural violence. About here you begin to see that if this were fully a thoughtful film, the raffish charm of the stick-twirling gang leader, not the stodginess of the downtrodden family, would properly set its tone.

At the end, that oppressive naturalistic encumbrance, a bare light bulb swinging incessantly from the low ceiling, becomes the agent of the mother's death—as she falls into the bathtub, it falls atop her, and she is electrocuted before our eyes. I wonder whether Carrier actually thought this a dramatically apposite conclusion, or just a good enough joke to compensate for all the messiness before it? Either way, we can at least be partly thankful for a home film whose virtues needn't be coaxed from beneath the surface, but have to do with the exposition, if never the evaluation, of something real.—JAMES STOLLER

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HALLELUJAH THE HILLS

Written and directed by Adolfas Mekas. Producer: David C. Stone. Photography: Ed Emshwiller. Score: Meyer Kupferman. With Peter H. Beard, Sheila Finn, Martin Greenbaum, Peggy Steffans. Vermont Productions, 414 Park Avenue South, NYC. 88 mins., B&W.

A piece of "divine idiocy," a "song of friendship," Adolfas Mekas calls his film *Hallelujah the Hills,* the story of two incompetent young men of a Holden Caulfield-like innocence and imaginativeness, and of the girl both of them love and lose. The girl, Vera, is actually two girls: the winter Vera, played by Sheila Finn, is the one seen or imagined by Jack (Peter H. Beard) on his annual visits to the Vermont town where she lives; the summer Vera, played by Peggy Steffans, is the version Leo (Martin Greenbaum) gets to see in the summers over the same period of seven years.

As the film opens, we are informed by curlicue titles that Vera has got tired of waiting and has married Gideon (Ed Emshwiller, who is also the director of photography and is identified in the acting credits as Emsh). Gideon appears in Leo's and Jack's fantasies as a bearded, middle-aged lecher. The two young men have come to Vera's parents' house bringing a birthday cake and a ludicrously fat black dog, which they abandon in a telephone booth during a subsequent binge.

The rest of the film is composed of flashbacks and fantasies which the two young men indulge in during a badly engineered hunting trip. There is no attempt at chronology: we see different episodes of the hunting trip and different episodes from each boy's mind. This wild intercutting is of course no new technique by now, but in *Hallelujah* it is carried out without self-consciousness and without any intention to confuse, and thus it works.

The film avoids suspense or any traditional attention to plot by giving away the ending first; thus it can devote its whole length to fun and games. The fun consists of the episodes showing the boys' magnificent ineptness on their hunting trip: the lunging jeep which they drive like a bulldozer, the mammoth campfire which they try to cook on, the impromptu songs and dances with which they pass the time. In contrast are the fantasy and memory episodes: these are accompanied by idyllic sounds of harpsichord and recorder (delightful music composed by Meyer Kupferman.) The action maintains a pitch of splendid idocy: Jack running naked through the snow, or the two of them stuffing themselves with grapes at Thanksgiving dinner at Vera's house. There are also other touches of pure insanity, like the scene of Vera's father (played by Jerome Raphel, of *The Connection*) sitting on the front porch carving "antique" privy seats and debating on whether or not to include fake worm-holes.

Perhaps best of all are the satires of almost every type of film, both American and foreign, incorporated in *Hallelujah.* These are, no doubt, family jokes, but good if you are part of the family. Even the flashback and fantasy episodes, on which the film is built, are satires of the Hollywood formula: Jack trying to seduce Vera on a zebra rug (and ending up looking foolish, of course), and Leo sipping the traditional Coke in the traditional drug store (and simply becoming bored). Nothing works out quite the way it is supposed to "in the movies."

Other, more unexpected touches, appear: a minute-long sequence of the icefloe scene from D. W. Griffith's *Way Down East* is spliced in, with appropriate credit given in titles. We see Russian subtitles under a snow scene; the

Peter H. Beard and Marty Greenbaum in Adolfas Mekas' HALLELUJAH THE HILLS

two boys fight Samurai-style in the woods. The camera pans up to leaves and birds, and running down the right-hand side of the screen we see Japanese characters. The two boys are shown running: suddenly the image is frozen and we get the title *Breathless*. Godard and Truffaut, though Mekas' admitted heroes, come in for their share of the ribbing.

Thus the film, while dealing with innocence, is itself a highly sophisticated bit of fun. The heroes are innocent, wishful, frustrated: we can identify with them because they appeal to the nebbish in each of us. Yet they are intelligent nebbishes, not simpletons like a Jerry Lewis who can't laugh at himself. And the film *about* them is sophisticated because it is also a film about films.

Adolfas Mekas, whose first film this is, has been around films, both on the collaborating and on the watching end, for a long time, as has his assistant, his brother Jonas Mekas, editor of *Film Culture* and director of *Guns of the Trees*. The actors, some professionals and some not, used a certain amount of improvisation in the making of the film, though Mekas says that he shot from a script. "The time of Rogosin and of *Shadows* is past," he said at a press conference in Cannes, where the film was premièred. "The new films of the New York school are combining the improvisational style of *Shadows* with a stylized kind of acting."

Though *Hallelujah* is about half an hour too long — the material runs a bit thin and becomes repetitious — it does show a great development over such films as *Pull My Daisy* and *Shadows*: the direction shows a new control over idea and material and gives a feeling of confidence. Every now and then the gags run away with the film; but the actors never do (though they improvise just enough to be natural and believable), and one is always sure that Mekas is making the film, and not that it is making itself.

If *Hallelujah* has any explicit message — and one would like to think that nowadays there might be some worthwhile work of art which does *not* — then it is that fun exists, that delight exists; and that, while life may be real and earnest (Vera does after all marry someone else, and boy does not get girl), it's worth celebrating nonetheless. — HARRIET R. POLT

Book Reviews

BOOKS FROM FRANCE

France is the one country that consistently respects the artist, and books devoted to the "seventh art" are legion. Most of them are available at reasonable prices too. One of the most enterprising and unusual series is that edited by Pierre Lherminier for Editions Seghers (228 Boulevard Raspail, Paris XIV), entitled "Le Cinéma d' Aujourd'hui." So far, volumes have appeared on Méliès, Antonioni, Buñuel, Becker, Resnais, Tati, Welles, Bresson, Lang, and Astruc. Each book contains a long study of the director and his work, a number of interviews with him or a selection of his writings on the cinema, and a series of script extracts from his principal films, not to mention an exhaustive bibliography.

The Méliès volume is by Georges Sadoul (each book costs 7.20 NF) and is larger than its companions probably because its publication was designed to coincide with the centenary of Méliès' birth. Very little of his work is available now, even to film societies, but recently he has come into rightful prominence as the progenitor of the "imaginative" school of young filmmakers, as opposed to those who follow Lumière's more realistic technique. But Sadoul, in his dry historical style, analyzes scores of the featurettes that flowed as prolifically from Méliès as they did from Griffith or Harold

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Lloyd. This volume is a fascinating rehabilitation of one of the genuine founders of the cinema, and the detailed chronological table follows Méliès' progress year by year until his death in 1938. Illustrations are numerous, and the stills from such films as *Conquest of the Pole, Journey to the Moon,* or *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* reveal a visual imagination and artifice that makes one feel that even Welles may have gleaned inspiration from some secret viewing of Méliès' work.

Pierre Leprohon's *Antonioni* is being published shortly in America, and to my mind is one of the first studies of the director that places his work firmly against his background and upbringing. The actual weight of criticism of the films is, however, light. Leprohon is one of those critics who considers *Il Grido* as the most significant and the most aesthetically satisfying of Antonioni's films. Antonioni certainly had a reasonable reputation among European cinephiles before *L'Avventura,* but I can't help feeling that Leprohon's volume itself would not have been couched in so sycophantic a tone prior to 1960. Leprohon performs a useful service, nonetheless, in concentrating on the mostly unrewarding early stages of Antonioni's career, and the story of his activities during the war are as dramatic as fiction. His first documentary, for instance, *Gente del Po,* was ruined while it lay in a warehouse in Venice before the close of hostilities, simply because it dared to show the terrible conditions in the villages on the Po delta.

Ado Kyrou is renowned, and in many quarters notorious, for his perfervid partisanship of *Luis Buñuel,* and his volume in the Seghers series in a monument to his idol. Kyrou's book is particularly good in that it links together firmly the early and later periods of Buñuel's career. If *L'Age d'Or* is the first, then *Viridiana* is "the second pole which sustains the wonderful Buñuel edifice."

Jean Queval, author of a penetrating essay on Raymond Queneau, analyzes the work of the late *Jacques Becker* from a highly objective standpoint and instead of tracing the director's career chronologically he devotes short chapters to such elements in his films as Actors, Reminiscences, The Couple, Writing, Comradeship, etc. As a result, his analyses of the films themselves are fragmentary and, like Becker's own productions, uneven in their quality. The book is chiefly valuable for its script extracts, among them lengthy sequences from *Rendezvous de Juillet* and *Casque d'Or,* and also for its filmography which includes contemporary reviews of some of the films and also a note about Becker's unrealized projects.

The *Resnais* volume is very good and, like other authors in this series, Gaston Bounoure knows his subject personally. Like the others too, he throws fascinating light on the early stages of the director's life—the childhood dogged by ill-health, the attempt at a theatrical career, the broken studies at IDHEC, the years of patient editing behind the scenes. Bounoure is a far more skillful critic of Resnais' short films than he is of the two features, *Hiroshima Mon Amour* and *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad.* He goes into a series of psychological reflections on the vagaries of memory that tend to divert attention from what is surely the sterling attribute of Resnais as a director—his imaginative and disciplined technique. But the script extracts are again useful and cover *Van Gogh, Guernica,* the censored *Les Statues Meurent Aussi, Nuit et Brouillard, Toute la Mémoire du Monde* and *Hiroshima Mon Amour,* as well as a segment of *Le Mystère de l'Atelier Quinze,* a little-known film on which Resnais collaborated.

In short, one is left with the impression that each of these volumes has been a work of love and arduous research. They are more than mere critical monographs; they are analyses of the cineaste himself and his environment, and above all of his development. Future volumes will be devoted to Sjöstrom, Bergman, Stiller, Visconti, Wajda and Fellini among others. In a handy square format they are excellent value at the price.

Another French series that goes from strength to strength is that published by Edi-

tions Universitaires, 72 Boulevard Saint-Germain, Paris V. Its early volumes included such classics as *Hitchcock* by Rohmer and Chabrol, and *John Ford* by Jean Mitry. The two most recent additions are *Dreyer* by Jean Sémolué, and *Renoir* by Armand-Jean Cauliez. This series, unlike Seghers' "Cinéma d'Aujourd'hui," places the task squarely on the writer's shoulders, and only the minimum of space is devoted to filmographies and the like.

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Jacques Siclier's book on *Bergman* for this series is still fairly sane in its appreciation (it was first published four years ago) and emanates something of the excitement experienced by the French (as by the English and Americans) at "discovering" Bergman and his early works. For Siclier, Bergman's career resolves itself into a spiral that reaches its highest point with *Wild Strawberries,* and its chief attraction lies in its unique concentration of thought and inquiry. Unlike some critics, Siclier seems to regard Bergman as very much an isolated phenomenon, none too dependent on his Swedish antecedents, Stiller and Sjöstrom, and obsessed by human relationships—"his whole universe revolves around the couple," he says.

Each of the books in this series costs 6.20 NF, and there are other volumes on Eisenstein, Chaplain, René Clair, and de Sica.

—PETER COWIE

Films of the Quarter

[Mr. Mekas and Mr. Sarris did not submit their contributions in time for this issue.]

Pauline Kael

Long Day's Journey Into Night was slow in coming to San Francisco, and so, rather late in 1963, I have just seen what I think is the one truly great American movie of 1962. After such an experience, I don't see how one can niggle over whether it's "cinema" or *merely* "filmed theater." Whatever it is, it's great. (And I am prepared to defend it as a movie.) I'm not sure, however, that *Journey* is, in the fullest sense, exportable. This portrait of the artist as an Irish-American has the worst American failings: it's pedestrian, obvious, crude, sprawling yet crabbed.

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It's the naked, trite, naggingly self-expressive art of a new, almost pathetically self-conscious country. But if you respond at all, I think you go all the way to exaltation. Perhaps just because of all its hideous familiarity, its grinding, ludicrous wrestling with expressiveness, its naive insistence, *Journey* is, at last, an American family classic: the usual embarrassments have been transcended and the family theme is raised to mythic heights.

Hepburn has surpassed herself—the most beautiful comedienne of the 30's and 40's has become our greatest tragedienne; seeing her transitions in *Journey,* the way she can look 18 or 80 at will, experiencing the magic in the art of acting, we can understand why the appellation "the divine" has sometimes been awarded to certain actresses. For the other performers, for Lumet, and for Boris Kaufman, perhaps even a critic may express simple gratitude; to borrow from Nietzsche: "In praise there is often more obtrusiveness than in blame."

I have barely started on the films of the quarter and I have used up half my 500 words on a film the editor didn't consider important enough for a review; I shall have to be brief. [Miss Kael, like Bogart in *Casablaca,* is "misinformed." We are open to a cogent defense of this, or any, film.—E. C.] *Hud* is the best new American movie, though I enjoyed it for its comedy and its unresolved suggestiveness and I am astonished that so many critics have identified with the goody characters and the "social" theme. Lon's innocence has more appeal for the critics than for the audience I saw the film with.

We are used to films in which the villain shoots a man in the back; in the most elegant "touch" of *Dr. No* the hero, bemusedly and gratuitously, shoots a man in the ass. *Dr. No* is a Pop Art collage of comic strips and Flash Gordon serials, and I suppose it is successful in creating a certain kind of modern male fantasy world. It lacks verbal wit (when Dr. No finally appears for dinner, we expect, we *need* some chic far-out dialogue), and the style collapses because there aren't enough asinine conceits. I know we're supposed to find the film sophisticated just because it's so banal, that this, as in Pop Art, is somehow supposed to be the whole point, but for pleasant entertainment, I prefer *The List of Adrian Messenger* (though every man I know says I'm wrong). The detective story film has, inexplicably, become rare; this one revives many of the pleasures of the genre—especially the opportunities it provides for all sorts of odd, specialized information, and odd characters. In this case there are phonetic clues, some fancy murder methods, a fox hunt, war-hero detectives; and even the disguised guest stars are rather like those maddening suspicious characters in detective novels who seem to be introduced for the sole purpose of throwing dust in our eyes. The stardust is slightly irritating; you find yourself trying to clear up the incidental mystery and losing track of the action. But it's not so bad as some of the reviewers have indicated (Lancaster is a fine character actress and there is the joker in the disguised pack: Mitchum defies make-up—when he peels off the layers, the wonder is that he could be wearing so much to so little purpose). As a rather notorious once-is-enough moviegoer, I'm almost ashamed to admit I wouldn't mind seeing it again. (It's not that it's deep or anything, it's just that I had such a good time.)

I wouldn't see *The Eclipse* again unless I was tied down and gagged, and I'd fight for my freedom.

The Stripper has that dreary, do-gooding neatness of "serious," second-rate drama: the characters have to be shallow so that the audience can see them developing and learning the little life-lessons the playwright thinks are good for people (other people—). Everything is all worked out: the characters, following the rules that second-rate professors have formulated to make the theater intelligent and worth-while, that is to say, a kind of liberal-Freudian Sunday School, *change* as a result of the action of the play. Still, Joanne Woodward is worth watching; and despite the lesson which the infantile heroine masters about standing on her own two feet, Miss Woodward's final bouncing little walk into the unknown (like the mad zigzag at the end of *El*) suggests that the girl can no more change her character than, I daresay, Inge can.

Days of Wine and Roses suffers from the same banal missionary playwriting; and not even Jack Lemmon can redeem redeemers who give us these goddamn, boringly average characters on the mistaken assumption that this makes them representative and important. And please, please can we get away from that one bit of poetry—a quotation or a moment of nostalgic insight—that provides these films with their thematic titles, and sometimes, revoltingly, the title songs as well. (*Splendor in the Grass, To Kill a Mockingbird, Days of Wine and Roses;* although *A Loss of Roses* has been altered to the spurious *The Stripper*—which the girl isn't—the film retains the poetic bit that explains the original title, and it is even more conspicuous now that it has lost even its titular *raison d'être.)*

The Ugly American is much more entertaining than either of these films (although it isn't nearly so well directed nor even so well photographed as *The Stripper*) not just because Brando is immense in just about anything, but perhaps just because the characters are more loosely conceived and not so tightly controlled. It's a clumsy, badly constructed movie, but at least we're not exactly sure what the people in it are going to say and do next (at the beginning they even have some pleasantly satirical dialogue). There is also a new face—Kukrit Pramoj—a sort of Thai Conrad Veidt—as the Prime Minister. And though it doesn't do great justice to its subject, it does have a subject and that's like a gift these days. Who ever thought our movies would become so empty that we'd be grateful for an old-fashioned

thriller like *Messenger* and a little politics?

Listening to an audience chuckling and gasping and assenting to *Mondo Cane's* cheap, fake ironies is a true nightmare. The film is a collection of false nightmares—which is to say, the final prostitution. The price is high: *Mondo Cane* is a box-office smash, and the reasons are worth a chapter in anybody's sociology of film. No doubt some smart art-house operator will combine this brothelized world of illusion with *The Balcony*—a brothel of illusion that may be the world. *Mondo Cane* masquerades as documentary reality, *The Balcony* as truth. It isn't remotely true to Genet (Peter Falk's best scene, his big speech, is lifted—or should I say adapted?—from Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*) but it's an interesting —and in some ways surprisingly effective—attempt at a paper, theatrical staging.

Stanley Kauffmann

Outstanding in the quarter ending July 31st were two contrasting Italian films. Fellini's *8½* is an example of art so excellently made that it not only seems better than it is, in a sense it is better than it seems. One is continually delighted by its cinematic bravura; moved, reproved, and tickled by nuance and insight; constantly aware that the entertainment is being provided by sensibility and fabulous talent. Later, one sees that its content, its point, is slight; then, still later, one sees that the execution was so miraculous that the thematic shortcoming looms small. Olmi's *The Sound of Trumpets* (a fairly free translation of *Il Posto*) is a simple sad poem about flickering humanism in a poured-concrete world—all the sadder for being the director's protest and not the characters'. *8½* is a coruscatingly orchestrated piece, with everything from fiddles to glockenspiel and theremin. Olmi's film is a small chamber work, woodwinds and strings, some pertinent variations on a familiar theme.

William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is an apt subject for a film and may some day be made into a good one. Peter Brook's attempt fails because of the obtrusion of theory—a vaguely neorealistic, "non-acted" approach—which makes the film sag in the internals of its scenes like an amateur play and which vitiates the terror. It seems to have been edited like mad in an effort to make up for the fact that what happens between one cut and another is generally limp. The studio sound fights the location photography, and Raymond Leppard's music wants to tug heartstrings but cannot even grasp them.

After one notes the obvious influences on Roman Polanski's *Knife in the Water*, it remains a considerable achievement, overlong but perceptive and subtle and technically adroit. It has only the three characters of its triangle, but it is principally the husband's drama and treats him with unsparing understanding.

Godard's *Breathless* was an extraordinary film which, as happens from time to time, might have been better than its direction. This suspicion is partly confirmed by *My Life to Live*, a lengthy collection of arty attitudinizings insisting on their importance, with the insistent note getting shriller as the film becomes more vacuous.

Some American films. *The Condemned of Altona:* Sartre, the man-size dramatist, shrunk to the scale of scriptwriter Abby Mann, an artistic, intellectual, and moral Lilliputian. *All The Way Home:* an irresistible child (Michael Kearney), a good actress giving a fair performance (Jean Simmons), Robert Preston doing the Music Man without music; the warm sentimental effects lost because of the sentimentality with which the differences between the married pair have been excised. *Cleopatra:* Rex Harrison's consummate skill, Burton's sporadically effective melancholia, Mankiewicz's rhinestone dialogue. Like Elizabeth Taylor, the film is occasionally impressive spectacle, but it is really two stories and, like Miss Taylor, overexposes its cleavage.

Gavin Lambert

Fellini's *8½* is autobiographical confession, a little like Cocteau's *Testament of Orpheus* but more ambitious in scope. Nearly all of it is

executed with marvelous virtuosity, and though the satire and comedy are stronger than the dramatic passages, it tells us quite a lot, very entertainingly, about a particular artist at a particular time in his life. Guido, the film director, is about to embark on a new work and finds himself blocked; kaleidoscoped episodes from his life—in dreams, memories, fantasies—build up the portrait of a charmer, half cheat and half romantic, full of imagination, vulnerability, and bluff, enormously attached to human beings yet somehow wrily aloof from them. In a brilliant conclusion, his crisis really changes nothing. He will go on kowtowing to cardinals to get Vatican approval of his work, even though childhood memories of a Catholic boyhood are like something out of the Terror. He will tentatively reconcile with his bitter, enigmatic wife, even though the other women in his life (a quite remarkable number of them) are not dismissed. The final dance in which he joints his "characters," friends, enemies, wife, assorted love-objects, etc., is not a solution, only a submission to the continuing conflicts, regrets and desires of his nature.

Fellini is now an absolute master of social satire, and his scenes at the health spa, in the "harem" fantasy, of the *Dolce Vita* world of society, journalism, silly women, and weird eccentrics, are all superb. Some moments of them reflect Buñuel's influence, as other passages in this curiously eclectic film suggest Bergman and Pirandello—Bergman (but greatly improved on, handled with fluidity and no portentousness at all) in the way Guido's parents move nostalgically in and out of time; Pirandello in the reality-illusion sequence when he watches screen tests of actresses playing parts he's created from real life. Less satisfactory is the definition of Guido himself, which is partly due to Mastroianni's performance. He seems more like a weary matinee idol—no creative cutting edge—and only Anouk Aimée's striking talent brings intensity to the scenes with his wife.

In any case, *8½* is very much a film to be seen, hardly ever boring, prodigally inventive, adventurous and witty, and one of those rare works in the cinema that creates its own, unique world.

Gualtierro Jacopetti, the principal director of *Mondo Cane* and *Women of the World*, has a good nose and eye for eccentric and sinister human behavior in all parts of the world. His attributes are—curiosity, and a relish tinged with cruelty: excellent collaborating cameramen: no taste at all: some dishonesty. In *Mondo Cane*, though the cynicism is too glib to pass for a point of view, some extraordinary material makes its effect—the radioactive atoll in the South Pacific where fish perch on trees and turtles, their sense of direction overthrown, die in the desert under the impression they've returned to the ocean; derelicts carousing in the bars and streets of Hamburg; two oddly contrasting Gurka rituals, a drag-ball (the British officers watch uneasily) and an expert decapitation of bulls with scimitars (the British officers applaud). Other scenes look faked, and the film remains frequently fascinating, occasionally suspect, and generally aimless. The material in *Women of the World* is far more uneven, a grab-bag with hardly the pretense of a point of view. Only a few sequences—the Club for Sporting Widows in Sydney, the two nuns driving across a huge African animal reservation in a jeep, to bless a remote and isolated Masai tribe, women waiting for divorces in Las Vegas—are up to standard.

Perhaps the English commentaries exaggerate the vulgarities in both films. Apparently the Italian commentary of *Monde Cane* was much harsher than the nervously arch English one, and in *Women of the World* there is some fairly offensive pseudomorality and facetiousness. Still, Jacopetti is a voyeur with passion, dingily unpleasant at his worst, cunning and bitter at his best.

Dwight Macdonald

I've been wondering, for various reasons,

whether to keep on contributing to "Films of the Quarter," but now that Andrew Sarris has been added to the stable, I feel the decision has been made for me. I am not willing to appear under the same rubric as a "critic" who thinks *The Birds* "finds Hitchcock at the summit of his artistic powers," not to mention similar recent ukases by the Mad Tsarris of Greenwich Village. Nor am I willing to pretend that it's just a matter of taste, a difference of opinion, etc. For I don't consider Sarris a critic; a propagandist, a high-priest, even an archivist; but not a critic. His simplistic coarsening of Truffaut's *auteur* theory has produced a dogma so alien to the forms of reasoning and sensibility I respect as to eliminate any basis of discussion. Even if I chance to agree with him on some specific movie, as has happened, it is irrelevant. Sometimes a Chinese fortune cookie will hit the mark, too.

Jonas Mekas was not my ideal of a critic, but, since he is a poet and anarchist by temperament, his vagaries are unsystematic and so gleams of perception sometimes shine fitfully through the mist. But Sarris, like certain Marxist sectarians I used to know, is a systematic fool. His judgments have nothing to do with criticism, since he merely applies the party line to each movie, as they did to each event; the actual, concrete film he sees (or rather does not see) is just one more brick to be fitted into his System.

That *Film Quarterly* sees Sarris as a *bona fide* critic like Pauline Kael, Stanley Kauffmann, Gavin Lambert, and myself, to name the four other contributors to the current "Films of the Quarter"—this is one more symptom of that mush-headed confusion and lack of standards I have long observed in most "serious" writing about the movies. (Why, for instance, is the level of "little" movie magazines invariably lower than that of their literary and political counterparts?) Knowing this fact of life, I have made allowances for *Film Quarterly*. I put up with Mekas, I forgave that entire issue recently devoted to Ian Cameron's stolidly uncritical blurb for Antonioni (those *auteur* pundits are most depressing when they praise a director one admires), and I might even have been willing to try coexistence with the increasingly *auteur* orientation of recent issues. But I draw the line at Sarris as a fellow-critic. Include me out.

Yours more in anger than in sorrow,

DWIGHT MACDONALD.

[ED. NOTE: We have received, with regret, the accompanying contribution from Dwight Macdonald. I am sorry to hear that he finds it impossible to continue participating in this feature, whose design has always been to provide as sharp a confrontation of opposing viewpoints as possible, because he finds someone else's opinions intolerable. It is our belief that from such confrontations a more interesting illumination may sometimes arise than from solitary views of any one critic, or from one magazine's line. As I have had frequent occasion to remind the more maniacal *auteur* critics, *Film Quarterly* has always been an arena journal, not a line journal; it aims to present criticism from a variety of perspectives and in a variety of intellectual styles. As I had occasion to tell Sarris a couple of weeks ago at a film seminar, I personally think most of his attempted theorizing is nonsense—"Nouvelle Blague," as someone has aptly put it. Some of us have better records; but no reader of Macdonald's columns in *Esquire* will fail to have, on occasion, found *his* tastes too rather less than perfect. That is the way it is in the film world—which lacks that wonderful unanimity of quality standards we see in the literary or political journals, where minds always meet and issues are brought to the best of all possible conclusions.

I confess I haven't yet penetrated some nuances of the higher criticism practiced in *Esquire:* I do not grasp how the journal which has just published the most thoroughgoing and acid attack on the *auteur* line yet to appear in English can have "an increasingly *auteur* orientation."—E. C.]

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PT 109. Lt. (j.g.) J.F.K. (Cliff Robertson), having used whatever influence may have been at his disposal to get to the South Pacific, insists upon fixing up the ruinous ship of the title, and gets the crew into shape too, confounding all sceptics. *PT 109* rescues some marines, and is rescued in turn, and crashes into a dock. By the time it is sliced in half by the Japanese destroyer, there are not enough of the film's 140 minutes left to make much of it beyond the point that without J.F.K. no one would have survived, because only he—in his quiet, firm and kindly way—maintains any faith in the possibility of rescue. That, the hero's name, and the lack of any romantic interest whatever, are this war movie's distinctions, such as they are; the rest is the usual, with the tired humor between explosions, the familiar characters, and the relentless score. *PT 109* might have advanced the cult of personality if Robertson seemed at all like Kennedy; since he does not, it is no worse than boring. Leslie H. Martinson directed.

Entertainments

The Courtship of Eddie's Father. It is all too obvious that Eddie's father (Glenn Ford) is not going to marry the lady with the career (Dina Merrill); she not only has "skinny eyes," as Eddie (Ronny Howard) complains, but she has a small, stout poodle with a pink collar, and it would clash with the decor, so he marries the divorced ex-nurse and incipient suburban housewife (Shirley Jones) instead. This rather unhappy domestic comedy is marred by a tendency to hysteria among the adults under Vincente Minnelli's direction, as well as by the predictable limitations of the child. Still, it is only one child, and other comedies these days have more of them. And the film is still worth seeing for Dolly Daly's (Stella Stevens') drum solo ("Carnival of Venice") while one waits for Minnelli to make another musical.

The Day of the Triffids ought to have been more convincing than *The Birds*, at least. What else could you expect from triffids? Unfortunately, adapter Philip Yordan has combined radical assumptions and made a fudge: meteoric showers blind almost everybody and bring a plague of fast-growing, fast-moving, poisonous man-eating plants. He has attempted some sort of solution, besides: salt water turns the triffids to green slime and vapor. He even gets mystical about it at the fade-out. The production is unusually elaborate for science fiction, and Steve Sekely's direction is competent, though without either imagination or taste.

Fifty-five Days at Peking. When Sir Arthur Robertson (David Niven) tells Major Matt Lewis (Charlton Heston) that they have held out for fifty-five days, it seems an exaggeration; it seems that we have spent no more than a week with the foreign devils. When everybody's marines show up a moment later, it is no relief; it seems less credible than the tedious siege they raise. One almost sympathizes with the Chinese, of course. Their lines are at least funny. "The dynasty is ended," says the empress dowager with clairvoyant calm; "the dynasty is ended; the dynasty is ended." The film, however, is not, and at the last minute producer Samuel Bronston has remembered to add a "Peking theme" entitled "So Little Time." Actually, there have been 150 minutes of pageantry, slaughter, fire and the sword on the huge sets, all with a timely theme: one world for everybody except, of course, the Boxers and the Manchus. To be sure, some of the time is devoted to more intimate matters, such as Major Heston's interest in the corrupt Baroness Natasha Ivanoff (Ava Gardner), who is redeemed and killed, and in little, orphaned Teresa (Lynne Sue Moon), whom he takes with him when, at last, he leaves, but this, too, is not without significance in the original screenplay by Bernard Gordon and Philip Yordan. A few things are well managed—the least one could expect from director Nicholas Ray—and, as photographed in Technicolor and Panavision by Jack Hillyard, it all looks very good.

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Correspondence & Controversy

THE AUTEUR POLICY

Critical internecine warfare can be useful, but has its obvious excesses, among them sheer length, so I will be brief in replying to Sarris' charges in our last issue.

(1) As to dating the "politique," *Cahiers* editor Doniol uses 1957, and this is good enough for me.

(2) As to the *FQ* Hollywood issue, we devoted the cover to *The Exiles* precisely because of the significance we attach to a low-budget film of honesty, directness, and human concern made in Los Angeles. Marilyn Monroe has plenty of admirers (especially now that she is dead). The discussion documented with what seemed to us horrifying precision the organizational and creative paralysis of the Hollywood industry. I don't take much stock in geographical distinctions in criticism (there's good writing and nonsense in all directions) but perhaps Sarris would find the discussion more relevant if he could study the Hollywood production scene firsthand.

(3) Instead of defending himself against the devastating arguments which Pauline Kael brought to bear on his version of the *auteur* theory, Sarris gives us an Italian-directors article which might well have appeared originally in *FQ*, so sensible is it. Where are the three supposedly fundamental tenents of the auteur theory – demolished by Miss Kael?

(4) The chief recourse of the *auteur* critic, confronted by a critical problem, is evidently to prepare a list. I prefer to see critics turn back to the films in detail, and the circumstances behind them (there is, of course, never enough attention paid to film-makers' biographies). The cult of the director is like the weed-killers which began as plant-growth stimulators: too much of some benefits can prove fatal. The excesses of *auteur* criticism bring passably good directors into disrepute by unreasonably plugging their bad films; worse, they turn film criticism into a kind of gang war, each gang with its battle slogans – its lists of the moment.

(5) As to *Cahiers* generally, even its outrages rest upon a base of cinematic culture which is far stronger than ours. This is too bad for us, it goes without saying. But it lays upon us an even stronger obligation to learn from its virtues, not its more spectacular peculiarities (which, it is true, I should not have put into a "pantheon"). Every reader must judge for himself how much of which can be found in *Cahiers* – for instance in the Hollywood issue whose articles Sarris so admiringly lists.—ERNEST CALLENBACH

"MOVIE" VS. KAEL

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Miss Kael really should have known better than to use the same tricks that Penelope Huston employed two years before in *Sight and Sound*. She should have realized that she would never get away with taking remarks out of context to give them meanings all her own, on the assumption that none of her readers would have seen *Movie*.

Perhaps she would have done better if she had read the whole of the two or three issues from which she quoted, or taken the trouble to obtain some more. How careless of her not to notice in the same issue as the section on Preminger an article on criticism rejecting the very aspects of the *auteur* theory which she attacks: "On the whole we accept the cinema

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of directors, although without going to the farthest-out extremes of *la politique des auteurs*, which makes it difficult to think of a bad director making a good film and almost impossible to think of a good director making a bad one." She might even have noticed this statement when it reappeared among the objections to the *auteur* theory in Andrew Sarris's *Film Culture* article, from which she quotes so liberally.

We would be more worried by the lady's portrait of us as "indistinguishable read-alikes" if she had managed to make herself read us. The assumption that the alleged "*auteur* critics" are all the same is in itself a concession to laziness. It allows Miss Kael to attack all the young critics she doesn't like, using the funnies thoughtfully provided by our contemporaries in other magazines as her ammunition. However, it also saves us the trouble of answering her article as a whole. Andrew Sarris's opinions are his own, not ours, and our only possible defense when she uses his statements as the basis for attacking us, is to challenge her to find the same ideas expressed in *Movie*.

As for the *auteur* theory, we accept it as a handy rule-of-thumb for picking out the films we want to see. So, apparently, does Miss Kael: "In the 'forties, my friends and I would keep an eye out for the Robert Siodmak films and avoid Irving Rapper films." We believe that the quality of a film depends more on its director than anyone else, a statement which can be backed up by a study of the films of any director. Of course, there are exceptions, where the producer or the star have effectively taken over direction of film or made it impossible for the director to contribute much. Very little can be derived from looking at each film in isolation, as if no others existed. One way of considering films in relation to each other is to group them according to their directors. Although this method interests us most, there are other, equally valid, ways of dealing with films. So far, these have proved less rewarding, but in the future they, too, could provide valuable results.

Although the main argument of Miss Kael's article can be left to fall by itself, there are a number of individual points in it which need to be questioned. We will deal with these in order of their appearance.

1. "*High Sierra* (not a very good movie)" or "it is as absurd to praise Lang's recent bad work as to dismiss Huston's early good work," or "an atrocity like *Whirlpool*." This sort of arbitrary value judgment is one of Miss Kael's main weapons. As she never thinks it necessary to provide reasons for her judgments, we conclude that she is certain of being right and expects her readers to accept her every opinion. We wish we could be that sure of our own infallibility. However, the dogmatic approach is, in terms of reader psychology, used admirably by Miss Kael: on famous films she follows generally accepted evaluations to the letter, so that her comments on more obscure ones seem equally reasonable. Everyone *knows* that *The Maltese Falcon* is perhaps "the most high-style (whatever that means) thriller ever made in America," so anyone who has the spleen to be unimpressed is automatically an idiot. This totalitarian approach to critical judgments lets Miss Kael get away with murder. Has she ever seen "the ugly stupidity of *The Tiger of Eschnapur* botch" except in the massacred English-language version which runs for less than half the original three hours?

2. "The simple technical competence that is so necessary for hacks." If this despised technical competence is the director's ability to use the resources of the medium to express what he wants to, then it is a criterion applicable to any director. Miss Kael's example is the ideal one to disprove her point; few directors depend as heavily on their handling of the cinema's technical resources as Cocteau. The idea that we would like Antonioni to make movies like John Sturges is a very elderly red herring.

3. Although we like the films which Miss Kael writes off as "routine" — westerns, thrill-

ers, and adventure movies — the implication that *Movie* prefers these to all other films is false. We have published more about Antonioni than any other director and have written at length about Buñuel, Varda, Renoir, Godard, Rossellini, Bresson, and other impeccably serious directors. We were the first, and probably the only film magazine, to devote an issue to the Cinéma-Vérité group of documentaries with the new 16mm synchronous sound equipment. And on the one occasion when we published a film script, it was of Chris Marker's documentary, *Cuba Si!* which appeared in our third issue.

4. "Every kid I've talked to knows that . . . *Hatari!* . . . was a crashing bore." All the kids we've talked to loved it.

5. Personality, a word which Miss Kael claims to find so worrying, taken in context, is evidently a convenient shorthand for the qualities which affect the way in which a director makes films: his psychological make-up, intellect, tastes, beliefs, prejudices, etc. In this sense, the director's personality controls his artistic vision. Therefore it should be distinguishable in his films, if he is any good.

6. "*Auteur* critics concerned primarily with style and individual touches," "a group that discounts content and story." Even *Sight and Sound* has had to abandon this line of attack because it is so manifestly untrue. A brisk about-turn has produced this line: "If the writers on *Movie* devote a lot of space in their reviews to describing the content of a film, it is because content, events, is as much a part of what-is-actually-happening on the screen as are camera-movements and compositions." How many more times do we have to repeat the obvious statement that style or technique is not just an optional extra, but the means by which the content of the film is expressed? Of course one talks about style, if only to get to grips with content.

7. "It's amusing (and/or depressing) to see the way *auteur* critics tend to downgrade writer-directors. . . ." Miss Kael seems to have a naive idea that, unless they receive a screenplay credit, directors have nothing to do with the writing of their scripts. Almost all the American directors we admire control the scripting as well as the shooting of their films. Many of them even fill Miss Kael's requirements for a writer-director; Richard Brooks, Blake Edwards, Samuel Fuller, Jerry Lewis, Joseph L. Mankiewicz, Leo McCarey, Frank Tashlin, and Orson Welles.

Miss Kael repeatedly tries to degrade this simple idea to the level of car-spotting. Would you recognize a Cukor without the titles? Would you recognize a Chevrolet without the trade-mark? Our argument is simply that a director's films should express what he is trying to do, and that should be in some way original and therefore distinguishable. That is why Hitchcock films or Preminger films are more distinguishable than Carol Reed films. When we say that Preminger's films are different from others, we don't expect anyone to recognize a Preminger picture if he is shown a sequence from one (a comparison with music or literature should show how silly that idea is). We do believe that Preminger's films, taken as a whole, do reveal an approach not shared by any other director.

8. "If Preminger shows stylistic consistency with subject matter as varied as *Carmen Jones, Anatomy of a Murder*, and *Advise and Consent*, then by any rational standards he should be attacked rather than elevated." The consistency in Preminger's films is that they embody "a method of looking at people and events," (*Movie 2*). Why should this necessarily change with subject? It is so personal to Preminger that for him to accept a different viewpoint in his films would be an act of insincerity.

9. "To provide what as many different groups as possible want to see: there's something for the liberals, something for the conservatives, something for the homosexuals, something for the family, etc." This analysis of *Advise and Consent* could hardly be further from the film. For example, the "something for the homosexuals" is the spectacle of a

latent homosexual driven to suicide, not by public condemnation, but by his own shame and disgust at the discovery that his personality still contains traces of his previous inversion. The scenes in which the hero is confronted with the homosexual world have, for us, the feeling of a descent into hell.

10. "He presupposes an intelligence active enough to allow the spectator to make connections, comparisons, and judgments." In its original context, where presumably Miss Kael found it, there is no possibility of interpreting this, as she does, to mean connections etc. with other films. The connections, comparisons, and judgments are obviously between people and events that are happening on the screen within the particular film. If "this spectator would have better things to do" than to think about the characters and action of the films she watches, one wonders exactly what she does do in the cinema.

11. "An educated man must have to work pretty hard to set his intellectual horizons at the level of *I Was a Male War Bride*." No work is needed: it is a very funny film. But Miss Kael has noticed something. The film is childish, and therein lies its quality. Like other Hawks comedies including *Bringing Up Baby* which Miss Kael claims to like, the film is about an intelligent man who, by a series of increasingly ludicrous disasters, is reduced to a level of conscious infantilism: when he is told that he is being childish, he replies "I know it," and goes on being childish. The taunt that this "wasn't even a good commercial movie," apart from being irrelevant to Miss Kael's argument, implies that we think films are better if they make money. We don't.

12. "If they are men of feeling and intelligence, isn't it time for them to be a little ashamed of their detailed criticism" of movies like *River of No Return*?" For those who have only the intelligent Miss Kael's word that *River of No Return* is crap, we must say that we have the highest admiration for the film's feeling and intelligence. "The role of the critic is to help people to see what is in the work," says Miss Kael. That is what we wished to do in publishing an article on *River of No Return* and we see no reason to be even a little ashamed for using space on a film that didn't make it with Miss Kael. ("Infallible taste is inconceivable.")

13. The *Movie* critics are not among "those, like (allegedly) Sarris, who ask for objective standards." Rather it is Miss Kael who, by presenting her judgments of films as the truth, is claiming that her standards are objective.

14. "The *Movie* group – just out of college." Yes, we admit it. How great to be *mature* like Pauline Kael! "And if they don't have interests outside films, how can they evaluate what goes on in films?" How the hell does she know about our other interests?

15. "Where the French went off was in finding elaborate intellectual and psychological meanings in these simple action films." Poor suckers! Miss Kael is an American so she must be right about American films. If she doesn't find any depth in a Hawks movie why should any mere foreigner ever bother to try? This line of argument, apart from its reaffirmation of Kael as the supreme arbiter, is based on the old *Sight and Sound* confusion of story and subject. The subject of a film is not limited to the story but can be found in the way in which the story is worked out. Any number of gangster films have used a story very similar to that of *Macbeth*, without sharing anything more than the outline. The content is not limited by the simple action plot. "It's obvious that a director like Don Siegel or Phil Karlson does a better job with what he's got to work with than Peter Glenville, . . . perhaps if they tackled more difficult subjects (i.e., stories) they wouldn't do a better job than Glenville." Non sequitur: Siegel and Karlson often do good and meaningful work within a genre that Miss Kael despises ("tawdry little gangster pictures") and have both made – like *Flaming Star* and *Hell to Eternity* – fine films with scripts much more difficult than Tennessee Williams' best early play, which Glenville contrived to turn, with little textual modification,

into an unusually foolish movie.

16. "Determined to exalt products over works that attempt to express human experience." Products for Miss Kael are films made in a set-up which produces films that mostly fit well-defined genres. And it is genre movies that she really detests, for she implies throughout her article that it is impossible "to express human experience" within a genre. We believe that genre is as valuable a framework for the cinema as other "imposed" formal patterns have been in other arts: the sonata, the Elizabethan tragedy, the sonnet, cubism, or dodecaphony.

17. "*Movie's* celebration of Samuel Fuller's brutality" had nothing to do with providing kicks for the readers. It aimed to show that the brutality had an intentionally propagandist (moral) function. Nobody would have turned a hair if we had talked about Buñuel in a similar way. Substitute nasty Fuller for nice Buñuel and it becomes "sensational."

18. By combining it with Sarris' "one of the screen's most virile directors" (about Walsh), Miss Kael manages to change the meaning of "Finally everything that can be said in presenting Hawks boils down to one simple statement: here is a man." In its original context, only the rhythm of the words would have been changed by substituting "person" for "man." The phrase, which came at the end of the introduction to *Movie's* Hawks issue, was clearly intended to mean that Hawks films are more directly an expression of his personality than those of almost any other director. However, in the context provided by Miss Kael, it has acquired a set of lavatory-wall connotations.

19. "Who would think of calling Shakespeare a virile writer?" Who, on the other hand, would think of denying it? However, it serves Miss Kael's purposes well to pretend that we use this descriptive adjective in some evaluative sense. She seems to think that she can discredit us as critics by characterizing us implicitly as homosexuals of the rugged all-male variety. Even if we fitted her picture, it would hardly be a defect in our critical ability. Were we to infer (with almost as little justification) from Miss Kael's fanatical feminism that she is a lesbian, that would be equally irrelevant to her capacity as a critic.

20. When Miss Kael says that there are no female *auteur* critics, she is right. She could have gone further: there are, alas, no female critics. However, she sees this state of affairs as evidence for the idea that the so-called *auteur* critics are using film criticism to perpetuate their "narcissistic male fantasies" of virility. The only other evidence she can provide comes from the slick editing job she has done on the Hawks introduction: an attempt to *describe* Hawks' work concisely turns into a hymn to Hawks as king of the he-men. A suggestion that Hawks makes "the very best adventure films because he is at one with his heroes" loses the essential qualifications: "but then so is John Huston, whose films pale beside those of Hawks." Equally damaging to Miss Kael's argument is our admiration of Hitchcock (mentioned in the Hawks introduction), the only American director we would rate above Hawks. Hitchcock's heroes are typically mother-dominated city-dwellers, often possessed by the most twisted of sexual desires. If most Hawks heroes have a certain maturity (which is an essential to their humiliation in the comedies), this may distinguish Hawks movies from many others. It does not in itself make them any better. We like Walsh and Hawks, many of whose best movies are not "simple action films" – *The Naked and the Dead, The Roaring Twenties, His Girl Friday, Twentieth Century.* Miss Kael apparently likes Huston and Siodmak, many of whose films are adventure films. We also admire such directors as Mizoguchi, Rossellini, Franju, Vigo, and Ophuls, who might well be passed by Kael as acceptable. Why, then, concentrate on one page in our issue, the only issue among ten in which we have dealt with an adventure director?

Miss Kael wants to attack us for writing in detail about films she detests. We, on the other hand, would be happy to see the non-

Movie films criticized with the same attention that we give to our choices. Instead of trying to prove the idiocy of the other side, she might more usefully try to prove by writing film criticism that her brand is more than a string of value judgments, interspersed with high school lit. crit. and sophomore sex talk. —IAN A. CAMERON, MARK SHIVAS, PAUL MAYERSBERG, V. F. PERKINS. (Editorial Board, *Movie*).

CRITICISM AND KIDS' GAMES

1. In reply to the editors of *Movie*. If my "main argument" is not to be honored with a reply but "can be left to fall by itself," why dishonor me, yourselves, and criticism with these slurs and quibbles, invalid implications, petty misinterpretations? I thought better of the editors of *Movie* than they, apparently, think of themselves. (If they can go to so much trouble to publish an *auteur* journal, why decide to save themselves "the trouble of answering her article as a whole"? If my argument will fall by itself, why resist the chance to knock it over and have done with it? They don't usually disdain such child's play.)

I think it is more than a little disingenuous for these gentlemen to say that the *auteur* theory is "a handy rule-of-thumb for picking out the films we want to see . . . although this method interests us most, there are other, equally valid, ways of looking at films" and a few pages later to say, "there are, alas, no female critics." For what could disqualify such women as Dilys Powell, Penelope Gilliatt, Penelope Houston, Arlene Croce and others from being considered critics except that they do not share in the true faith—they do not subscribe to the *auteur* theory? And why that offensive, hypocritical little "alas"—as if the editors of *Movie* regretted that women were not intellectually strong enough to support the rigors of their kind of criticism.

Gentlemen, though women in my part of the world rarely see writing on lavatory walls, I can't have missed much if what you impute to me is an example. I think if I chose to provide a "context" of "lavatory-wall connotations" for a film, I should have better judgment than to select a film by Howard Hawks. And if I had wished or intended to "discredit" you as homosexuals, it would never have occurred to me to suggest that you were of "the rugged all-male variety."

I suppose that any woman who writes is in that act asserting the rights of women, and in that sense, I am happy to be called a feminist. If the *Movie* critics, following the old reactionary pattern, use "fanatical" as the conventional adjective for feminists, are they not revealing the rather limited view of life which I suggested was involved in the *auteur* theory? Their heroes, Gable, John Wayne, or Charlton Heston, would also laugh at the little woman trying to think, and they'd probably grin, he-man style, as they said, "Honey, there are no female cowboys"—or gun-runners, or plantation managers—or wherever that tired old plot is set *this* time. (But I don't think movie heroes would throw in the "alas" . . .)

The first ten issues of *Movie* do represent an achievement: *Movie* has the most gorgeous graphics of any fan magazine yet, and the editors may—if they wish—congratulate themselves on producing the first fan magazine for the carriage trade. Though shop-girls may want more gossip, interior decorators can be proud to display it, and I certainly prefer their chic to the drab *Film Quarterly* format. But a precious fan magazine is surely neither a commercial project nor an artistic one.

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Movie films criticized with the same attention that we give to our choices. Instead of trying to prove the idiocy of the other side, she might more usefully try to prove by writing film criticism that her brand is more than a string of value judgments, interspersed with high school lit. crit. and sophomore sex talk. —IAN A. CAMERON, MARK SHIVAS, PAUL MAYERSBERG, V. F. PERKINS. (Editorial Board, *Movie*).

CRITICISM AND KIDS' GAMES

1. In reply to the editors of *Movie*. If my "main argument" is not to be honored with a reply but "can be left to fall by itself," why dishonor me, yourselves, and criticism with these slurs and quibbles, invalid implications, petty misinterpretations? I thought better of the editors of *Movie* than they, apparently, think of themselves. (If they can go to so much trouble to publish an *auteur* journal, why decide to save themselves "the trouble of answering her article as a whole"? If my argument will fall by itself, why resist the chance to knock it over and have done with it? They don't usually disdain such child's play.)

I think it is more than a little disingenuous for these gentlemen to say that the *auteur* theory is "a handy rule-of-thumb for picking out the films we want to see . . . although this method interests us most, there are other, equally valid, ways of looking at films" and a few pages later to say, "there are, alas, no female critics." For what could disqualify such women as Dilys Powell, Penelope Gilliatt, Penelope Houston, Arlene Croce and others from being considered critics except that they do not share in the true faith—they do not subscribe to the *auteur* theory? And why that offensive, hypocritical little "alas"—as if the editors of *Movie* regretted that women were not intellectually strong enough to support the rigors of their kind of criticism.

Gentlemen, though women in my part of the world rarely see writing on lavatory walls, I can't have missed much if what you impute to me is an example. I think if I chose to provide a "context" of "lavatory-wall connotations" for a film, I should have better judgment than to select a film by Howard Hawks. And if I had wished or intended to "discredit" you as homosexuals, it would never have occurred to me to suggest that you were of "the rugged all-male variety."

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so time and energy-consuming that the rubbish remains and is added to. The more Sarris writes of "systematic reappraisal" the more confusion piles up around him. This Hercules fills his own Augean Stables, and types up little lists to clean them out.

Sarris' "categories" of directors are a good index to his "systematic" approach (1. Pantheon Directors; 2. Second Line; 3. Third Line; 4. Esoterica; 5. Beyond the Fringe; 6. Fallen Idols; 7. Likable But Elusive; 8. Minor Disappointments; 9. Oddities and One Shots; 10. Research Problems; 11. Other Directors). It's people who think those are acceptable categories who feel the need for categories.

What are we to make of Sarris' re-evaluations of American film history? How can one answer a bible? The task would be endless, and, perhaps, pointless. I suggest another approach: an empirical test that anyone can make for himself. Here are some of the films which Sarris, in a "weighted critical valuation" has selected as important: *Parnell, Love Affair, Strange Cargo, Comrade X, Random Harvest, Stage Door Canteen, So Proudly We Hail, Keeper of the Flame, Spellbound, Centennial Summer, Undercurrent, Somewhere in the Night, The Fugitive, Unconquered, Forever Amber, The Foxes of Harrow, The Secret Beyond the Door, Whirlpool, The Beautiful Blonde from Bashful Bend, American Guerilla in the Philippines, The Baron of Arizona, Rancho Notorious, Torch Song, Anatahan, Johnny Guitar, The Long Gray Line, Jet Pilot, The Court Martial of Billy Mitchell.* Here are some of the films he rejects, under the heading of "False Reputations": *Counsellor-at-Law, The Thin Man, These Three, Wuthering Heights, The Stars Look Down, Roxie Hart, The Ox-Bow Incident, None But the Lonely Heart, Murder, My Sweet, The Treasure of Sierra Madre, The Heiress, Intruder in the Dust, The Men, Detective Story, From Here to Eternity, The Member of the Wedding, On the Waterfront, Beat the Devil, Bad Day at Black Rock, The Blackboard Jungle, Baby Doll, A Kid for Two Farthings, Paths of Glory, Twelve Angry Men, The Horse's Mouth, Room at the Top, Look Back in Anger, The Nun's Story, Sons and Lovers, The Hustler, Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, The Manchurian Candidate, A Taste of Honey, Billy Budd, Lawrence of Arabia, Whistle Down the Wind.* I suggest that anyone impressed with Sarris' criticism go to see any five films of the first group and any five films of the second group, and decide for himself if Sarris deserves to be taken seriously. I do not say that the films of group 2 are all good films but I think that they are incomparably more interesting (in content, technique, performances—or any other way you want to look at them) than Sarris' selections.

If, after making this test, you think perhaps the fault is in you, that you haven't perceived the *mise-en-scène* or whatever it was that made Sarris' selections important, that after all the writing about the *auteur* theory, there must be *something* in his arguments, let me suggest you make a further test on his prose. Can you really tell what he's talking about? "Lang is the cerebral tragedian of the cinema, and his lapses into absurdity are the evidence of a remote sagacity, an intellect without intelligence." Try to make sense out of his distinctions. "Where Huston displays his material, Hawks projects his." (Or, if you like cosmetic criticism, there's "Bogart is taller and more heroic under Hawks than under Huston.") Try to make sense out of his epigrams; in relation to von Stroheim he says, "The mark of genius is an obsession with an irrelevant detail." Notice how often he explains the good work of a despised director by attributing it to the designer or the cameraman or the writer or the actors ("*The Little Foxes* owes more to Toland's camera than to Wyler's direction, and *The Letter* still reverberates somewhat with the repressed passion of Bette Davis and James Stephenson.") Or, going all the way—"Zinnemann's direction is consistently inferior to his subjects, his genres, his players and his technicians." In other words, if Zinnemann makes a good movie, it's the work of 6 other guys or perhaps 60 other guys, and even the consistency of his making pretty good movies—which might seem to indicate that he has a certain amount of ability—simply proves that he is consistently inferior to the 6 or 60 other guys—variable though the groups may be for each picture. Zinnemann, as it happens, has not made any real clinkers; but if he had, we may be sure that in Sarris' book, he would be totally responsible for *them*. As Sarris ticks them off, the directors he doesn't like made good movies through luck and the skill of others, but their bad films are always proof of their incompetence.

Sarris' *auteur* theory is a kid's view of life—that men are the captains of their souls, the masters of their fate, that if they've got the desire, the will, nothing's going to stop them. If this view has any meaning, it is its inspirational meaning for us—particularly as adolescents—but it's not a guide for interpreting or judging the actions of others. Growing up is a process of perceiving obstacles, evaluating compromises, and discovering that no matter how much we may want to burst the bounds of experience, there is only so much we can do. We learn to accept our failures and weaknesses, our limitations, even our despair at our limitations. But the kids' view of life is still the stock-in-trade of action melodrama: the good man is the strong man who can't be licked. This, transferred to cinema aesthetics, is, I am a little embarrassed to point out, Sarris' view of the *auteur:* you can't keep a good man down. (This may perhaps help to explain why Sarris regards it as proof of Hawks' superiority to Huston that Bogart is taller, more heroic in Hawks films, and why he doesn't see or perhaps care that, whether taller or shorter, Bogart has dimensions in films like *The Maltese Falcon, The Treasure of Sierra Madre,* and *The African Queen* that aren't even relevant to *The Big Sleep* or *To Have and Have Not.)*

4. I'd be tempted to say that the *auteur* critics were on the river of no return except for various indications that kids' games can serve adult purposes. There's a streak of opportunism a yard wide in some of these critics who devise an aesthetics that flatters the commercially successful directors. The idolatrous Bogdanovich comes out of an interview gushing like Hedda Hopper: Hitchcock's "thoughts on cinema are simply breathtaking" or "The next day, Jerry Lewis showed me a just-completed print of his latest film, *The Nutty Professor* . . . It was a revelation . . . Lewis has blossomed on his own . . .", etc. Many of our critics—and not only those of the *auteur* variety—demean the critical function by suggesting that it is merely a preparatory step toward becoming "creative" like their gods. As others, besides Sarris, may assume that I share in the editorial position of this magazine, may I state that I am not on the editorial board of *Film Quarterly* (I've never even met half of those who are) and the Editor's Notebook in the last issue, like so many film magazine editorials these days, reminded me of those *Variety* ads: "Available for immediate booking." I don't see how shallow, unimaginative critics who haven't even earned their corruption are going to be much help to American film-making, but I think it might be a boon to criticism if those who have so little respect for the honor of the profession that they are using it for contacts and opportunities "graduate" into production. — PAULINE KAEL

[ED. NOTE: I have long known that at least one of our critics has an imagination—a little paranoid, maybe, but certainly not shallow. Still, it remains astonishing that in Miss Kael's eyes an appeal for a healthier interchange of roles between critics and film-makers becomes "opportunism," a job-seeking gimmick, or some devious way of denigrating criticism. What is she so worried about? Why this querulous, defensive tone? Has anybody insisted that she try making movies? Has anybody inferred that, since we print articles by her, she approves of everything else in the journal? There are some writers whose forte is generating heat rather than light, a vice which restricts them (unnecessarily and sadly) to second-rank performance.

Criticism is a personal art, and critical debates have a way of becoming quickly acrimonious and petty. It would be reassuring if any further contribution to the great *auteur* controversy could rise from the level of personalities to the considerable issues involved. A return to good manners might be possible if we all reflect on Trauffaut's advice that critics today ought to be "calm."—E. C.]