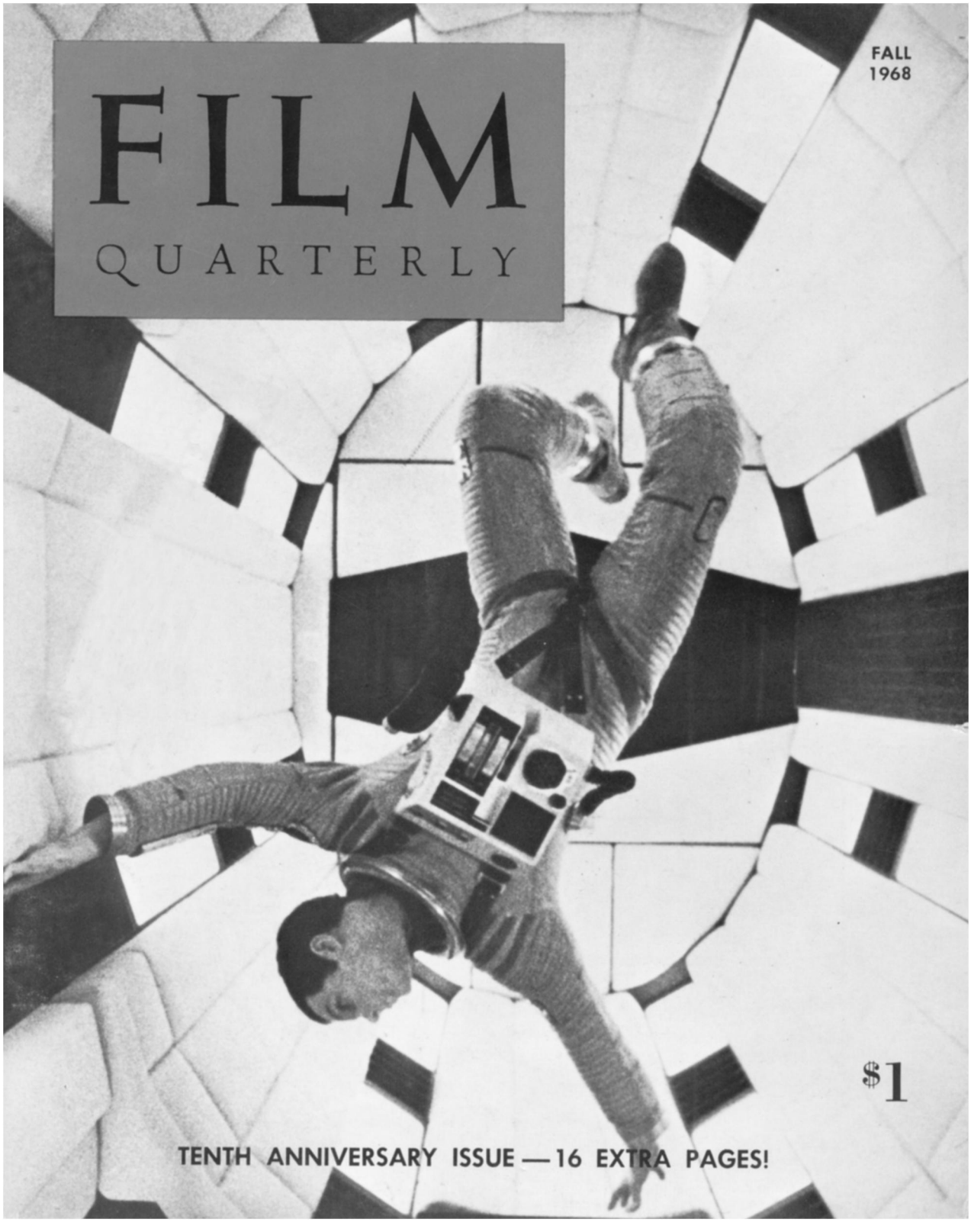
FILM QUARTERLY

FALL
1968



$1

TENTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE — 16 EXTRA PAGES!

THE KINETIC ART

3 FILM PROGRAMS / A TRAVELLING GALLERY SHOW FOR 12 NEW DIRECTORS
26 NEW FILMS / 16 FILM MAKERS / ABSTRACT / DRAMATIC / POP / ANIMATED

The key new work from the world's leading creative film makers: Walerian Borowczyk, Jan Svankmajer, Julien Pappé, Jordan Belson, Zoltan Huszarik, Istvan Ventilla, Bruno Bozzetto, Hellmuth Costard, Charles Matton, Peter Whitehead, Ivan Renc, Pavel Hobl, Oimel Mai, Diourka Medveczky, Helmut Herbst.

Imported for series bookings to art centers, museums and colleges. THE KINETIC ART, Universal Education and Visual Arts, 221 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10003

VOL. XXII, No. 1 Fall 1968

ARTICLES

INTERVIEW

REVIEWS

SHORT NOTICES

BOOKS

Cover: Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*

Editor's Notebook

LOOKING BACKWARD
(Some Personal Notes Upon FQ's Tenth Birthday)

When I first found out about films, it was through a kind of secret society known as the Documentary Film Group: a student film society at the University of Chicago. Unlike too many "student organizations" of today's multiversities, which use student fees for their operations but are controlled by the administration, Docfilm was an independent affair, full of internecine disputes, struggles for succession, and the glories of self-propelled activity: it put on a taxing program of two double-features per week and focused serious interest in films (by no means only documentaries) on a campus not exactly surrounded by culture.

In those days, being interested in films was distinctly strange. Our president for a while, besides being the dedicated kind of old red who lectured in a monotone about Film & Reality, was also a member of the campus Rocket Society, which was then considered a half-baked gang of visionaries. Although it was Chaplin who lured me into my first business meeting of Docfilm (and, to be perfectly candid, the mistaken belief that a girl named Marjorie was a member) I soon discovered what my rural and filmless childhood had given me no chance to know—that films were a marvellous and mixed medium, combining chance and patterns, passion and precision, life and craft, in mystifying and sometimes overwhelming ways. At Docfilm we had a scholarly bent; we went systematically through the arcane catalogues of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, Brandon, Cinema 16. We showed

FILM QUARTERLY is published by the University of California Press, Berkeley, California 94720. $1.00 per copy, $4.00 per year in the U.S., Canada, and Pan-America. Special two-year subscription rate: $7.20. Elsewhere: $1.80 per copy, $7.20 per year. Editor: ERNEST CALLENBACH. Assistant to the Editor. MARTINA FLACH-AGNAR. New York Editors: ROBERT HUGHES and JUDITH SHATNOFF. Los Angeles Editor: STEPHEN FARBER. Paris Editor: GINETTE BILLARD. Rome Editor: GIDEON BACHMANN. London Editor. PETER COWIE. Advisory Editorial Board: ANDRIES DEINUM, AUGUST FRUGE, HUGH GRAY, ALBERT JOHNSON, NEAL OXENHANDLER, COLIN YOUNG. Views expressed in signed articles are those of the authors. Indexed in *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Art Index* and *Social Sciences and Humanities Index*. Published quarterly. Second-class postage paid at Berkeley, California. Printed in U. S. A.

VOL. XXII, No. 1 Fall 1968

ARTICLES

INTERVIEW

REVIEWS

SHORT NOTICES

BOOKS

Cover: Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*

Editor's Notebook

LOOKING BACKWARD
(Some Personal Notes Upon FQ's Tenth Birthday)

When I first found out about films, it was through a kind of secret society known as the Documentary Film Group: a student film society at the University of Chicago. Unlike too many "student organizations" of today's multiversities, which use student fees for their operations but are controlled by the administration, Docfilm was an independent affair, full of internecine disputes, struggles for succession, and the glories of self-propelled activity: it put on a taxing program of two double-features per week and focused serious interest in films (by no means only documentaries) on a campus not exactly surrounded by culture.

In those days, being interested in films was distinctly strange. Our president for a while, besides being the dedicated kind of old red who lectured in a monotone about Film & Reality, was also a member of the campus Rocket Society, which was then considered a half-baked gang of visionaries. Although it was Chaplin who lured me into my first business meeting of Docfilm (and, to be perfectly candid, the mistaken belief that a girl named Marjorie was a member) I soon discovered what my rural and filmless childhood had given me no chance to know—that films were a marvellous and mixed medium, combining chance and patterns, passion and precision, life and craft, in mystifying and sometimes overwhelming ways. At Docfilm we had a scholarly bent; we went systematically through the arcane catalogues of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, Brandon, Cinema 16. We showed

FILM QUARTERLY is published by the University of California Press, Berkeley, California 94720. $1.00 per copy, $4.00 per year in the U.S., Canada, and Pan-America. Special two-year subscription rate: $7.20. Elsewhere: $1.80 per copy, $7.20 per year. Editor: ERNEST CALLENBACH. Assistant to the Editor. MARTINA FLACH-AGNAR. New York Editors: ROBERT HUGHES and JUDITH SHATNOFF. Los Angeles Editor: STEPHEN FARBER. Paris Editor: GINETTE BILLARD. Rome Editor: GIDEON BACHMANN. London Editor. PETER COWIE. Advisory Editorial Board: ANDRIES DEINUM, AUGUST FRUGE, HUGH GRAY, ALBERT JOHNSON, NEAL OXENHANDLER, COLIN YOUNG. Views expressed in signed articles are those of the authors. Indexed in *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Art Index* and *Social Sciences and Humanities Index*. Published quarterly. Second-class postage paid at Berkeley, California. Printed in U. S. A.

everything, as a good film society should, trying to be stringently catholic, even to the point of booking films that only one member really fought for. And we had a profound sense of being on the unknown, growing edge of something: the new understanding of a beleaguered art, precious, endangered on every hand by commercialism, censorship, and the manifold sins that sound had made film heir to. We were disciples, and we spread the word as we could, with the devotion of disciples. We read and studied, we schemed to stay alive financially, we prepared long program notes, we worked many unpaid hours to carry out the actual arduous labor of publicizing and showing our films. It was lonely work, but serious, and in a way exhilarating.

Twenty years later, active film societies exist on literally hundreds of campuses. The distribution of 16mm films is becoming big business: Contemporary Films has merged with McGraw-Hill, Audio Films with Macmillan; even Brandon is reported negotiating a merger. Progress, surely? Or will the major corporations which have snatched up the formerly independent distributors play it safe, releasing only conventional, acceptable pictures? If another McCarthyism arises out of the frustrations of a continuing Vietnam war, will these corporate giants keep on supplying "subversive" films, as Brandon did? Or will the standards that apply to television and textbooks—precooked controversy, conventional wisdom—also be applied to film?

The old-established film schools (USC, UCLA, NYU) have been joined by others with full film programs; many other universities are gingerly offering film courses of one kind or another; colleges and secondary schools are incorporating film study into their curricula from one end of the country to the other. Film books need no longer be hunted up in secondhand bookstores; Rudolf Arnheim's *Film as Art,* which our Docfilm library possessed in its rare British edition, may be found in any paperback store and sells thousands of copies every year. *Film Quarterly,* which uses many long words and makes no attempt to be popular, may be seen on newsstands next to *Popular Mechanics* or *Hot Rod.*

And where young people during my Docfilm years thought of film as outside the pale of the established arts (drama, poetry, fiction, painting, and music were still the *real* arts, with histories, duly certified basic works, and accepted canons of taste) nowadays professors of literature bemoan their students' faint interest in literary art, and find them willing to talk seriously only about movies. Hairy young men who would have once said they were poets now declare themselves film-makers, and invite girls over to see a few reels of their latest 8mm footage.

Is this satisfying spread of film enlightenment and activity perhaps only another manifestation of Callenbach's Second Law, *viz.,* "Success Is Failure"—though the principle itself was derived from a study of Hollywood career lines? Is the real frontier now elsewhere, in computer art, or portrait painting, or the home fabrication of molotov cocktails? I have no answer, except to propose a lightning tour of the film scene as it seems to me to have evolved during the ten years *Film Quarterly* has existed; and that will lead us to still more questions.

The State of the Art

Are the movies "falling apart," as Pauline Kael has charged, because the plot structures of many current (and popular) films are not the neatly built structures of earlier American movies? This is not merely a trivial debate over changing tastes; it raises the larger cultural question of what is happening to form in contemporary art generally. "Perhaps," writes Miss Kael, "people prefer incoherent, meaningless movies because they are not required to remember or connect," and she goes on to discuss the misfortune that is "the acceptance of art as technique." After some experience with teaching them, I do not share her worry that young audiences will be bulldozed into reacting to movies in the safe, anxious ways they have been

taught to react to Shakespeare; but it seems to me that narrative form *has* certainly been taking a beating, and we critics have not been actively enough exploring the implications of this. I do not find the fracturing of old narrative standards a menace in itself. Jiggling a time sequence to no purpose seems to me exactly as tiresome as keeping a time sequence chronological to no purpose—no more and no less. An episodic structure, like that of Godard's *La Chinoise*, may seem intriguing to some viewers and irritating to others; but this phenomenon is at least partly explainable by differing expectations about the "allowable" forms of film. People who are reasonably willing to let poets write lyrics which are non-narrative do not always extend the privilege to film-makers, whose control of the viewer's time is absolute and literal (unless he closes his eyes). Yet of course our reactions even to a strictly orthodox narrative film, like *The Thomas Crown Affair* or *The Graduate*, depend on many substantial non-narrative questions: whether we find the characters credible and interesting, whether the atmosphere created by the film seems in good faith, whether the imagery is rich or dull, whether the ideas conveyed in the style and in the dialogue have any relevance to our concerns, and so on. *Une Femme est Une Femme* and *Pierrot le Fou*, two Godard films I do not greatly prize, could have been made with conventional plot structures; but that would not have made them any more interesting. It is doubtful whether *La Chinoise*, or *8 ½*, or *This Sporting Life* could be given any other treatment than they have. The real question, then, is whether contemporary structural innovations have not been essential for artistic reasons—whether, that is, the sacrifice of the kind of action "suspense" associated with the old narrative structures has not been obligatory for certain kinds of films. Films like *Persona* or *L'Avventura* do not goad us to keep wondering "What's going to happen next?" The implicit motto of most modern films is rather "What the hell is going on here?"

Miss Kael is very impatient with the idea that time is important as a "theme" in films. She hates *Marienbad;* and indeed *Marienbad* is a crucial case. For it is at least arguable that a film about obsession could literally not be made convincingly with the old linear causal structure —which is precisely what obsessions negate. Hence Robbe-Grillet and Resnais had to construct a style where the regular flow of time and causation did not obtain, or only haltingly. The result may be, as I think, a lasting work, or it may be, as some believe, an empty bore; but it is a singular achievement, a peculiarly French display of rigor and precision. Nobody is required to like it, or to like Descartes, or Citroën cars. But there is surely room for it in the canon of what cinema can do—unless we wish to close off certain areas of human experience as out of bounds to film-makers.

Percy Lubbock's *Craft of Fiction* is a book for which we badly need a cinematic counterpart, because most major stylistic developments of the past decade have been matters of what we might call point-of-view. The narrative structure of the old Hollywood film in the thirties through fifties was that of the omniscient narrator, who could know everything and see everything at all times. The camera, like God, had "the whole world in his hands." Films were structured by universally accepted rules: unless a dissolve or a fade intervened, geographical and temporal continuity was assumed, reinforced by the aural continuity of the sound track. A film made on these stolid assumptions seems cloddish to us now. Even *Petulia*, with its arbitrary contrivances of structure, seems nearer to an honest artistic stance than the regular Hollywood article: we can take it seriously because its camerawork and editing *are not literal.* It is not made in the routine artistic bad faith that underlies the ordinary narrative film, say *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, or *The Fox*, where no difficult questions of point of view have been allowed to arise out of the bland camera's presence.

Why do we now think it immoral of film-makers to pretend to omniscience, when earlier viewers were perfectly willing to accord that as the artist's privilege or indeed his duty? One

thing that has happened is that the visual image has lost its magic quality because of TV and *cinéma-vérité*. It has been borne in upon us by the casual sloppiness of TV camerawork that the existence of a visual image requires the presence of a taking lens, which some poor slob is operating. Traditional documentaries never lost the luster of artfulness; Flaherty's skies were filtered, and Grierson's workers were posed. But we now know, from the direct cinema films, what life looks like when it is captured with very little interference. We know instinctively, by the feel and movement of the image, that the theatrical film is built upon interference, control, preparation. We accept the presence of the camera there too, but we demand that the artist acknowledge its presence. In return we accord the artist certain new freedoms. His performers may now look at the lens—formerly a sacred taboo. His film may bear visible marks of having been worked upon: obtrusive editing, special titles. Most precious of all, he is no longer obliged to pretend that his film came into existence automatically or magically. The modern film is visibly constructed by the hand of man, and not by the eye of God. It has become, for sensitive viewers, slightly embarrassing to watch a film built on other assumptions—like watching a man who doesn't realize that he has a hole in his pants. The modern artist whom we find comfortable has sewed on a bright-colored patch, or is busy exploring the hole with his finger. With him, we know where we are.

The State of Film Culture

Every television viewer—which means just about everybody—has some grasp of the changes outlined above. But understanding of film developments in the sense of following the appearance of new artists, making an effort to grasp the significance of new trends, has been spreading to a larger group of informed and curious students, film-society people, film-makers, and so on. Clearly, the chosen people have multiplied. More Americans now know far more about films than they did in 1958. They have seen more films, and more varied kinds of films. They read more film books and magazines. They support film festivals in San Francisco and New York. It is no longer necessary for us to lecture on why film is an art; *Life* magazine takes care of that. We may not have a Cinémathèque such as they boast in Paris, but we have admirable repertory theaters in several major metropolitan areas. Censorship restraints on film have been chiseled away through the decade, thanks to legal actions by exhibitors and distributors, until only a few local ordinances remain; the screen has been accorded the same constitutional protections as other forms of expression. The feared Hollywood Code, by which a narrow Catholic moralism was forced upon a compliant industry, resulting in the hypocrisy and perverted puritanism of earlier decades, has been revised and reinterpreted, like some awkward early encyclical, to accommodate the big companies' need to compete in sexual candor as well as sadism and violence.

Before World War II, it would not have been far wrong to say that the only people who knew anything substantial about movies were the people in the studios. The situation has now changed so drastically that cynics ask whether anybody *in* the industry knows anything about movies—and that this is not an idle jest may be learned from those who have, for instance, gone through the experience of having their film publicized by a big movie company, or talked to a Hollywood movie-maker about his reactions to "foreign films." Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that people in the business care about the business; people outside care about films. There are now literally thousands of Americans outside the industry who have watched films carefully enough, or made enough films of their own, that they can tell when camerawork is incompetent or editing is sloppy; they can spot phoney lighting; they laugh at idiotic dialogue; they can tell when a film-maker is making it, and when he is just wasting their time. It is often startling for Hollywood film-makers to come into contact with young

people, even those outside film circles; one gathers that they had not expected to be found out, or subjected to such embarrassing questions. Intelligent film columns appear in most mass-circulation magazines, and in many smaller periodicals; they are read by millions of people.

Surveys of the general mass audience, nationwide, urban and rural, tells us it is younger and better educated than before. Even old-timers in the industry do not seem to talk any more about "the 12-year-old mind." Theaters are not being called Bijou or Embassy any more, but Cinema II or New Metro. Mass audiences have no difficulty in following *Tom Jones* or *Help!*, perhaps because the visual acuity they presuppose is no greater than that of the better television commercials. Camp films—the would-be-serious middlebrow films of the thirties and forties—are popular not only in homosexual circles but because self-consciousness has come to seem inescapeable anyway; so why not enjoy it in Bogey or Bette? The audiences are growing hippier, warier, less easy to fool. Yet they keep coming into the theaters; and money is going into the construction of new walk-in theaters, while drive-ins become more and more the exclusive preserve of the family trade and the young who need a place to make out.

The State of the Industry

Hollywood, like Italy, may be "only a geographical expression"; its sound stages are filled nowadays with TV quickies, while many movies are shot elsewhere. Yet even after the dissolution of the old studio system and the rise of the "independent" method of film financing, the industry has hardly become the welter of small competing firms a naive economist might have expected. Some power has indeed been diffused, from the former studios toward their former employees: the high-priced stars, a diminishing band who have now incorporated themselves and operate on percentages not salaries. And the initiative has moved from studio executive offices to the offices of packagers—independent producers and agencies—who juggle tested properties from fiction and the stage with tested performers, and come up with satisfactory combinations. But there is still somebody the packages must be satisfactory to; and as it happens these are the major distributing firms —the remnants of the old film trust—which, like the body of a beheaded chicken, go on running around and flapping their wings.

The name of their game is desperation, for the old rules have failed, and the risks are rising. There is no such thing as a safe picture any more; audiences have grown unaccountably fickle and unpredictable. Things are obviously changing when *The Graduate* challenges *The Sound of Music* at the box office. But what are they changing to? Nobody knows, and everybody knows that nobody knows.

A healthy situation, ripe for important organizational innovations, one might imagine; yet the one thing that seems certain is that the industrial process of manufacturing films will *not* change. An occasional picture like *The Graduate* may succeed because vast numbers of young people think it is expressing their attitudes (with a terrible irony, they may be right). Such flukes can keep the game going for a long time. Over the next decade the budgets and crews of Hollywood (read "Hollywood-financed and -distributed") pictures will certainly grow still more extravagant. A business is measured by the dollar volume thereof; and the personal interests of its participants are served by monetary expansion, so long as the risks do not get out of hand, because there are bigger pies for everybody to get a slice of.

Going by most lists I know of, not one of the ten or twenty best films since the invention of the art has cost more than one million dollars to produce. Yet a picture with that small a budget is almost impossible to finance in the American film industry today. Americans think big. It is only the results whose size is questionable. And this is not merely an aberration of one small industry. The American method of making films is like the American method of waging war in Vietnam: it involves immense expenditures but it is indiscriminate in its ob-

jectives; it provides many lucrative jobs, utilizes ingenious technology, yet the operation is conducted out of touch with significant human reality. Both the war game and the film game have their own reality, of course: they are conducted with real guns, real cameras, and real people, some of whom mean well, at least when they begin to play. But the rules forbid taking into account certain discomfiting facts: that art is produced by artists, that people love their countries and defend them bitterly. Filmmakers who work like artists (who insist on doing their own work and controlling its finished form) are like Vietnamese who insist on running their own country. They refuse to play the game. They are a threat. Hence Godard's slogan: Create many Vietnams in the film industries of the world.

It is little realized that the American method of film manufacture has been spreading rapidly, in the past several years, on a wave of American finance that has at last penetrated European production to a significant extent. American control of the patterns of film distribution in Europe (and the rest of the capitalist world) was established by the twenties. American companies now control much production not only in England, where this is abetted by government subsidies intended to protect the home industry, but also in France and Italy. Budgets have been rising in Europe too; only the Swedes, with the thrifty example of Bergman always before them, seem to have escaped so far.

Moreover, through communication-satellite agreements and related developments, we must anticipate that in the next decade American interests will come to have an important degree of control over communication media throughout the capitalist world, and the international homogenization of films and television will make a Mustang commercial like *A Man and a Woman* look like virgin Gallic culture.

I do not argue that the emergence of individual talents, of the kind *Film Quarterly* has always watched for, has become impossible in the American film industry; but only a fatuous optimist would think it has been getting easier. We are currently witnessing a small boom in the stock of writers, largely on the strength of the unexpected success of *Bonnie and Clyde;* and greater influence for the writers of original scripts could hardly hurt an industry so parasitic on ideas formed and tested in other media. But the proving of new talents is rigorously commercial; if *Bonnie and Clyde* had failed like *Mickey One,* it would be cited as another case of insufficient caution in trusting untried materials. There are no modest successes in today's Hollywood, and the writer-producers or writer-directors will, like everybody else, have to make it big or not make it at all.

Once upon a time, we are told, the giant studios with their picture-a-week schedules year in and year out maintained a relatively rational apprenticeship system, with promising young men on low salaries making shorts, to show what they could do and learn their profession. Moreover, an astounding percentage of the men in their sixties and seventies who have until very recently been the workhorses of Hollywood (men like Ford, Hawks, Wellman, Vidor, Stevens, Cukor) got into the industry in its early days, before the studios had entered their full-blown factory phase. It was possible, in those days, for a young man with some talent and moderate gifts as a con man to persuade a small producer to let him try something with a couple of thousand dollars. No neophyte can be trusted with a couple of million. The result is that there is practically only one route of entry into film directing at present, and that is from television directing. Yet, since the early-fifties advent of Frankenheimer, Ritt, Lumet, and Mann, this route has not been traveled by any significant talents; evidently the experience of TV direction does something to people. They come through like Elliott Silverstein or Stuart Rosenberg: competent craftsmen in a small way, but with no original vision. Mike Nichols, with a string of Broadway staging successes as credentials, directed an excellent version of *Virginia Woolf;* but after *The Graduate* we realize that much of *Virginia Woolf*'s stylistic vitality

depended on Haskell Wexler's camerawork, and we look forward uncertainly to *Catch-22*. Francis Ford Coppola parlayed stage connections into a fashionable bit of kookery in *You're a Big Boy Now;* after *Finian's Rainbow* he is attempting a very personal project in *The Rain People,* which he is shooting with a workable-sized crew although with industry money.

Coppola's method of work—which is the method used by the great American pioneers, of course, as well as contemporary European directors—was only possible after lengthy and difficult union negotiations, and it is important to understand this aspect of industrial film-making. The industry has got the unions it deserves. The union position is simple: if movies are multimillion-dollar operations where stars, producers, and directors are paid fantastic sums, then the wealth should be spread around to the working men who push and haul, string the cables, run the machines. Heretofore, the unions have not been willing to recognize that other kinds of movies also exist, with modest budgets and where the film-makers and actors are paid modest salaries, and which cannot sustain the costs of huge studio-type crews. Some movies are being made in the world, and even in the United States, by crews of a dozen men. Serious movies not only *can* be made by small crews, they *need* to be made by small crews. Sooner or later, union regulations must take account of the basic quantum-jump in film budgeting; rules that are fitting and proper for monster-budget pictures need to be complemented by rules that are sensible for small-budget pictures. In the long run, a film industry that has no place for small-budget films will find itself without new talents. Indeed it is the panicky realization that its old hands are retiring, and few youngsters are around to take their place, that has led the industry to support the American Film Institute and the film schools, with their schemes for the training of new directors.

It has not been lost upon industry figures that notions of cinematic style and interest have greatly widened since World War II; the commercial successes of *La Dolce Vita, 400 Blows, Tom Jones, Hard Day's Night* each pushed back a little the previously accepted ideas of what theatrical films should be. Not only the commercial confidence of the industry but its moral confidence seem to have suffered; the malaise of intelligent and talented Hollywood film-makers confronted by the free and original achievements of *8 ½* or *The Silence* or *Blow-Up* has been considerable. Nobody likes to feel he is being left behind, and one senses the bitterness when American directors defensively quote their box-office take as opposed to the Europeans'. They cry all the way to the bank, no doubt, but that's better than not crying at all.

Outside the Industry

In any enterprise, distribution is the key. Faced with the massive caution of the established industry, film people in the past decade have pushed in other directions. Interest in foreign and short films has been fostered and served by the 16mm distributing firms and the 35mm importing firms; the result has been a kind of shadow industry, by-passing the regular theatrical system. Persistently, although against great obstacles, independent producers have made feature films for this market; and countless short-film makers have made films, sometimes for no market at all. Even the experimental film-makers, who are not very interested in the business side of things, have organized cooperative distribution centers to book their films. The Film-Makers Co-op in New York led the way; now there is also the Canyon Cinema Co-op in San Francisco. Though undercapitalized and understaffed, they serve a growing number of people, and send back a high proportion of revenue to the film-makers. (Thus, like co-ops in the grocery business, they give a competitive check against the profit-making firms.)

The volume of work being done in 16mm has become very large in recent years—that is, films made by experimentalists, students, documentary people, outside the special world of

the 16mm sponsored film. Much of this work is not very good, but then neither is much industry work. What counts is that, compared to the days when Maya Deren and a few others championed the cause of the personal, "avant-garde" film, dozens of people with talent are busy, and their films are being seen. The center of creative gravity, that mysterious theoretical point, has moved in the United States to a point hovering over the boundaries between the industry and outside film-makers. When historians get around to adding up influences, the names of Bruce Conner, Ron Rice, and Jordan Belson are likely to loom larger than those of Richard Lester and Stanley Kubrick; for they are the men who invented the new forms that *Help!* and *The Trip* and *2001* later cannibalized.

In a curious way, film history is beginning to repeat itself. For new developments in 16mm technology (the light, portable camera, and the portable synchronized tape-recorder) have restored film to something like the simplicity it had in the earliest days of 35mm. We are approaching, in fact, a curious and critical point in our definition of what "a film" is. During the era of Hollywood's dominance, culminating in the elephantine budgets of today, a film has been something requiring the services of several hundred employees to manufacture, the investment of several million dollars, and the commitment of a giant organizational mechanism to distribute. But what if a film is, as it was once thought, only a band of images which can be made by anybody with talent and a couple of thousand dollars? What if both synchronous sound and image can be recorded by two men, operating without wires, cables, lights, reflectors, motor-generators, portable dressing rooms, refreshment trucks? What if it can be distributed through film societies, colleges, museums, 16mm-equipped art theaters? Above all, what happens if ambitious beginning film-makers with the most talent begin to make films for this audience rather than to beat at the iron gates of Hollywood?

We face still other puzzling prospects in 8mm. A British device will shortly be available in this country which synchronizes any 8mm battery-driven camera to any tape-recorder, at a cost of less than $100. Inexpensive editing and mixing devices will presumably follow. When this happens, any talented person will be able to make films with the flexibility of 35mm, though naturally without the photographic definition. And videotape recorders are now becoming cheap enough to be widely available. Does this matter? Judging from what has been happening with student films, if you give several hundred aspiring film-makers the equipment and stock to work with, at least a couple of them will turn out to be highly talented; one in five hundred may be a really interesting and original artist. Such ratios are not pejorative; they apply also to people who get the chance to make studio films. But what happens to this statistical game if ten thousand or a hundred thousand people begin to put themselves forward as film-makers?

Such a remarkable development, which is more than a gleam in the eye of Eastman Kodak, does not mean that we are about to enter a period when film art takes some kind of qualitative leap to higher levels. But it *does* mean that film at last can operate on the same basis as writing or painting: the means of production are within the grasp of any dedicated person, and the testing of talents can proceed in a more natural fashion. Jean Renoir, whose family had gained a modest fortune from his father's paintings, once remarked that it was a big help to a beginning film-maker if he was rich. What we can expect of the new technology is to diminish the extra obstacle to artistic achievement that the heavy costs of film-making have posed since film became heavy industry. This is not to say that it was easy to become Méliès or Porter or Griffith, any more than it has been easy to become Bruce Baillie or Yoji Kuri or Chris Marker. Nor is it to say that it will be easy, even given work of the highest caliber, to secure public circulation and recognition for it—just as it is not easy to get novels or poetry published. Great notoriety and financial success may now be coming more readily

to certain artists, including film-makers, who touch a nerve of the mass society and have a talent for publicity, such as Andy Warhol. But for most serious film-makers, the practicalities of their situation will not be easy. Serious film-makers, however, know that only a fool expects the artist's situation or his work to be easy. Like science and politics, art is worth doing because it is *not* easy.

The State of our Auxiliary Institutions

The Museum of Modern Art in New York, together with the Cinémathèque in Paris, first led the way; today archives exist in many countries, industriously conserving both films and early machinery, film literature, and so on. General museums have begun to regard film as one of their proper concerns. The San Franciso Museum of Art struck out boldly with the Art in Cinema series in the fifties, followed by the early mixed-media shows called Vortex. Today museums across the country are sponsoring miniature "film festivals." Recently a novel and promising archive for experimental, personal films has been set up in the new Art Museum at the University of California, Berkeley; it will conserve the 16mm work of artists whose films have heretofore often been at the mercy of household fires and other hazards. The national collection of films in the Library of Congress has been reviewed and rationalized under a new film-trained curator; and recently, through grants from the American Film Institute, the remaining problem of transferring decomposing early films onto more lasting acetate stock has at last been solved. The history of the art, with certain painful exceptions in the form of apparently lost films (among them Stroheim's complete *Greed*), has been secured. And works of film history, though still rare, are being written; slowly but surely, historical scholarship in film is developing a tradition.

When Colin Young described a plan for an American Film Institute in these pages in 1961, it seemed a lovely idea but unlikely to happen. Today, a non-governmental, part-industry, part-foundation organization exists, and is going ahead with ambitious plans to bolster our archives, provide grants for young independent film-makers, perform scholarly and reference services, and improve American film education at all levels. Plans also exist—though fraught with various uncertainties—for feature films to be produced by new film-makers under joint Institute-industry auspices, on "moderate" budgets (about twice Godard's or Bergman's).

Publishers, whose products were after all the first mass medium, no longer routinely reject manuscripts on film. Indeed books about film are sold in numbers that would have been unbelievable a decade ago: books that appeal to dedicated movie-goers and also books of a specialized research nature. Many university libraries are building up respectable film collections that would have been hooted off the shelves by academicians earlier.

And the foundations? Their record is not a bright one, if we take seriously their press releases about providing "risk capital for culture." Ford's admirable $120,000 grant program to a dozen experimental film-makers in 1964 reaped astonishing fruit: Belson's *Re-Entry,* Conner's *Report,* Emschwiller's *Relativity* — three films that will last. Yet a muddled and ignorant attack in *Time* led Ford timidly to draw back from a projected second round. (Nobody bothers to attack the ballet and music projects which consume enormously greater sums.) Recently the Rockefeller foundation began a modest and intelligent set of small grants to experimental film-makers; and even the Guggenheim foundation, whose grants chiefly go to established academicians who don't need them, has given a couple of grants to film-makers. A few ingenious souls have been able to pry money out of local or smaller foundations. But in general foundations wish to back respectable, already successful people; as one foundation mogul wrote to me, "We leave poverty programs to the federal govenment." In plain English, this means that they do not care about artists as much as about their own prestige, and that in particular they do not care about new artists, who are not yet widely known and do not yet have powerful friends and

clients. It is well to keep in mind that, press releases aside, a foundation is basically an entity set up for tax and public-relations purposes. Foundation grants are erratic tidbits, useful but irrelevant to the long-range problem, which is how beginning artists can manage to eat while they are discovering if their talent is significant. That problem will only be solved when we have some kind of guaranteed minimum income, so that those strange and gifted individuals who wish to pursue unremunerative activities like writing or painting or film-making can at least be sure they won't starve while they try it. Work, in the old sense of labor performed for another man's profit, in return for wages, is indeed going out of style. Millions of members of the expense-account middle class have learned this since the war, and it is at last getting through to ordinary working people and labor organizations. "Work" in the advanced technological society is becomnig a formal and partly fictional phenomenon; one watches the dials and buttons, but it isn't necessary to actually *do* much. And so increasing numbers of people are able to contemplate what it would be like to work for something, or on something, that genuinely interests them. (As we students, members of a leisured class, used to do in Docfilm.) A great race is on, in American society, between the massive forces of conflict and disintegration set in motion by Vietnam and the decay of the cities, and forces for new and freer ways of living which are being generated. Film is a weapon in that struggle, for only film can literally show it like it is. But film is also a prize: to the winners will go the images of the future.

DAVID MADDEN

Harlequin's Stick, Charlie's Cane

Most of the best books on the commedia dell'arte appeared in the twenties. Most of them point out, briefly, the parallel between commedia dell'arte and those of Chaplin's tramp. And many writers on silent slapstick point out this Chaplin-commedia parallel. But I know of no detailed, extended comparison. Academic comparisons are often odious, and contrasts are often irrelevant, but they can instruct and delight, though one always risks seeming to make a hysterical discovery of the obvious. We will get a better perspective on silent slapstick if we look at its major parallel in the past; and as it happens there is no better living evidence of what commedia dell'arte was like than American silent slapstick movies.

How can we compare the two when commedia dell'arte played directly to its audience, while silent slapstick reached its audience through a strip of celluloid projected onto a white screen? When commedia plays were often as long as three hours, while silent slapstick movies were much briefer? When five commedia characters wore masks while the faces of silent slapstick characters were only semi-masks. When in commedia there was almost constant verbal dexterity, slapstick noise, music, and color, while silent slapstick was comparatively mute and black-and-white? When the various commedia characters were usually all in the same plays, interacting upon each other as an ensemble, while Charlie, Harold, Buster, Ben, Stan and Ollie usually acted in separate films—as stars—though they may have acted together in early Sennett movies? When except for Harlequin's metempsychosis in Charlie, the commedia stock characters are only vaguely resurrected in silent slapstick characters? When commedia was not transvisualized through the camera and projector, while silent slapstick was? *Even though* one sees clearly that both used stereotyped characters and that improvisation based on a sketchy

clients. It is well to keep in mind that, press releases aside, a foundation is basically an entity set up for tax and public-relations purposes. Foundation grants are erratic tidbits, useful but irrelevant to the long-range problem, which is how beginning artists can manage to eat while they are discovering if their talent is significant. That problem will only be solved when we have some kind of guaranteed minimum income, so that those strange and gifted individuals who wish to pursue unremunerative activities like writing or painting or film-making can at least be sure they won't starve while they try it. Work, in the old sense of labor performed for another man's profit, in return for wages, is indeed going out of style. Millions of members of the expense-account middle class have learned this since the war, and it is at last getting through to ordinary working people and labor organizations. "Work" in the advanced technological society is becomnig a formal and partly fictional phenomenon; one watches the dials and buttons, but it isn't necessary to actually *do* much. And so increasing numbers of people are able to contemplate what it would be like to work for something, or on something, that genuinely interests them. (As we students, members of a leisured class, used to do in Docfilm.) A great race is on, in American society, between the massive forces of conflict and disintegration set in motion by Vietnam and the decay of the cities, and forces for new and freer ways of living which are being generated. Film is a weapon in that struggle, for only film can literally show it like it is. But film is also a prize: to the winners will go the images of the future.

DAVID MADDEN

Harlequin's Stick, Charlie's Cane

Most of the best books on the commedia dell'arte appeared in the twenties. Most of them point out, briefly, the parallel between commedia dell'arte and those of Chaplin's tramp. And many writers on silent slapstick point out this Chaplin-commedia parallel. But I know of no detailed, extended comparison. Academic comparisons are often odious, and contrasts are often irrelevant, but they can instruct and delight, though one always risks seeming to make a hysterical discovery of the obvious. We will get a better perspective on silent slapstick if we look at its major parallel in the past; and as it happens there is no better living evidence of what commedia dell'arte was like than American silent slapstick movies.

How can we compare the two when commedia dell'arte played directly to its audience, while silent slapstick reached its audience through a strip of celluloid projected onto a white screen? When commedia plays were often as long as three hours, while silent slapstick movies were much briefer? When five commedia characters wore masks while the faces of silent slapstick characters were only semi-masks. When in commedia there was almost constant verbal dexterity, slapstick noise, music, and color, while silent slapstick was comparatively mute and black-and-white? When the various commedia characters were usually all in the same plays, interacting upon each other as an ensemble, while Charlie, Harold, Buster, Ben, Stan and Ollie usually acted in separate films—as stars—though they may have acted together in early Sennett movies? When except for Harlequin's metempsychosis in Charlie, the commedia stock characters are only vaguely resurrected in silent slapstick characters? When commedia was not transvisualized through the camera and projector, while silent slapstick was? *Even though* one sees clearly that both used stereotyped characters and that improvisation based on a sketchy

scenario is the pulse of both commedia and silent slapstick? If despite his mask-like deadpan, Buster Keaton is unique, in a vital sense, *all* silent slapstick characters are unique, even Charlie-Harlequin, for what is periodically rejuvenated in comedy is never a mere duplicate of what once died.

A provocative comparison comes not from checking detailed similarities—between characters, for instance—but in finding certain character traits, story elements, comic routines, principles and methods of comedy common to both. Since the second elements in commedia make up almost half—though a secondary half—of the experience, why not, one might ask, focus the comparison on early *sound* film comedy rather than silent? Again, the point to stress is that what is resurrected is the *spirit* of commedia, which is most dynamically expressed in the action element and in nonverbal aspects of its stock characters.

Commedia dell'arte means comedy of the profession of skill (not of *art*), contrasting its actors to the numerous amateur actors of the *erudita* or learned comedy. Italian popular comedy had many other names: improvised comedy, subject comedy, masked comedy, unwritten comedy. The typical commedia play involved three interacting sets of stock characters. Most important were the professional types. Pantaloon was an elderly but still vigorous merchant, a native of Venice. A miserly, overreaching, credulous, talkative, sententious old fool, he was the cuckolded husband of a passionate young wife and the deceived father of an eager virgin. Ineffectually amorous himself, he was always outwitted in love by his son, his servant, the Doctor or the Captain. He wore long trousers and slippers turned up at the toes in the Turkish manner. He wore a reddish brown mask with a hooked nose and spectacles, and a pointed beard. The Doctor, usually a friend of Pantaloon, was a

Columbine and Harlequin

pretentious, comic man of learning (somewhat like Irwin Corey), a product of the University of Bologna. Usually a lawyer, but sometimes a physician, an astrologer, or a professor, he spouted Latin inaccurately, and garbled facts into balderdash. Sometimes the father of one of the lovers, he was inclined to pursue women himself. His black mask covered only his forehead, and included a comic nose, and a short, pointed beard. Dressed entirely in black, he wore an academic robe and a gigantic hat. The third major professional type was the military man. The Captain is a carry-over of the *miles glorious* figure of ancient Roman comedy, given fresh impetus by the presence in Italy of the Spanish conquerors. When he enters in his flamboyant outfit, including a plumed hat, wearing a flesh-colored mask with a Cyrano nose and a fierce moustache, carrying a hideous sword, he creates terror for a moment—swaggering, parading, blustering, threatening, bragging of his feats in love and war. But he dodges if someone sneezes, he flees if someone makes the faintest aggressive gesture.

The two comic servants or *zanni* were employed by Pantaloon, the Doctor, or the Captain, but they usually assisted the lovers in scheming against their masters. Just as Pantaloon and the Doctor were companions, Harlequin and his opposite, Brighella, were conspirators, or rivals. In fact, originally lower Bergamo produced the dull-witted Harlequin and upper Bergamo the crafty Brighella. Dishonest, unscrupulous, opportunistic, malicious, vengeful, egoistic, sinister Brighella was a more deliberate caricature of the servant type than Harlequin. Sometimes a hired thug or a thief or a panderer, moving always with a prowl-like gait, he would often move the audience by suddenly lapsing into music, dancing, singing, playing the guitar or flute. He wore an olive-tinted mask with "a bizarre, half-cynical, half-mawkish expression . . . sloe eyes, a hook nose, thick and sensual lips, a brutal chin bristling with a sparse bear, and finally the moustache of a fop, thick and twirled at the ends."[1] He wore a jacket and full trousers, decorated with braid, a large leather purse and a dagger,

Pulcinella (who became the English Punch) was somewhat similar to Brighella; both had many job functions and ultimately became associated with Naples. Hooknosed, hunchbacked, pot-bellied, old but still energetic and pugnacious, Pulcinella walked with a hen-like hop, and made little "cheep" sounds. He wore a loose blouse and balloon-like pantaloons of white linen and a white dunce-like cap; from his heavy leather belt hung a wooden sword and a large wallet. A different sort of valet character was Pedrolino, who became the French Pierrot. "He is a young, personable, and trustworthy individual who can be a charming lover—usually of Colombine, the maid-servant. Though he had an "engaging simplicity and elegance" and "a tenderness and senitiveness . . . characteristic of the lovers in the aristocratic pastorals of the period," he is still a comic character (Ducharte, 251). He is always looking for something to eat, and often ends up getting beaten by his master. Pierrot's costume is almost as familiar as Harlequin's, but he wears no mask.

A maid-servant assisted the Inamorata in her love intrigues, and she often had affairs herself with servants or with the professional types. Colombine was a coarse, witty, bright counterpart of Harlequin, but was seldom a focal character in the action. Though most scenarios concerned love intrigues, the lovers themselves were not as important as the professional and the male servant types. They were somewhat like

straight-men in vaudeville. Their dress and speeches imitated the styles and mannerisms of the courtiers. Neither the female servants nor the lovers wore character masks.

While the parallels between these commedia characters and silent slapstick characters are not as close as those between Harlequin and Charlie, we do see traces of Pantaloon in John Bunny, W. C. Fields, even in Oliver Hardy; of the Doctor in Hardy, and in Fields and Groucho after movies learned to talk; of the swaggering, bullying captain in Ford Sterling, Wallace Beery, Fields, and the cop on the beat; of Pedrolino-Pierrot in some of Charlie and Harold Lloyd and in Langdon and Harpo; of Punch in Fields and Ford Sterling; of Columbine and of the Inamorata in the various girls whom the slapstick comics pursue. And if we pair Harlequin and Brighella, we see dimwit Laurel and sly Hardy, the first great comedy team. But the point is that each commedia character was a special combination of certain traits that became hilarious when activated in patterned relationships with other characters. Reshuffled, these traits turn up in new combinations in important and minor characters and actor-characters in silent slapstick cinema.

Allardyce Nicoll in *The World of Harlequin* argues that "in several recent books on the commedia dell'arte the name of Charlie Chaplin has been familiarly invoked as though he were the living embodiment of this style of theatre. Nothing could be more in error. Everyone recognizes Charlie Chaplin's genius as a pantomimic actor; everyone equally recognizes that his skill evaporates when he turns to dialogue. The truly talented exponents of the commedia dell'arte depended upon both."[2] Ducharte was one of the first to observe that "though he may not be aware of it, Charlie Chaplin is undoubtedly one of the rare inheritors of the traditions of the commedia dell'arte" (219). He notes that Chaplin's pantomime in *Shoulder Arms* when he poses as a tree is remarkably like Pulcinella's mimicry of a weathercock whirling in the wind, then a milestone inert in a garden, then a winnowing basket, which goes off to the woods pretending to be a tortoise. The comparison is based not so much upon similarities between Charlie and Pulcinella as upon a principle of comic business: the contrast between absolute immobility and sudden agility. Ducharte concludes: "The sublime Charlie Chaplin has originated a character far more popular and universal than was Harlequin" (302). If Nicoll dismisses the comparison too glibly, Ducharte embraces it too passionately, for Charlie is popular because he is one of the greatest (and unfortunately the most recent) of Harlequin's numerous avatars. Of the many cinema scholars who see the comparison, Roger Manvell is typical in declaring that Harlequin is at the root of Chaplin's art: "The resource, the ingenuity, the by-play with vice and virtue, the visual innuendoes"—these make Harlequin-Charlie a character who "will never die or grow old-fashioned."[3]

If, as Nicoll says, the two most universally known theatrical characters are Harlequin and Hamlet, a new medium offered in the days of silent slapstick a character even more famous: Charlie. But Hamlet exists in only one play; Harlequin and Charlie in hundreds. Man has no universal image of Hamlet; but distinctive costumes and bodily stances immediately declare Harlequin and Charlie. Harlequin and Charlie are archetypal proletarians, created by the workers, although it is the intellectuals who keep all three still breathing today.

Who *is* Harlequin? As his costume turns like a crystal, he mirrors, in the flash of a single performance, all the moods man is heir to. A grotesque tatterdemalion of vices and virtues, Harle-

Charlie Chaplin in SUNNYSIDE

quin is many things: a shrewd but ignorant valet, who serves lovers and cheats old men; always striking poses, he is a capering, clumsy, credulous clown, a blundering fool; he is greedy, charming, impulsive, sometimes malicious; he is eternally amorous, easily hurt, quickly comforted, his grief and his joy equally comic. His origins are a mystery, but he is a divine creation who at any moment may assume a diabolical stance—but only for a moment. Harlequin, like his costume, is a puzzle.

Ducharte is one of many scholars who delights in describing Harlequin. "Of all the traditional characters Harlequin is the most strongly individualized and yet the most enigmatic." He is a "paradoxical figure . . . both sluggish and full of bounce . . . a clown with a long reach and yet remarkably compact . . . Only rubber could do him justice in effigy, only rubber could receive the impress of his subtle spirit, created by the gods in a moment of uncontrollable fantasy and bred by men of bold imagination . . . . Cicero seems to be describing his art when he said, referring to a mime of his day, that 'even his very body began to laugh'." Ducharte quotes an earlier commentator who describes the acting of Harlequin as "a continual play of extravagant tricks, violent movements, and outrageous rogueries. He was at once insolent, mocking, inept, clownish, and emphatically ribald. I believe he was extraordinarily agile, and he seemed to be constantly in the air." He is, says Ducharte, "now delicate, now offensive, comic or melancholy, and sometimes lashed into a frenzy of madness. He is the unwitting and unrecognized creator of a new form of poetry, essentially muscular, accented by gestures, punctuated by somersaults, enriched with philosophic reflexions and incongruous noises. Indeed, Harlequin was the first poet of acrobats and unseemly noises" (123-134).

Much about the origins of the commedia characters is a mystery. But Chaplin's account of how the Tramp came into being is like a poetically compressed parable of the spirit that produced commedia characters in Renaissance Italy. Mack Sennett was standing with Mabel

The Tramp

Normand, looking into a hotel lobby set. He turned to Charles Chaplin and said, " 'Put on a comedy make-up. Anything will do'." At first, he had no idea of a character. "But the moment I was dressed, the clothes and the make-up made me feel the person he was. I began to know him, and by the time I walked onto the stage he was fully born." Chaplin's explanation of the character to Sennett is quite similar to the foregoing description of Harlequin: "You know, this fellow is many-sided, a tramp, a gentleman, a poet, a dreamer, a lonely fellow, always hopeful of romance and adventure. He would have you believe he is a scientist, a musician, a duke, a polo player. However, he is not above picking up a cigarette butt or robbing a baby of its candy."[4]

As Chaplin draped Charlie in the garb of a convict, clergyman, factory worker, soldier, streetcleaner, millionaire, he demonstrated that constancy of character is more important than costume. Thus he went a step beyond Harlequin, who wore only disguises over his standard costume.

In the early days of silent slapstick the comic situation submerged the participants; but Chaplin is a supreme example of the comic's progress from object to subject, of the triumph of the individual over the inhuman machinery of farce. In Harlequin and Charlie, the little man, the underdog, reaches mythic proportions. Unlike other legendary, literary, and theatrical figures of universal fame—Robin Hood, Roland, Hamlet, Ulysses, Estrogon—they have no literary

memorial. They are poetic images. Harlequin is seen only in icons: Charlie still moves on the screen, though in no new guises.

It is in those characteristics which set them apart from other kinds of comedy that commedia and silent slapstick are alike and unlike. And it is from these unique characteristics that they derive their triumphs, for each characteristic is an externally imposed or self-imposed limitation, forcing the actor to develop skills that enable him to control and turn to advantage those limitations. Convention imposed upon the commedia the limitation of the five masks. Technology imposed upon slapstick cinema the limitation of silence. The commedia imposed upon itself the tasks of improvised action and dialogue. Silent slapstick imposed upon itself the limitation of improvised action, which had the added burden of compensating for lack of sound.

If there were conventional limitations in commedia dell'arte and technological limitations in silent slapstick, both had one basic source of freedom—the sketchy scenarios. But it was a freedom that entailed risk and imposed responsibilities upon the actors. A skeleton scenario hung backstage. On a narrow stage, against a crude curtain, the actors wove its flesh and gave it pulse. The some 800 scenarios that have been preserved are sketchy—the ones that haven't been were perhaps even sketchier.[5] Some commedia scholars envision the manager dashing one off on his knee, as the silent comics were to shoot "off the cuff." In the early days at Keystone, Mack Sennett, as he explained to film novice Charles Chaplin, used no scenario at all: "We get an idea, then follow the natural sequence of events until it leads up to a chase, which is the essence of our comedy" (Chaplin, 141). One wonders whether the person who first used the term "scenario" on a movie lot knew the ancestry of the term.

The commedia manager, usually the chief actor as well, wrote the scenarios, with some help from the other actors; he stole as much material as he could. Mack Sennett wrote scenarios before his Keystone days, and confesses that he lifted his first one from O. Henry. Sennett also was an actor, and with the help of his gag men, he thought up most of the Keystone ideas.

The commedia love plots were often extremely complex, sometimes involving three sets of lovers, whose efforts were further complicated by the erotic overreaching of Pantaloon, the Captain, Harlequin, and Columbine—each person in love with someone else, all acting at cross purposes, entangled in misunderstandings and mistaken identities. Silent slapstick simplified all this into the struggle of a single comic character to win one girl. In Charlie and other slapstick comics, Harlequin is combined with the courtly lover. Alone, the courtly lover as a type has, of course, no parallel in our silent slapstick, though he reappears in the musical comedies of the thirties and forties, with their romantic subplots.

Mabel Normand, queen of the slapstick beauties, shared many of the talents of the male comics. A carefree sprite, a tomboy, a Cinderella, she was capable of provoking many moods, from violent slapstick to pathos. If we compare the early commedia company *The Gelosi* with Keystone, Mabel Normand certainly parallels the celebrated actress Isabella. But she, like most of the silent heroines, combines the Isabella-type Inamorata with the maid-servant Colombine; many of the silent heroines were working girls. Though at times female impersonators were used, commedia brought women onto the stage on almost equal terms with men. Slapstick comedy companies were democratic clearing houses for the emancipated young girl, recently freed from Victorian restraint, so that in Mabel Normand the reincarnated Renaissance Isabella experienced new freedoms and a less conventionalized character style. The famous Keystone Bathing Beauties, prefigured in the ballerinas of the commedia, were one manifestation of the new sexual freedom.

The chaste love of the virginal lovers had its farcical erotic side in the vulgarity of the old men and of the servants. The drawings that have

come down to us show Harlequin with his hand up Colombine's dress or fondling her bare breasts. We see Pantaloon prancing about sporting an enormous phallus. Such ostentation deserves to be deflated—as it is, in numerous climaxes in which Pantaloon is cuckolded. Silent slapstick offered many sublimations, obvious and subtle, of the obscene and the sallacious. Though early slapstick was considered quite risqué, Charlie could do no more than gesture his desire to fondle a girl's private parts.

If the commedia actors were allowed to improvise almost at will, this freedom had its limitations in character. Each actor had a rich repertoire of set speeches and routine action that suited the character he portrayed. (In fact, it is one of Harlequin's traits as a character that he is always improvising upon situations; thus improvisation gives force to his personality.) The actors did not fill in the scenario outline with entirely extempore or impromptu routines. In both commedia and silent slapstick, skillful improvisation is the ability to make the right choice from a vast repertoire of learned speeches and antics precisely at the appropriate moment—in character.

When confronted with a blank moment in the action, improvise. Mabel Normand was directing a little comedy one day and wanted Chaplin to stand with a hose and water down the road so that the villain's car would skid, and, Chaplin says, "I suggested standing on the hose so that the water can't come out, and when I look at the nozzle I unconsciously step off and get it in the face" (148-49). In improvising to meet the needs of the moment, Chaplin reached for the very first slapstick gag recorded on film —twenty-five years earlier.

The commedia spontaneously turned accidents on the stage or in the audience to advantage; and they built into their plays local legends or other contingencies as they roved from one town to another. Both commedia and silent slapstick used local color quite deftly. We see the raw new suburbs of Los Angeles in the background of the films, and sometimes these are brought into the foreground as Sennett loaded his camera crew and actors into jalopies and raced to the scene of fires, floods, and parades, shot film, then went back to the studio to build a story around the footage.

That aspect of improvisation which enabled the commedia to break out of its limitations most boisterously was, of course, slapstick stage business—called *lazzi,* which means ribbon. The *lazzi,* like a ribbon, wound through the plot. The *lazzi* is a visual analysis of the logic of absurdity, Our term "slap-stick" derives from Harlequin's bat, a stick made of two limber pieces of wood bound at the handle which made a very loud racket when applied vigorously to an exposed rump. It is the sudden bursts of *lazzi* that gives us in slapstick what André Bazin calls "that delicious vertigo" or Arthur Knight calls a "surreal," though "ordered insanity." In these bursts of *lazzi,* the participants were chaos seeking form, they were form courting chaos.

There were two kinds of commedia—the trivial Neapolitan sort in which slap-stick was an end in itself, diminishing the importance of character, and which flourished in southern Italy; Mack Sennett revived this type, though his parodies were on a slightly higher plane. Then there was the northern Italian commedia which was subtler, wittier, in which laughter was provoked more by character revelation; Chaplin perfected this type.

Early commedia troupes rehearsed the scenario as such no more thoroughly than Sennett's people did: both groups might run briefly through the bare plot, trying to discover places for *lazzi.* Individuals might work out little *lazzi* routines separately with a partner. The problem was to avoid deviating so much from the basic plot with *lazzi* as to lose the thread and confuse the audience. The commedia constantly studied and practiced ancient comic business, but each dav they were engaged in the actual execution of *lazzi* skills in public performance.

Lazzi were not just a matter of indiscriminately engaging in horseplay: these structured gags followed the logic of comedy with mathematical precision and the actors became masters of timing, pacing, and spacing, so that even when a routine familiar to the audience was brought into play, it came with a degree of sur-

Water lazzi. Note the slap-stick of actor at top.

prise. Suspense was another element in some of the *lazzi*: the audience sees the cop or the captain with stick or sword in hand sneak up behind Charlie or Harlequin before the characters do.

Commedia and silent slapstick audiences loved to see human and mechanical transformations. Thus in a commedia scenario, a lovely fountain was discovered to be four men in disguise blowing through tubes. In *Sherlock Jr.*, Keaton, small-town movie projectionist, dreams that he walks up into the movie being shown on the screen; he dives into the sea, but the scene changes so that he lands on hard rock; camera tricks and editing and great imagination produce some awesome effects. Commedia found other means of producing numerous transformation techniques of their own.

Slapstick is the comedy of force. In vengeance for a beating from his master, Harlequin often engineered a sequence of events which put Pantaloon through numerous beatings and violent accidents. The savage encounters between man and man, and man and objects, in Laurel and Hardy movies especially, demonstrate the prevalence in the *lazzi* repertoire of violence and mayhem. In *Two Tars,* the genial pair demolish a car with their bare hands, and precipitate a chain of similar destruction down a long line of Sunday drivers.

Like the verbal improvisational routines, many of the *lazzi* had to be in character; thus the manager could instruct the Harlequin actor at one point in the bare scenario to do a Harlequin love *lazzi,* or fear, or jealousy, or rage, or menace *lazzi. Lazzi* familiar to us in silent slapstick were used in commedia—the frantic-fright leap, obviously, the pratfall, various kicking routines. The "108," an acrobat's terms for a comic fall involving a split and sudden backward somersault that lands the actor flat on his back, a feat involving great risk and skill, was Bel Turpin's professional signature: he would often announce in public, "I'm Ben Turpin! $3000 a week!" and do a neat 108. The 108, like the salary, was who he was. Holding a glass of wine, Tommaso Visentini, a great Harlequin, could do a somersault without spilling a drop.

All these *lazzi* were, obviously, enhanced in the silent era by speeding up the camera or showing a sequence in reverse. The speed-up

made the most of the chase especially, although Chaplin, a master of *lazzi,* de-emphasized the chase as a gratuitous wrap-up for the last reel. "Little as I knew about movies, I knew that nothing transcended personality" (142). Many of these *lazzi* were, of course, extremely dangerous, but the actors of both traditions were daredevils, though some daredevils were happily more skillful than others. Just as Harold Lloyd, with three fingers missing on one hand, has left us a record of the typical daredevil antic in *Safety Last,* we know that one Harlequin was famous for his own human fly act around the face of the auditorium.

Many of the *lazzi* involved the use of objects, which were often hazardous to the character and to the actor as well. The play of dangerous objects began with Harlequin's stick and Charlie's cane—magic wands with which they ward off the evil spirits inhabiting other objects. Charlie's repetitious movements, which enable him to either adapt or escape, are camouflage imitations of the machines that threaten him everywhere he turns. On the narrow commedia stages fewer machines or objects afflicted Harlequin, but in the new gigantic public theaters whole towns were constructed and many stage machines employed. Often the proper use of these objects and machines failed to serve Harlequin and Charlie as they served other people, but their ingenuity enabled them to solve immediate problems by forcing these objects into momentarily alien uses, as when Charlie uses a gas-lamp to subdue the bully in *Easy Street.* In silent films, flivvers, streetcars, trains, were frequently demolished in use. Treadmills, revolving doors, vats of water, were often used.

The scenes for commedia and silent slapstick were set in places calculated to produce machines and objects as levers for *lazzi.* The apothecary provided the Doctor with a stock *lazzi* prop—the enormous enema syringe; drawings show posteriors bared to receive the enema, which sometimes splashes an old woman's face. Silent slapstick exploited barber shop, laundries, hotel lobbies, kitchens, factories, beauty parlors, movie theaters, and film studios. The bakery shop provided Mabel Normand in 1913 with a pie. Ben Turpin's cross-eyes were failing to spark a laugh as he stuck his head in a doorway. Improvised *lazzi* to the rescue. Mabel, sitting on the sidelines, noticed a workman's lunch pie. "Motion picture history," says Mack Sennett, "millions of dollars, and a million laughs hung on her aim as the custard wabbled in a true curve and splashed with a dull explosion in Ben Turpin's face." Like the spitting routines of Harlequin, pie throwing became such "a distinguished facet of cineplastic art" that a special throwing pie was invented. Berry pies were preferred but creams had their justifications. Thousands of pies later, in Laurel and Hardy's *The Battle of the Century,* 1500 pies were thrown in one day. Like slipping on a banana peel, the pie in the face is an elementary *lazzi* for the downfall of authority or false dignity. "It represents," says Sennett, "a fine, wish-fulfilling, universal idea, especially in the face of authority, as in the cop or mother-in-law situation."[6]

Animals were often good for a *lazzi* in both commedia and silent slapstick: donkeys, horses, monkeys, lions, bears, giraffes, turkeys, dogs, goats, skunks, elephants, etc. In addition to animals, or in lethal conjunction with them, kids—brats, that is—were often employed, though more frequently in silent films.

A favorite target of *lazzi* was the body, with preference given to the posterior—which accidentally encountered a hot surface or a finger, or the Captain's or Pantaloon's sword. The skull, the nose, the ears, the back, the hands, the toes were often targets of a wide range of somatic gags. Bare breasts and bare buttocks and false phalli contributed to the bawdiness, the lasciviousness (as some Victorian commentators eagerly pointed out) of these gags. The pulling-of-teeth routine aroused empathy and laughter simultaneously in the audience.

Many *lazzi* made use of basic human necessities such as food. Harlequin's many attempts to satisfy his gluttony (often depicted in paintings and drawings) are reversed in Charlie's pathetic effort to wring some nourishment from his boiled shoe in *Gold Rush.* Drunkenness quite obviously provides many opportunities for *lazzi.* Then, what one eats and drinks

must be evacuated, and there is a category of *lazzi* to take care of that necessary function too.

But both comedia and silent slapstick provided subtle *lazzi* as well. If we want to imagine Harlequin's gentler *lazzi*, we have only to recall the nuances Chaplin gave to many stock bits of comic business, as for instance his brushing-aside gesture—in *The Adventurer*, he escapes from prison, is crawling around, encounters the warden's shoe, and kicks a little sand over it with his hand. Hardy was a master of gesture *lazzi*—the tie-twiddle used to mollify a bully or a girl, his baroque way of signing his name, his you-after-me routine with Laurel that always leads to a more violent *lazzi*.

The ability to make a judicious use of *lazzi* was a major skill of the professional comedy actor. Over-zealous surrender to the vertigo of *lazzi* often collapsed into pointless farce. Commedia and Keystone comedy at their worst were 90% *lazzi*. This characterless farce encourages, of course, the use of grotesques, so that we find hunchbacks and dwarfs in decadent commedia, and Sennett himself was inclined to overpopulate his lot with actual or fabricated grotesques. The ultimate success of *lazzi* depended upon the ability of the actors to play together, and many fine actors were plagued by partners who were inept at *lazzi*.

In early silent slapstick, the immobility of the camera and the fixedness of the studio stage constituted a limitation—to be unable to speak is one thing, to be confined in movement is too restrictive. So when the camera began to move about, a new freedom added another dimension to basic slapstick elements—space. Camera placement, said Chaplin, is "cinematic inflection," it "was not only psychological but articulated a scene . . ." (151). "My own camera setup is based on facilitating choregraphy for the actor's movements . . . The camera should not obtrude" (255). Griffith and others taught the slapstick camera how to plant gags with selective close-ups, while commedia actors had other ways of focusing—special use of the body was one, and of course, silent slapstick also used the body as a means of creating montage within a frame (a technique currently heralded as "new"). Through trick photography and special editing effects, silent slapstick could, of course, achieve effects no commedia troupe ever dreamed of. Pies appeared to swing around telephone poles in pursuit of their targets. But the camera and film editors could also ruin some fine moments. Chaplin had to contend with machines and mechanical minds off the screen as well as on: "The butchers in the cutting room. Familiar with their method of cutting films, I would contrive business and gags just for entering and exiting from a scene, knowing that they would have difficulty in cutting them out" (148). But the camera was also capable of making certain *lazzi* appear *less* mechanical. Charlie is leaning over a ship rail, appearing to be seasick. From another camera angle, however, we see that he is only fishing. On the commedia stage, Harlequin would have have to turn around to cinch the gag. Certain effects are possible only with the collaboration of the camera: Charlie Murray is tied to a boiler which begins to expand, then an exterior shot shows the whole house expanding.

In silent slapstick the major limitation was, of course, imposed externally—a technological limitation: absence of sound. But in a sense, even in commedia, the sound itself was not important so much as the impression of physical pain amplified by the sound. This is a synesthesia sort of technique—just as certain sounds induce the sight of a color. So that through the sensory phenomenon of synesthesia we might say that a kind of visual sound was produced in silent slapstick. The cacophony of mass destruction in Laurel and Hardy's *Big Business* or *Two Tars* is heard whether seen in a large theater where sound effects as well as music accompanied the films or in the small-town theaters where the silent sound was seen more clearly. In *Leave 'Em Laughing*, Laurel and Hardy were given too much laughing gas at the dentist's. The spectacle of the boys simply laughing while also reacting to pain, is contagious, so that the audience, which hears no laughter, laughs until it gags at the mere *sight* of prolonged laughter. Years before, a wildly popular recording, consisting of nothing but laughter, variously modu-

lated, had a similar effect. Another synesthetic effect was the sight of a pie in the kisser, which produced in the imagination's ear a sound—"splurch." Silent slapstick transcended its limitation of silence with many other ingenious compensations.

Instrumental music and singing enlivened the commedia productions and usually music accompanied silent slapstick if only on a tinny piano. The demonic Brighella, who could lapse into lyrical guitar playing, is resurrected with the advent of sound in Harpo at his harp, Chico at his piano. Actual sound effects accompanying the *lazzi* is only one element that is missing—silent movies did not speak. Synesthesia is little help here. The use of titles to provide key lines of dialogue, vital narrative information, and comment on the action never made anyone happy. Since commedia actors could speak, dialogue was extremely important, but like the early *sound* comedies, the commedia plays often talked too much, and when one looks at some of the scenarios which do include written dialogue, one observes that much of it is pretty tedious—like the unfunny translations of Molière. But this literary element—whether written in or employed improvisationally from the actor's repertoire of learned set speeches—was always secondary to the action in commedia. Just as we enjoy Groucho's insane gibberish, we're glad when he shuts up and the three brothers plunge into action. Without the inflections of the voice, the silent slapstick actor must develop all the more his talent for communicating emotion through gestures, through his body.

For the many rhetorical devices used in commedia dialogue, silent slapstick found visual equivalents. If a comedia scene often ended on a rhetorical flourish, Charlie simply rounded a corner in his peculiar way—fade out. If audiences enjoyed listening to Pantaloon extend a metaphor, film audiences enjoyed the visual analysis of a gag premise, as in the ice-cream sequence in the Edgar Kennedy short *A Pair of Tights* (1928). The nature of the commedia allowed the actors to speak but they often became enslaved to this freedom, while one might say that the machine freed them in their film reincarnation by imposing upon them the limitation of silence.

The major conventional limitation with which commedia was blessed was the use of the mask for the five major stock characters. But Goldoni, the great Venetian playwright of the eighteenth century, whose plays drew heavily on commedia subject matter and conventions, wasn't much interested in limitations; he was a freedom lover. If the masks make it difficult to convey emotions, eliminate the masks: "The mask," he said, "must always be very prejudicial to the action of the performer either in joy or sorrow; whether he be in love, cross, or good-humored, the same features are always exhibited; and however he may gesticulate and vary the tone, he can never convey by the countenance, which is the interpreter of the heart, the different passions with which he is inwardly agitated . . . The actor must, in our days, possess a soul; and the soul under a mask is like fire under ashes."[7] Behind this limitation a powerful blessing is latent. With his own face hidden, the actor playing Harlequin, for instance, is forced to project his character's emotions with his body. His gestures must speak. In the slight margin between fixity and flux, he must shape the nuances of his *own* Harlequin. Though Harlequin's face never changes, his body speaks differently every moment, in every play. Though Harlequin's face remains neutral, it is full of possibilities which his body and his voice articulate.

The commedia actors spoke of the skill of "playing the mask"—with it and against it. The inanimate mask and the animate body enhance each other. The commedia also used the voice, of course. Silent slapstick had only the body, but the actor's masks were only semi- or modified masks, made up of Chaplin's, Hardy's and the Keystone Cops' mustaches, Lloyd's glasses, Chaplin's made-up eyebrows, Hardy's bangs with the spit curls, and Stan's slit eyes (resembling Harlequin's). The actor's own God-given features were exploited, too: Turpin's crossed eyes, Langdon's baby face. Chaplin gives us some impression of the effect of the mask (which may include an inseparable costume), upon the wearer: "With the clothes on I felt, that day on

Harlequin with mask and slap-stick.

the Keystone lot, that the Tramp was a reality, a living person. In fact, he ignited all sorts of crazy ideas that I would never have dreamt of, until I was dressed and made up as the Tramp" (147). Keaton's Great Stone Face is so close to being a mask that some commentators are encouraged to make deeper philosophical, metaphysical interpretations of the significance of his "face" in particular and of masks in general. Lloyd's comment is simple, but adequate: "By not smiling, Buster made his task all the more difficult. Like all good comics his body movements were generally funny. But he had to depend on his body and go along on that same facial expression."[8] While even the soft leather masks of the commedia had a certain mobility, the masks of the silent slapstick actors were much more mobile: Charlie's smile and the curl he gave his lip, lifting that tuft of mustache; Stan Laurel's slow cry and his scratch, raising his hair in a stiff thatch; Hardy's famous stare or camera-look; Edgar Kennedy's slow burn; Finlayson's "double-take and fade away"—all these expressions are fixtures of the mobile, portmanteau mask.

The five commedia masks were made more effective and expressive by juxtaposition to the characters who didn't wear masks; this value operated in silent slapstick as well. The girls in both commedia and silent slapstick were there for their beauty, adorned only by cosmetics and costumes.

The mask the actor plays is his dominant theatrical image; it is the outward manifestation of the soul of the character. John Grierson remarked sadly in 1932 that "masks, the greatest of all the gifts of the silent comedy, are become mere faces again."[9] But it was not just their distinctive masks that set commedia and silent slapstick characters off and made them poetic, iconographical images, but masks and costumes, together with the typical bodily stances.

With either the face covered or the voice muted, the body had to supplement those limitations, and the use of the body was itself limited at times in Renaissance Italy when the commedia played the narrow, trestled stages in the piazzas. This reliance upon the body to do the work of the face or the voice necessitated the cultivation of the art of pantomime or mimicry. The commedia actors spoke a language of gestures. They sculptured life in motion on the air. The art of the gesture extended from expressive poses and postures to the most exacting gymnastics. Looking at silent slapstick stunts, we get some sense of the commedia actor's acrobatic skill in feats of running, leaping, falling, tumbling, etc. Harlequin's acrobatic skill made his imbalances all the more ridiculously funny.

The stances of the various characters became so stylized that the body too became a mask. One might speak of "playing the back." Harlequin could make himself taller or shorter, and he had distinctive mannerisms involving his use of his slap-stick and his handling of his hat.

His unique walk also reminds us of Charlie. Harlequin's was an impertinent, arrogant, self-mocking, still-legged, flat-footed strut. The odd-ball walk is, of course, distinctive of Buster Keaton, Stan Laurel, Harry Langdon, and Groucho Marx. Scaramouche, at 80, could box a man's ears with his feet; Chaplin employed a backward kick capable of conveying many character attitudes and nuances.[10]

Another major use of the body in commedia was the dance. In contrast to the learned comedy, with its intermezzi or interludes, commedia often laced the play itself with dancing and music; its ballerinas were a great attraction. The influence of ballet in Chaplin's movements has often been remarked (see *The Cure* and *The Floor-walker,* for instances). And, of course, the Keystone comedy generally exhibited in its chases the choreography of chaos. This mixing of slapstick with song and dance was characteristic of many Laurel and Hardy and other comedy team movies in the early era of sound.

Stylization of masks, movements, and costumes was a limitation, but each enabled the other to transcend limitations in a controlled manner. If we can speak of playing the mask and of playing the body, we can also speak of playing with or against the stock costume.

Costumes enhanced contrasts between age and youth, ugliness and beauty, dignity and foolishness. The Lovers dressed like the fashionable young people in the audience. But the Zannis dressed in sloppy clothes, or tight clothes, or tight but many-colored outfits. Each mask character wore a distinctive hat. We see combinations of these costume items in the silent comics. Harlequin's heelless shoes and Pantaloon's Turkish slippers are famous, but Charlie's, Harry's, and Keaton's oversize shoes were used even more consciously. Of course, in silent films we miss the color that was characteristic of commedia costumes and masks. But both commedia and silent slapstick make wonderful use of costumes in the various disguise plots. In one of these Harlequin is dressed half as a woman, half as a man; and most of the major silent comics enjoyed dressing up as women, or acting out role reversals, as when Harlequin literally became a mother, and Laurel and Hardy or Chaplin were forced into housewifely chores.

If Bazin is correct in saying that "laughter allow the audience to become aware of itself" (121), perhaps he is more aware than the audience that the impact of public approval gives birth to comic characters and that the public collaborates with actors in the evolution of those characters. It is the public which hands down to succeeding generations timeless, changeless masks. The commedia is a popular comedy, irresistible to the people because the people were irresistible to the actors. The public was their livelihood, their mentor, their god. They didn't go to the tombs of the Greeks—they let the courtiers perpetuate on paper their thin effusions—but to the market place for their inspirations.

The theatre being offered in Italy just before 1550 was mainly amateur farce and religious plays. (In supplanting the religious theater, the commedia dell'arte provoked the scorn of the church and was forced to submit to its control.) The learned comedies of the academies, like the American theater of the 1910's and 1920's, was confined to large towns and special audiences. The commedia dell'arte itself derived from the satyr plays and New Comedy of the classical Greek theater, from Roman popular comedy, from the tumblers, jugglers, conjurers, tightrope dancers, clowns, mountebank quacks, the exiled Byzantine mimes, and the strolling players of the middle ages, who showed up at fairs and carnivals. These strolling fugitives offered a continually changing ensemble of characters. Centuries of improvisation freed shadowy character types from their substances and made the shadows larger than life.

"Comedy that is basic will live forever," says Harold Lloyd, because its language is universal (Cahn, 20). Both commedia and silent slapstick were grand new flowerings of basic popular entertainment elements that had always existed before, continued to exist alongside of, and *after* each of these. But as Bazin points out, classical commedia-type farce seemed to have atrophied since the eighteenth century and had "a sudden and dazzling rebirth" in silent slapstick in what

was a "spontaneous linking up of a genre with its tradition" (81). Two things made that spontaneity possible: a technological invention—cinema itself—and a sociological responsiveness to the possibilities of that invention. The characteristic we experience most intensely about these two comic media is their youthfulness, and it is in their early phases that they are most interesting and comparable to each other.

American silent slapstick derived from popular entertainment forms that had kept vital commedia routines, formulas, plots, characters, costumes, and masks alive: Harlequin lifts his stick, Charlie his cane, and the dead rascals of centuries become quick. Though he made the obvious Chaplin comparison, Ducharte, one of the best commentators on commedia, observed in 1929 that its last vestiges were to be seen in the marionette shows (120). Chaplin and other slapstick comics saw Punch and Judy, too. While most of the commedia actors were trained *in* the commedia troupes themselves, most of the silent slapstick actors came from the ranks of the American minstrel shows, the circus clowns, the stage comics of the Victorian London music hall, the rubes and buffoons of vaudeville and burlesque. In the theater of the Victorian era, our own Dark Ages for the theater, "once stage business had been tried out and set," says Chaplin, "one rarely attempted to invent new business" (153). These rigid routines were given new freedom in silent slapstick.

The influence of foreign movies upon American slapstick was decisive. Early slapstick movies were born in a thirty-second burst of water from a garden hose on the Lumière lawn in 1895. By 1907, the chase was on, with Cohl's *The Pumpkin Race*. Chaplin studied the style of Max Linder, an elegant man who wore a tiny moustache and a derby and carried a cane, and who as early as 1905 appeared in a Zecca farce in the commedia tradition: *La Vie de Polcchinelle*. Sennett tells us that he tried the "dizzying camera tricks he admired in French chases."[11] So what had proven most vital in French, Italian, Jewish, and English comic traditions was yoked violently to the enormous energy of a youthful nation grasping for its own folk art.

Tartaglia

Harold Lloyd, in GRANDMA'S BOY

As acting companies, commedia and silent slapstick are quite similar in many ways. The comedia actor-manager was also the director (a Leo McCarey-Hall Roach combination). A commedia company consisted of about 13 actors; but that many recognizable faces composed only the nucleus of Keystone. If the slapstick laugh factories didn't move around from town to town, its films of course did.

Both commedia and silent films (as in Chaplin's mocking impersonation of Hitler) pushed pure slapstick into satire. Just as commedia offered popular adaptations and parodies of classic "high art" and travesties of the learned comedy (itself based on Plautus and Terence), silent slapstick offered parodies of "serious" movies (Stan Laurel's *Mud and Sand*) or of works in other media such as opera (Chaplin's *Carmen*). But in the work of both Gozzi in eighteenth-century Italy and Chaplin in America we see that topical satire can dull the impact of more basic and universal comic elements.

In both commedia and silent slapstick there was a good deal of mixing of different genres: satire and parody, obviously: the pastorale (more of this in Chaplin's than in any other slapstick comedy); the melodrama (less in commedia than in silent slapstick where its features often scowl). If slapstick is often pushed beyond farce and satire to the absurd, there is also a mixing of the comic and the tragic. But while commedia troupes could perform a straight comedy one night and a pure tragedy the next, silent slapstick film had to blend the two genres very carefully. Early, Chaplin learned from a spectator on the set that he had the "ability to evoke tears as well as laughter" (153). Thus were the tragic postures of his childhood transformed into comic gestures. But except for Buster Keaton, the major slapstick comics (Chaplin, Langdon, Lloyd) lunged at pathos—and often collapsed into Victorian sentimentality.

Since commedia plays derived their elements from every possible source, the main source, in time, became other commedia plays. And silent slapstick is one vast reservoir of comic routines that have been practically in the public domain since ancient times; so silent movies often only *appear* to plagiarize from each other. Both commedia and silent slapstick have taken transfusions from every conceivable high and low culture literary and theatrical antecedent for its life's blood. Ironically, both have survived their major competitors: the non-commedia drama in Italy was of no lasting importance; little American theater of slapstick cinema's reign has survived; and while some of the "serious" movies *(Sunrise)* are dear to students of the film, few can be enjoyed by the sort of throngs who even today find silent slapstick awesomely zany.

But there were of course, always, many dull, bad commedia troupes and we've seen plenty of tedious Sennett farces. Commedia was potent for two hundred years, but had become repetitious, vulgar, tedious, inept, grossly farcical, and decadent after 1750. It was dead by 1800. Silent slapstick's golden age was much briefer (1903 to about 1927), since it did not have real people to perpetuate it, and it died in one stroke—the invention that gave it birth devoured it in one of its major improvements: sound. Paradoxically, when the slap-stick was heard, it lost its power. Such artistic reforms as Goldoni's—he wanted to abolish the masks and flesh out the skeletonal scenarios—precipitated the commedia's decline. Commedia influenced Goldoni, Lope DeVega, Molière and Shakespeare, and, through silent slapstick, its verve and its more profound implications are seen in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and other absurd and black-comedy plays, and in the films of Godard, de Broca, Jacques Tati, Peter Sellers, and Lester.

At every point in a comparison of commedia dell'arte and silent slapstick, we find forceful substantiation of a basic aesthetic principle: that the source of genius is an ability to control externally imposed limitations and a recognition of the necessity to risk imposing certain limitations upon oneself in order to realize one's potential. The actor must subordinate himself to the demands of his fellow actors, while giving his own abilities full scope and thrust. Since his character is set, his only freedom is in his art. His task is to control that freedom.

Actors and audiences participate in a metaphysical conspiracy against mortality to raise the stock and the standard to the level of art. they sometimes—as in Harlequin and Chaplin—succeed. There is a wisdom in the popular taste that the masses have always felt and sophisticates have always later discovered. Intellectuals do not discover that certain things are avant-garde until after the masses have discarded them. When Harlequin's titanic energy overflowed the public squares into the palaces, his antics became high art for those aristocratic snobs who had once scorned his origins among the serfs. The future will search the libraries in vain for the early commedia plays. Free of playwrights, they imitated themselves, and fixed, not on paper, but in their costumes and masks, immortal characters. Outside the law, outside the church, they were alive in the laughter of the people—and that laughter was their religion and their law. I once wrote of Chaplin: "The tramp's success as an everyman figure depends upon there being no man behind the mask, for he is, in a profound sense, a creature of the folk imagination. He underwent a slow realization and articulation, and, giving him his cues, international audiences collaborated in the process."[12] Chaplin often looked at his films with his audience: "The stir and excitement at the announcement of a Keystone Comedy, those joyful little screams that my first appearance evoked even before I had done anything, were most gratifying" (152).

One night in Rome, Goldoni sat in the audience for the première of one of his new plays; when Punch did not appear in the play, the roar in the pit was so frightening that the playwright left early (Nagler, 280-81). Keaton corrobates Goldoni: "I tried smiling at the end of one picture. The preview audience hated it and hooted the scene. . . . I never smiled again" (Cahn, 65). Audiences force comic characters into existence and certain actors into stylization by a child-like insistence: "Do it again! The *same* way." The commedia's success lay in its ability to get the feel of its audience and then to play directly to it; silent slapstick comics had a small, jaded, studio audience, and often visited the movie houses—as Stan Laurel did, to clock laughs—but they seldom played directly to the camera, since it was only an abstract proxy for an audience. Sennett had one advantage over the commedia: if a gag misfired, he could always reshoot it, while the commedia could only employ one of many cover-techniques. By taking its materials from all classes and playing to them, the commedia was a genuinely popular comedy; silent slapstick, however, aimed more directly at the lower and middle classes which identified with the little guy underdog figure.

Audiences collaborate with actors not only in creating characters, but also in creating the stars who portray those characters. The commedia was an ensemble of actors and characters, but audiences insisted on choosing their favorites, and their choices differed from region to region and era to era. Of course, even with the American star system—forced upon the industry by audience preferences—a different sort of ensemble playing was achieved. Communication media make stars: rumor, mostly, in Renaissance Italy; the mass media, working faster and more decisively, in modern America. If the affection of the masses can make god-like stars—more, ironically, in a democracy than in feudal Italy—the scrutiny of sophisticates can break stars (as in the case of Langdon). The most brutal test of comedy is its export power, and both commedia and American silent slapstick passed that test by speaking so strongly in the universal language of comic pantomime that their popularity exceeded that of the native comedy with which they competed.

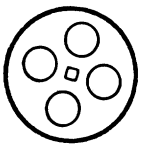
The audience makes the most important contribution to the evolution of a character, for an actor can only introduce a character—it is the audience that accepts or rejects him. The Italian audiences no doubt behaved as the silent cinema audiences did when they rejected Harold Lloyd's "Lonesome Luke" in favor of his All-American zany optimist. The audience encourages or disapproves of the gradual stylizations of the character's image, as we see in the iconographic depiction of the evolution of Harlequin's costume from colored patches to

formal diamonds. Ultimately revelations of comic character are more endearing to an audience and to the actor than gags. Neither is interested mainly in the thing being done, but in who is doing it. The basic traits of the character are set, but it is within those limitations of character that the actor exercises his talent and the audience its admiration to the full. As many different actors portrayed Harlequin in 300 years, certain variations emerged; but the same actor played the tramp, though Chaplin put him through many variations, and many comedians had a go at Charlie-like characters.

Each actor in the commedia perfected a single role over a lifetime, sometimes created a significant variation, and in many instances passed it on to his son. It was an actor-centered theater in which the actor had to be a playwright in the heat and flash of the performance itself; and more than any other film genre, silent slapstick was actor-centered; both types permitted the triumph of the actor as sheer creator. Audiences were able to see their creations grow, because new facets were always accumulating to the stock figures, and this process of growth, accelerated in the films, lent the characters a sort of three-dimensional quality. This quality was achieved also in the techniques for playing against one's own type and with or against one's opposite (Harlequin and Pantaloon, Charlie and Ford Sterling); the mocking mimicry of one's opposite was always a mode of self-definition. One could also play with or against one's partner—Harlequin and Brighella or Laurel and Hardy. Silent slapstick offered a plethora of series based on its stars, while commedia was one series only, perpetuated over centuries, with an antecedent in the Atellan Roman character—Maccus.

Commedia and silent slapstick were the most unique theatrical and cinematic achievements of their times. The best commedia lasted 100 years; the best slapstick about 20 (perhaps the modern equivalent of about 150 years). Both were the most commercial of their time, but also, without trying to be, both were classic folk arts and their works artistic achievements.

Both are gone—and though we feel a great sense of loss, neither can be willed back to life. However, the ashes of the phoenix still smoulder. When the Italian comedy made its triumphant return to the Hotel de Bourgogne in Paris in 1697, "Je Renais" and a phoenix emblem were painted on the curtain. Sennett himself ought to have used such a motto. It would be interesting to discover whether Sennett ever heard of the commedia dell'arte.



NOTES

1. Pierre Louis Ducharte, *The Italian Comedy* (Dover: New York, 1966), p. 161.
2. London: Cambridge University Press, 1963, p. 18.
3. *Film* (Penquin: London, 1946), p. 84.
4. *My Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), p. 144.
5. See K. M. Lea, *Italian Popular Comedy* (New York: Russell & Russell: 1962) and Henry F. Salerno, translator and editor, *Scenarios of the Commedia dell 'arte* (New York: NYU Press, 1967).
6. Quoted in *Film Makers on Film Making*, edited by Harry Geduld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), pp. 37-40.
7. A. M. Nagler, *A Source Book in Theatrical History* (New York: Dover, 1952), p. 275.
8. William Cahn, *Harold Lloyd's World of Comedy* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1964), p. 63.
9. "The Logic of Comedy," *Grierson on Documentary* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), p. 58.
10. André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), p. 150.
11. Arthur Knight, *The Liveliest Art* (New York: New American Library, 1959), p. 41.
12. Review in *Film Quarterly* (Winter, 1965-66), pg. 58.

DAVID PALETZ

Judith Crist: An Interview with a Big-Time Critic

The American public (aside from the miniscule part of it which reads film magazines and that small part of it which reads weekly or monthly film columns) gets its information and opinions about movies from reviewers in the metropolitan and smaller dailies. It is important, then, to understand how such writers approach films. Judith Crist was one of the best-known newspaper critics; she made her reputation covering movies for the New York **Herald-Tribune.** ***Before the demise of the*** **Herald-Tribune** ***and its companion papers, Miss Crist had begun appearing on the*** **Today** ***television show, and she has continued this work, together with a movie column in*** **TV Guide** ***plus a weekly film article for*** **New York** ***magazine. With the possible exception of the columnists in*** **Life** ***and*** **Time,** ***she thus seems to be the American critic with the widest impact upon the mass audience. Her book*** **The Private Eye, the Cowboy and the Very Naked Girl: Movies from Cleo to Clyde** ***will be published shortly.***

BACKGROUND

The most important thing that I did before I began reviewing movies was to *go* to movies—from the age of about seven on, with time out for some years in Montreal where you weren't allowed to go to anything but special kiddie shows unless you were over sixteen. Then for some years I became an insane moviegoer. Therefore I had very basic training. I was of the generation that was brought up on movies, the pre-television generation that might be enthralled with radio, but movies were our great outlet. And I was an excessive outletter.

Then professionally in the course of my career I had what I consider a rather good liberal-arts education. I had taught before going into the newspaper business and I had been a reporter for fifteen years on the New York *Herald Tribune*. My entire journalistic career was on that great newspaper. May it R.I.P.

The first opportunity that I had for reviewing happened to come in the area of the theater. While I was still a reporter I became the *Tribune's* second-string drama critic, doing it on an after-work left-handed basis, serving as handmaiden to God, I like to think of it—assistant to Walter Kerr. Several times over the years the opportunity was available to me to review movies, but unfortunately for the kind of critic I intended to be (and this involved a practical hard fact of newspapers, advertising, et cetera) it was not the right time for me to become a film critic. And I must say the editors of the *Tribune* felt that way too.

After John Hay Whitney's purchase of the

paper, Jim Bellows, who was the editor, asked me if I would become the movie critic. The climate was right because with Mr. Whitney's purchase of the *New York Herald-Tribune* a new era came in, certainly for the movie critic, and this was one of complete integrity, complete support of the critic. I took over, I guess it was appropriately enough, April 1, 1963, and within no time at all we had crises attached to various films.

CRITICAL CANONS

I consider myself a journalistic critic. In other words I am not confusing myself with the critic who is writing for *Film Quarterly* or for the little magazine with an equally small circulation. I am a mass medium person. I think this is basically the teacher in me. I want to proselytize. I teach a critical writing workshop at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. This is so I can train critics to infiltrate. I want to reform. I am a screaming reformer, and Lord knows, there is a lot of reforming to be done in the movies. Therefore, I think that a journalistic critic has very specific functions. I think that you must inform, basically, letting people know whether this is something they should or shouldn't see—and by that I don't mean that I am trying to restrict trade in any way. But I think that you have to let your "viewer" or reader—and you know who your reader is—know whether this is or isn't his cup of tea. This he learns by knowing whether it is your cup of tea. So that there are many people who will say of my reviews, "Well if she liked that I will like it" And there are as many who say, "If she liked it, I am going to hate it." And we have tested this out—my reader and I—over the years.

To me movies are very much a mass medium. I do not think that as a whole they can be regarded as an art form because most movies are not art, so why be concerned with the form when you haven't got any art to put into it? And they are one of the most important social factors in our society, and even more important, they are to me the one medium that is an intellectually international medium.

I have a very high tolerance for the commercial movie that doesn't pretend to be anything but a commercial movie. If it is very well done, as *Our Man Flint* or *Harper,* or *The Professionals* or *Deadheat on a Merry-go-round,* I don't say that every single movie has to make a statement or anything. I do think that essentially all of us want to have a good time at the movies and you know you can have a really good time with certain movies. I think I have always had this attitude as a moviegoer first and last.

The *auteur* theory, I think, is very fallible, first of all because it inhibits a movie-maker terribly. If *A Man for All Seasons* had not turned out what it was I think a man like Fred Zinnemann would have been destroyed. Here he had all of these great successes and good-to-great films and then along comes *Behold a Pale Horse.* How do you then work? There is the constant feeling, of course, of what do you do for an encore. I think you have to judge each film on the basis of what it is going to be, but unfortunately we do tend to expect an awful lot from the people who have accomplished an awful lot. This is the price you have to pay. After *Strangelove,* I felt that Stanley Kubrick's next movie would have to be an awfully good movie. It wasn't for me—*2001* is all right but not for Kubrick. I expect people to grow, I really do.

This again is part of my critical theory. Going back to *Our Man Flint* and *Harper,* I feel they completely succeeded for me in what they set out to do, and they did it first and best in that particular category. They made my "Ten Best" list, *Blow-Up* did not. *Blow-Up*—which I could say (it has been said to me) is old Hollywood stuff—it has been done before. But never quite this way, in my view, and never with such excellence in eye appeal. It is stimulating, exciting, yet it is not a totally successful film as far as I am concerned and therefore, it is not among the best. It may well prove to be the most talked-about, and more I cannot wish it. I find great excitement in talking about it and that is what makes it so terribly good, but I feel that

one must withhold this hysteria about it because that way you lose your critical faculty. And when you say, what do you look for in a movie, I could say you look for quality. I look for content. I am rather old-fashioned. I think that a movie has to say something, which is part of my objection to these movie-making courses that are all over. I mean it is just great to go make a movie, except that I don't think that you should make a movie until you have something to make a movie about. You ought to have something to say that could be said only in and by a movie. You don't write novels in movies. You don't write plays in movies. I am high on *Bonnie and Clyde* because it can exist only as a movie. Further, I feel you have got to tell me something. All I ask, after a while, is what am I here for? What you are trying to say and how you say it, of course, is movie-making.

REVIEWING PROCESS

Most movie companies or certainly the major companies have magazine critics' screenings which are far in advance of the opening. Then they have the newspaper critics' screening which can be anywhere from two weeks to two days or a day before the film opens in New York. The newspaper critics, certainly I for one, do not want to see a movie two months ahead of when it is opening and I don't think I am alone in this because I am a last-minute writer. I basically trained in newspaper writing and until that deadline knife is at my throat I don't put typewriter to paper and therefore, I like to see a movie quite close to its opening.

The New York Times, with a staff of three reviewers, for some reason unbeknownst to me, go to the theater. But normally you see a movie in a screening room in the company of anywhere from ten to twenty people. There are occasions where you see a movie all by yourself. I do not like to go to screenings at night because I keep the evenings for the theater and for my family. I think half the thrill of going to the movies is to do it on company time.

I rarely discuss the films with other reviewers at the screenings. I am an absolutely solid-minded person, so the only danger really is that in talking about a movie, someone else may say something and then when you sit down to write your review, you will unconsciously use the other person's phrase or something of that sort. I think that is really the one reason not to discuss it.

In actual theatrical films I think there have been weeks when I have seen—there have been festival years here where you would see four festival films in the course of the day and then see one or two others—I have managed six movies in one day and not one of them suffered.

Then it can go down to no screenings, where there is a great lull period, for instance right after New Year's. They still may have the Christmas goodies and they can't get rid of the baddies. And then sometimes in the fall there is a lull, depending on how good the product is or whether something has to be thrown out of a house.

The worse the movie is the more I will have notes. I walked out of *Bonnie and Clyde, The Graduate, La Guerre est Finie* without a note.

One goes to see a movie to review it in exactly the way you go to a movie. You know, kids say "What should I look for?" when they are going to review a movie. And I say, you don't look for a thing and you are not supposed to notice, to see anything in fact, if it is a good movie. You don't hear the sound track. You don't see the performers. You don't see the camera technique. You see the movie. You walk out and say "This is fantastic." Why was it fantastic? The critic's function is to articulate—put that "fantastic" or "echch" into 800 words. That is the tough part with good or great movies because you know when a movie is bad from the minute it hits you while you are watching it, you sit there and you start picking out everything that is bad for the duration. But when a movie is good, all you really want to say is "Wonderful, beautiful." Everything that gets quoted in the ads. That is all you want to say and you don't want that great labor of saying "why" and it is hard to do it right afterwards because you are still caught up with it.

If a real piece of trash is coming into Radio City Music Hall, it is more or less the duty of the first critic to review it. On the other hand, I feel that if you are going to know movies at all, you do have to keep going to certain movies that you just palm off on your second and third stringers. Sometimes I want to go to one of the horror movies or I must feel the popular pulse by going to an Elvis Presley movie or I must go to test, shall we say, the French pulse by going to the Jerry Lewis movie. I very often leave the reviewing to others, but I go to see it anyway.

Not all the movies that I review for the magazine are for the *Today* show because it is a network program for seven million people and therefore, we don't go in for foreign films until they are in national distribution. For *TV Guide,* which has close to 30 million readers, I review the old movies that are shown on the networks and that is a lot of fun because you know half of them are awful movies but occasionally when a good movie is going to be shown you just want to say to people, drop everything and look at this movie, or this isn't really a good movie but you will see this and this and this in it. I think I am about the lone movie critic on network television at this point.

When the *Herald Tribune* merged with the *Journal American* and *The World Telegraph,* Hearst and Scripps-Howard papers, it was said all over that I would not be the movie critic. As people from newspapers have said to me afterwards, "I never thought I would live to see the day that this kind of movie reviewing was going on in a paper financed by either Hearst or Scripps-Howard," because those papers had had a tradition of extremely bland movie reviewing—and movie reviewing that was, at least in the eyes of the critics whom I knew, very closely tied in with advertising. They were a part of the tradition that exists all over the United States, that your movie reviewing is a part of your service to your movie advertisers. You have to face it, you know. Movie ads are the one type of ads that you get seven days a week, 52 weeks of the year. It isn't a matter of when there is a big sale on. There are *always* movie ads. And they are a large part of revenue, they are high-priced ads. But—and this to me is such a change of climate—there I was. The readers from the afternoon papers, the holdovers, they had never heard a negative word about movies. I remember the very first really commercial movie to come along was *The Appaloosa* and not only did I have a review that demolished Marlon Brando and all his great works, but they put an inspired head on my review, saying it's an "Appalousy" movie. This must have been a great joke for all the afternoon-trained readers, but there I was. And I had the exact freedom that I had on the *Tribune.*

I don't think my being a woman makes any difference because, well certainly not in my case because I was a newspaper man and I feel now like a critic. As a matter of fact, every possible thing you can experience helps in being a critic. The more you know, the better a critic you can be. It is helpful to me, let's say, that I have a child, and I have a rather good notion of what children like. And some of the men critics will say what a delightful movie for children, when I know that it is going to bore any kid over the age of four-and-a-half silly. It saves me from generalizations, false generalizations.

But I think that mature people are people. Nothing is going to shock a woman that doesn't shock a man. Men are a lot more shockable—just as I find them so much more easily titillated, ready to whistle at anything. I believe in discrimination.

CONCEPTION OF AUDIENCE

In my oral TV reviews, which are necessarily about two paragraphs long, and for television, which I am fond of describing as in one eye and out the other ear, you have to be far more specific—in black-and-white with no grays whatsoever, because grays assume a dual meaning. This is a matter of specifics in terms; the criticism is the same. I am talking to the same audience as the one I write for. In the magazine, I am writing for my peers and a few people beyond them and I feel that this is the only way that you can write honestly, because you are talking to your equals and your friends. When

I say the few people beyond them I am assuming that nobody is reading my column or watching me unless he is interested in movies; that he is a person of a certain basic education and taste and, as I say without flattering myself, my education and my taste, we are on a par. Beyond that I know that there is the person who never goes to movies who reads me, he likes the way I write, which to me is the highest compliment. Beyond them are the people who are not particularly interested in movies as a going thing, but want to know what are we going to do on Saturday? This is to whom I am writing or speaking. I do think of what I have to say as a layman talking to laymen, because I again think of the critic as a layman who happens to be in the catbird seat. I know that I have a great many college people, both students and faculty, among my readers and among my viewers. I know that I have many older professional people. I would say that ten per cent of my mail is oddball. It is semi-literate people, gauged by the handwriting. They say you are insane and you have never liked anything that is good. "I think you are a sour old maid, you don't know what witty clean exciting movies are." But all of this is said in words of one or fewer syllables except for the obscenities which they manage to work into a couple of syllables. When I started on the *Today* show for example, I would get that kind of letter, and then it disappeared. I would say with *TV Guide* I am getting more and more letters because it is a relatively new column and I get a lot of promotion on it. My total mail would average out to about 25 letters a week which is pretty good in that most of them now are favorable and there are people now who want to talk about movies and people who are inquiring about something—because as you know the pro people never write. They are not writers—it is only the antis who write and therefore we have a higher percentage than that of pro mail. It is extremely interesting. At one point somebody in circulation in the *Tribune* conducted a survey and he found that I was the fourth most-read feature on the paper, but I suppose this leaves a lot to be named.

SPECIFIC CONCERNS

I have a deep concern for the neglected film, *The Sound of Trumpets,* for instance. I had this passionate crusade about that movie. And the word of mouth was good, I have yet to find anyone who had seen it who hasn't loved it. But it is so fine a film; the kind we never think of in this country; the kind that would interest everybody. But it should never have been called *The Sound of Trumpets*—if it were just called *The Job!* I don't know why this film didn't go. Another one that did not go the way I felt it should have was *The Organizer.* And *Mafioso.* These were two passions, and then the one that has become a lost film is *Le Feu Follet* (The Fire Within)—Louis Malle's portrait of a golden young man. This is F. Scott Fitzgerald done to perfection.

One thing that I am very annoyed with and have referred to, and this is my current campaign for the year, are the horrible unselected short subjects you are subjected to at these prices. They also show advertising, but they don't tell you it is an advertising film. They have Chamber of Commerce things and *Fishing in Canada* which turns out to be an airline ad, and a tourist ad, and all of this. I find that more and more people are objecting.

Another thing that I dislike is that most people in movie houses today are convinced that they are in their own home. They talk in perfectly normal voices to their companion. They don't have any of the real kind of respect that we used to have, even when we went to the Saturday afternoon matinee.

CRITICS' AWARDS

I am a past president of the original New York Film Critics, established 32 years ago when there were a great many newspapers and a great many critics in New York. Of course over the years this has been a shrinking situation and finally, we revised the constitution that was set up 32 years ago so that you did not have to be employed by a daily newspaper, and now we are taking in other critics. This sniping at the major critics by the little-magazine critics—I mean really, these are people who are so damn

good in their own right, why do they have to hang on to a coat tail and gain stature by shooting at what they insist is the establishment? This to me means that they are not very confident of their own power. However, they decided to form a society which would take in all the magazines and the fringe publications. This is great. I think the more organizations there are around the better.

The new Society of Film Critics turned out to me to be rather ironic. I thought they were going to push neglected films. What did they come up with? *Blow-Up*, which is probably the most commercially successful of all the art films to have come out at that time. I thought they were going to push new performers and what did they come up with—Sylvie, who in *The Shameless Old Lady* is magnificent, no doubt about it, but hardly an upcoming performer.

AWARDS

I notice that in Andrew Sarris's report from the Society of Film Critics he said that there was such a good and stimulating discussion before all the voting was taken and so on. The New York Film Critics do not discuss. It seems that about 20 years ago they used to discuss and somebody got his face slapped and some woman burst into tears and so on. What evolved was that by the time we voted (this is at the end of the year, after New Years) every one of these critics, because they are newspaper critics, had already committed himself by writing a list of the ten best movies. And if you are a critic who has chosen something as your best movie and can be talked out of it in 20 minutes of general debate, then I feel that you are not much of a critic in your own reckoning.

Very often I feel that we're up against a pretty mediocre year in movies, I can understand that Dwight Macdonald's resigning as movie critic for *Esquire* when he said that in the past six or seven years there has been a steady deterioration of product. This is because of the formula having gripped too many people, too many imitations, too many of the really creative people being taken up by Hollywood and coming a cropper. Antonioni is really the first foreign director who has gone to foreign soil and dealt with a foreign language and almost succeeded. Certainly as far as the communication and everything else he has succeeded. I don't know, too many of these people can't stand the uprooting, the instant success, and then of course, we have been inundated with this new freedom, aside from James Bond and all. I just think it is a low tide. Actually I still feel in the air that it is a renaissance time.

In the course of my professional life, which is basically concerned with mass media, I don't have to see student films. But I made a particular point of seeing student films. I don't have to see the small, the underground, but I think all of them are essential because the art film of today is going to be the commercial film of tomorrow, in the normal progression.

For example, I participated in the panel that the Museum of Modern Art had about a year or two ago in which they were showing a great many of the so-called underground films and their motivation was much like mine when I do something about off-beat films. They felt there were a great many people who would not go out into the far reaches of Greenwich Village to see an underground movie but who should become familiar with them. I don't think you have to like them but I think you have to know what they are. Everybody talks about underground movies and nobody knows how to define them and occasionally there is the movie that comes up for air.

For example, about two years ago, the critics were invited to see the movie called *Babo 73* by Robert Downey and I thought that movie was so bad that I did not review it, and very often when I see some of these movies I don't review them. I feel that I am doing this not only as a favor to my readers (it would do them no good to know about it) but as a favor to a young film-maker, because when you can't say anything good about someone who is young and amateur and proves that he is young and amateur, then you are just harming him needlessly. So *Babo 73* got no mention from me although there were one or two critics who flipped over it.

Now you get invited to see Mr. Downey's second film *Chafed Elbows* and I went. And here I could see that indeed Mr. Downey was growing up, not all the way, but also for me he revealed his real wit. I mean wit in the pure sense, not ha ha—and a great talent for creative cinema and I think it is a very good, far from perfect, but a good second effort and this to me was something well worth writing about, and I couldn't wait for his third film. I really looked forward to it. And this is where the critic goes offbeat: I would seek it out if he didn't tell me, if I didn't get an invitation, I would seek him out and say "show me that movie." I did see it finally—I was disappointed —but that's something else.

INFLUENCE OF REVIEWS

I have been able to learn of the effect of my reviews only from the exhibitors. I gave *Chafed Elbows* an enthusiastic review and Robert Downey said that the first week people arrived there clutching the review—mainly because it had the address of the theater because it had not been advertised. But I think the best way a critic can gauge what the people think his influence is, is the quotes that are used and their length. Now for example, I know with several movies I will pass an art house and to my complete astonishment they will have my entire review blown up. I think my most thrilling moment was when I was told by somebody connected with the Beatles, when *The Silence* was showing in London, the Beatles all went to see it and when they came out they read my review of it blown up full outside the movie house and they got into a very heated discussion of it. This was told not to flatter me but to settle an argument about what the Beatles really are like. . . .

About out-of-context quotes, I have tried and tried—I have gotten the worst offender because every week I was calling him and screaming. I think he is a little more considerate. You see, I was spoiled. In the theater the press agent outlives the production; therefore a theatrical press agent is far more anxious to maintain good relations with the press than with the production. However, a movie is a very permanent thing, a movie company is a much bigger organization and farms out its ads to an advertising agency that has no direct relationship to the film or the critic and therefore the companies end up being irresponsible about quotes. When I call and yell and complain they take the misquotes away, but the ad has already been running. The damage has been done. I would have people call me and say, "Look, I saw on that marquee that you said it was superb and it was a lousy movie. I got very mad because I trust you and you mean to say you called that movie superb?" I said what do you mean, it was a dreadful movie. It turns out that I said something like it was "a superb bore." When I became a critic, the first time this happened to me I was terribly upset. How could they be so dishonest? One of the other critics said to me, "Look, don't you know you have to go over your writing with a fine comb to see that there is nothing they can take out?" I decided I was not going to write for the benefit of crooked press agents. I remember with one movie I said, "Patricia Neal is one of the finest actresses around and Samantha Eggar is certainly one of the most attractive sexpots we have seen in years, and what either of them is doing in *Psyche 68* (or whatever that movie was) I cannot for one venture to guess." What do you think came out? "Patricia Neal is one of the finest actresses around and Samantha Eggar is the most luscious sexpot we have seen in years." You can't say I didn't say that. The most recent example was *Grand Prix*. I had said on the *Today* show that every year at this time we get a great big luscious Cinerama special. This year it is *Grand Prix*. Well, they had an enormous ad with a seven-column headline that said "This year it is *Grand Prix*.—Judith Crist, *World Tribune*." which made it sound as if, particularly around Christmas-time, it was my choice of the picture of the year. So that is all I can tell you about out-of-context quotes.

Oh, another terrible thing. I loved *Dear John* and I wrote in my column what indicated my passion for *Dear John* and came to the miracle of how really grown-up this movie was in deal-

ing with a relationship. Well, the movie went on its rounds and I began getting letters from all over the country plus at the same time reactions which made me take the letters a little more seriously from my brother who was in Michigan and a friend who was living upstate saying this is a dirty movie, are you mad? So then, thanks to my friend and my brother tipping me off, I realized they were seeing *Dear John* with a sound track dubbed. *Dear John* had come here with subtitles. It was being shown around the country with an English dubbed track that according to the best witnesses was turning this movie into just a dirty sex exploitation movie. It had destroyed whatever sensitivity there might have been in the film. . . .

If you are going to give me a hunk of shmaltz, I want it to be like *The VIP's*. At least I can have beautiful performances like Margaret Rutherford's and Maggie Smith's. At least let me have Elizabeth Taylor weeping and so on, and not like, for example, *Hotel*, where it is all third-grade weepers and no good performances.

FAVORITE FILMS

Over the past three or four years my favorite movies have certainly been *8 ½*, *Tom Jones*, which I find has survived. I loved *The Sound of Trumpets; Le Feu Follet;* and above all, *Dr. Strangelove; Harakiri* certainly; *La Guerre est Finie* is very close to my heart; *Mickey One*—which I perpetually crusade for; *A Man for All Seasons; Shop on Main Street; Loves of a Blonde; The Organizer; Mafioso; Seduced and Abandoned; Simon of the Desert; The Hawks and the Sparrows; Cat Ballou; Bonnie and Clyde; The Graduate, In Cold Blood, Battle of Algiers, The Fifth Horseman, Falstaff. Mary Poppins* I happened to like because it does so many things that only a movie can do. For the dance of the chimney sweep alone, for the flying nanny, for Dick Van Dyke dancing with the cartoon characters, for that whole race, for all of these things I like it.

The movies I have liked least are all the Hollywood sex binges, and the ones that really insult your intelligence like *Baby the Rain Must Fall, Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, Hurry Sundown;* the Natalie Wood dramas of life like *Inside Daisy Clover* and *Love with the Perfect Stranger*—that kind of thing. Then the great epic trash or trash epics. I think one time I called these "Joe Levine's trilogy of trash," that started out with *The Carpetbaggers*. The old Hal Robbins types of movies that make a good deal of money. I loathe *Sound of Music*. Because it has given so many people pleasure, we of course have to realize that in the wilds of South Africa, the wilds of Omaha, wilds of Wales, I have received letters from literally the four corners of the earth, from people who have the album of *The Sound of Music* and who love the movie. I tell you it is better than Lourdes for physical and spiritual therapy. What I really despise about this film was the notion that it was the greatest thing that had ever happened on films. It isn't. It is a beautifully dressed-up Cinderella story, and if people could only see it in perspective, fine!

Of course, Antonioni in *L'Avventura*, let's say, is not one of my favorite movie-makers, until *Blow-Up* which is so stunning a movie simply because so much of it is so un-Antonioni until the cop-out. Up until then I simply could not stand his movies. Another type of movie I loathe is Tony Richardson's *Mademoiselle*, which to me is one of the funniest horror movies ever made. But they weren't really making a funny horror movie.

There has been so much pretension. I disliked intensely a movie like *Morgan*, which has fine directorial skills, fine performances, but which has so sick an idea. The director and actors did not know what they were setting out to accomplish. Because I do not think that in these times anybody in his right mind would say let's watch this lunatic, isn't he fun! And this is exactly what *Morgan* makes you see. Because he is a man who is schizophrenic to the point of being committed to an insane asylum by the end of the film, and therefore this is not black comedy.

I am not a Godard enthusiast, because again I frankly admit to having a very old-fashioned idea that the man who has made the movie

should answer my question, "Why am I here—what are you trying to tell me?" and it seems to me that Godard is infatuated with his camera technique. Really he has the eye but he doesn't bother to use it to any purpose. The awful thing is I looked at *Breathless* very recently and you mustn't look at it unless you can shut your mind and remember when it came out. He has been so pleased with what he can do with a camera and has had such fun that until *Masculine/Feminine,* as far as I am concerned, he hasn't had anything other than the most juvenile obvious to say to us. This is not true of Malle and Fellini and particularly Resnais—who I think is probably the most cogent of the present-day movie-makers.

CONFLICT WITH HOLLYWOOD

In the spring of 1965 I was invited to Hollywood to make a speech at the Screen Publicists' Guild. I guess by that time I was considered the arch enemy of Hollywood because I said *Spencer's Mountain* was a dirty movie, which it was. I did not like *Cleopatra* and *The Sound of Music* and *Lord Jim,* and what was the third block-buster? I guess it was *The Greatest Story Ever Told.* Also I had not thought that *My Fair Lady* was the greatest movie ever made either. So I was invited out. It was on a Friday that I spoke at the luncheon and what would have been an understandable light remark in the east fell like a bomb. I said, "Where I come from, Hollywood is a dirty word." Anybody in movie circles here would understand it perfectly. This absolutely destroyed them. This was biting the hand.

On the dais were Joan Crawford, Frank Sinatra, Joe Levine. I said you asked me to talk frankly and I will. I said I wish all the money you wasted on postage and mimeographing stupid releases like "Bette Davis blew her nose three times on the set, three times for luck," they said; or "They are filming the Love Life of Madame de Stael with 20 million extras which will be released next month." If you just saved up all that money and devoted it to producing good movies, I would be happy. Well, apparently this was a horrible thing to say to them. This was just the beginning. What really got them was my reviewing on television—because you can always threaten a newspaper through the advertising, but you can't do that to television, because they don't carry movie ads. Anyway, they began a very heavy campaign against the *Tribune.* But I will say I did get a good deal of support—and sometimes from people in Hollywood who wrote saying they had been at the luncheon and that it's time these people got a few hard facts, and ended by saying they were not signing their names because they still had relatives living in Westwood. Which I thought was just lovely.

A great number of the people who mattered to me, of course, did not take offense. A number of producers were very very nasty. In the columns, in silly little things like not making pictures available, and that kind of thing.

INTERNAL MECHANICS OF THE INDUSTRY

Of course I have met with executives of movie companies, and I suppose I have been able to do it because I used to be a reporter. I say, "This is totally off the record and I am not going to write about it, but will you please educate me on distribution, or will you tell me the financing of this new picture?" I have found that this is the only way that people will tell you more than you are going to get either out of a trade story or out of the fan magazine story, or even out of the analytic story in the New York *Times.*

They are secretive because (and this is the one thing I'm afraid we keep forgetting) this is a business, and nobody covering movies should expect any of the companies to open up their books for our benefit any more than somebody covering automobiles is going to expect General Motors to open up its books. Nonsense—this is business. It is not art. It is heavy industry.

What has been typical of the movie industry to me is that the greatest compliment anybody can pay you, and this is a positive virtue, is "She is honest." This is supposed to be a great accolade, but particularly for someone who has been around newspapers a long time it is not the

height of flattery for me. But this is the greatest compliment Hollywood can pay. Some of my best friends are movie-makers and some of them make absolutely the worst movies, and some of them make movies that I have won laurels denouncing.

DAN BURNS

Pixillation

The single-framing of controlled live action appears to have been recognized as a distinct category of animation only after Norman McLaren "slightingly"[1] christened the technique, used extensively in his 1952 film *Neighbors*, as "pixillation." McLaren describes the pixillation process as that of "applying the principles normally used in the photographing of animated and cartoon movies to the shooting of actors: that is, instead of placing drawings, cartoons or puppets in front of the animation camera, we place real human beings."[2]

But McLaren's description of the process no longer defines the term. Pixillation may be used to achieve a variety of physical and psychological effects; and the word has been loosely used to label any process which produces these or similar effects. Central to the broadened concept of pixillation is the animation, by whatever means, of live actors—as distinct from the animation of normally inanimate objects. Although stop-camera cinematography is fundamental to both effects, the usefulness of this distinction will become apparent as we explore the aesthetic of pixillation. We may approach this aesthetic by examining the implications of the stop-camera technique as they relate to the nature of film as a medium.

Stop-camera cinematography may have been discovered when Méliès's camera jammed while shooting ordinary footage on the streets of Paris:

> It took a moment to unjam the film and to start the camera going. During this pause the pedestrians, buses and cars had changed their positions. When I projected the developed film to the point where the break had occurred, I suddenly saw the Madeleine-Bastille omnibus changed into a hearse, and men changed into women . . . The substitution trick, called the *truc à arrêt*, had been discovered . . .[3]

The *truc à arrêt*, even in its most sophisticated use, is still basically the same: an immobilized motion picture camera is temporarily stopped while the scene which it is photographing is altered by adding, moving, or removing an object or set of objects. The camera is then made to photograph the altered scene. The resulting strip of film, when projected, imposes upon the photographed sequence an apparent temporal continuity, thus creating the illusion of sudden appearance, disappearance, or, more important, of metamorphosis. The physical act of altering the scene, plus the time it takes to effect this alteration, may be said to have been compressed within a frame line. Thus the stop-camera cinematographer achieves his effects through the manipulation of time. For the painter, line-in-space is plastic, and results in articulated space, or form. For the animator, form-in-time is plastic and results in visually articulated time, which does not have a name, but whose structured aggregate is perceived as metamorphosis.

Stop-camera cinematography is often thought of as a kind of gimmicky subterfuge and is carefully distinguished from straight movie-making procedures. Yet it can be demonstrated that a radical affinity exists between stop-camera techniques and ordinary cinematography.

height of flattery for me. But this is the greatest compliment Hollywood can pay. Some of my best friends are movie-makers and some of them make absolutely the worst movies, and some of them make movies that I have won laurels denouncing.

DAN BURNS

Pixillation

The single-framing of controlled live action appears to have been recognized as a distinct category of animation only after Norman McLaren "slightingly"[1] christened the technique, used extensively in his 1952 film *Neighbors*, as "pixillation." McLaren describes the pixillation process as that of "applying the principles normally used in the photographing of animated and cartoon movies to the shooting of actors: that is, instead of placing drawings, cartoons or puppets in front of the animation camera, we place real human beings."[2]

But McLaren's description of the process no longer defines the term. Pixillation may be used to achieve a variety of physical and psychological effects; and the word has been loosely used to label any process which produces these or similar effects. Central to the broadened concept of pixillation is the animation, by whatever means, of live actors—as distinct from the animation of normally inanimate objects. Although stop-camera cinematography is fundamental to both effects, the usefulness of this distinction will become apparent as we explore the aesthetic of pixillation. We may approach this aesthetic by examining the implications of the stop-camera technique as they relate to the nature of film as a medium.

Stop-camera cinematography may have been discovered when Méliès's camera jammed while shooting ordinary footage on the streets of Paris:

> It took a moment to unjam the film and to start the camera going. During this pause the pedestrians, buses and cars had changed their positions. When I projected the developed film to the point where the break had occurred, I suddenly saw the Madeleine-Bastille omnibus changed into a hearse, and men changed into women . . . The substitution trick, called the *truc à arrêt*, had been discovered . . .[3]

The *truc à arrêt*, even in its most sophisticated use, is still basically the same: an immobilized motion picture camera is temporarily stopped while the scene which it is photographing is altered by adding, moving, or removing an object or set of objects. The camera is then made to photograph the altered scene. The resulting strip of film, when projected, imposes upon the photographed sequence an apparent temporal continuity, thus creating the illusion of sudden appearance, disappearance, or, more important, of metamorphosis. The physical act of altering the scene, plus the time it takes to effect this alteration, may be said to have been compressed within a frame line. Thus the stop-camera cinematographer achieves his effects through the manipulation of time. For the painter, line-in-space is plastic, and results in articulated space, or form. For the animator, form-in-time is plastic and results in visually articulated time, which does not have a name, but whose structured aggregate is perceived as metamorphosis.

Stop-camera cinematography is often thought of as a kind of gimmicky subterfuge and is carefully distinguished from straight movie-making procedures. Yet it can be demonstrated that a radical affinity exists between stop-camera techniques and ordinary cinematography.

Stop-camera effects are achieved by the substitution of objects for each other, or for informal space, during the several seconds or minutes (or days) when the camera is not running. This substitution, experienced in projection, results in metamorphosis. Similarly, in ordinary continuous cinematography the camera is actually "stopped" for a short interval 24 times per second, during which time the scene being photographed is altered by the substitution of objects for each other or for informal space. In reality, movement is *not* photographed, but only a sequential series of substitutions, which in projection results in a special case of metamorphosis: the illusion of continuous movement.

The deception created by "continuous" cinematography is therefore essentially no different from the subterfuge of stop-camera movie making; but in the latter technique a formal control factor, normally present only in a diminutive state, is amplified. We should not hesitate to exploit this control factor, or worry about being unfaithful to the nature of the film when we do so. Cinematography is the craft of achieved image-ination. The motion picture film is a vehicle for the articulation of time with formal space. The movies, or pictures which seem to move, are themselves secondary to the fundamentals of the motion picture film; their basis is in an illusion. It is their ability to structure illusion which determines the movies' suitability for the realization of the fantastic. Méliès said that "in film making today it is possible to realize the most unlikely and impossible events . . . illusion, intelligently used, lets us render visible the supernatural, the imaginary, and the impossible itself."[4]

We have noted that in stop-camera cinematography more can happen between the individual frames than would normally be expected, and thus a formal control factor is introduced. If this control factor is introduced for the purpose of photographing human beings, the process is known as pixillation. Although the maker of a pixillated film may never achieve quite as much formal control as is available to the cell animator, the human mind grants to the pixillated image a degree of credibility which is forever denied to cartoon characters. Thus pixillation is the perfect vehicle for the realization of fantasy.

Pixillation processes are of two types: continuous movement pixillation, in which each frame of exposed camera original is represented by one frame of picture in the final print; and staccato action pixillation, in which individual frames of camera original are represented by more than one frame of picture in the final print. Only continuous movement pixillation has received any measurable degree of exploration, and experimentation in this field has been largely limited to noncommercial filmmakers. Widespread interest in the technique was sparked by the films of Norman McLaren, who in 1952 experimented with live-actor animation in a short work called *Two Bagatelles*. He found that

> Once it is assumed that the actor being photographed by a movie camera can stop between any or every 24th of a second, a new range of human behaviour becomes possible. The laws of appearance and disappearance can be circumvented as can the laws of momentum, inertia, centrifugal force and gravity; but what is perhaps even more important, the tempo of acting can be infinitely modulated from the slowest speed to the fastest.

Two Bagatelles, in effect, was a warming-up exercise for McLaren's 1953 Academy Award winner *Neighbors*. The film concerns the battle of two neighbors over a flower which springs up on the boundary line between their property. Pixillation is used to achieve fantastic effects which often take the place of words. For instance, one neighbor sniffs the flower and floats through the air with pleasure. The other neighbor gestures with his hand, and a fence erects itself in an instant. Pixillation is used in the fight that follows to give an unbelievable intensity to the violence. A fist smashes into a mouth with such speed that the face must surely be flattened. One man tears down his neighbor's house, stomps his wife into the ground, and kicks her baby with such force that it goes flying out of the scene.

There is still a great deal of technique that the amateur and the professional can learn from

Neighbors. Camera procedures were modified to suit the action being photographed. In order to combine normal-looking live action with the animation of an object the camera was hand triggered. During the interval between exposures, the actor would modify his position slightly while an assistant moved the object being animated.

Pixillation was also used to intensify the violence of the neighbors' fight scene. McLaren notes that "live action animation can create a caricature by tampering with the tempo of human action, by creating hyper-natural exaggerations and distortions of the human behaviour, by manipulating acceleration and deceleration of any given human movement." These effects can be controlled *by the actor* if the camera is allowed to run continuously, but at a slower speed than normal. A camera running at half speed would introduce a tempo control factor of two, and give the actor a range of available screen speeds varying from normal (if he moved slowly) to twice normal (if he moved at an ordinary rate). In addition to introducing a tempo control factor, this technique of slowing down both the acting and the camera may be used to distort the effects of gravity, inertia, and centrifugal force. If the camera is running at half speed but the acting is made to appear normal, an object may fall to the ground as if pulled by a magnet, or may be brought to an impossibly sudden halt, or may smash into another object with incredible force without damaging it.

Perhaps the most fascinating effect possible with pixillation is the creation of new kinds of human movement. McLaren has noted that "apart from new types of walking and running, a person may get from one place to another by sliding (while sitting, standing, balancing on one foot, or any other way), by appearing and disappearing, and a host of other ways." These locomotion effects may be achieved by having the actor reposition himself, relative to the camera, while maintaining any pose which the director desires. The camera may be stopped after each frame to allow the actor to reposition himself, but some experimenters have found it more convenient and convincing to let the camera run continuously at one frame per second, and establish a rhythm for the actor's movement which allows a slight blur to be registered on the film, as in continuous-action filming.

Abnormal kinds of locomotion are at once the simplest and the most spectacular of pixillation effects. A group of students at Chouinard Art Institute has recently completed a 16mm film, *Vicious Cycles,* in which a gang of Hell's Angels, legs astraddle, are seen racing madly down the highway—without the help of motor cycles. The effect was achieved with the pixillation technique. The possibilities for new kinds of locomotion are probably endless. "Creatively you are dealing with unreality. The less likely the action, the more fascinating the effect." (McLaren)

The formal control available to the film-maker in pixillation may be extended to the realm of rhythmic and contrapuntal effects. The separate action sequences in *Neighbors* were realized in precise metrical lengths, so that the picture could later be synchronized to an as-yet-unmade sound track. Of course it is possible to begin, as in cell animation, with a complete sound track, and plot the movements of the actors frame by frame.

Although pixillation was briefly popular in TV commercials soon after the release of *Neighbors,* the technique has never really made a breakthrough into the theatrical entertainment film. It is remarkable that experimentation with the technique has been so largely limited to noncommercial film-makers. Pixillation may have a special appeal to the amateur because "its potentialities are enormous and its cost is nil."[5] *Neighbors,* for instance, was made without elaborate settings, and was shot with a Cine Kodak-Special. The disproportionate ratio of shooting time to screen time may discourage lengthy professional productions; but to the amateur time is free. Moreover, pixillation presents technical obstacles which become more and more formidable as one demands a greater degree of perfection. The problems of changing color temperature, fluidity of movement, and stabilization of inanimate objects are never fully solved in *Neighbors.* The noncommercial

Norman McLaren's NEIGHBORS

film maker can afford to ignore such minor imperfections; the professional, perhaps, cannot.

McLaren completed two more pixillated films: *A Chairy Tale* (1958) which exploited the pas de deux of a man and a chair which had begun to be developed in *Neighbors,* and *Opening Speech: McLaren,* (1960), in which his microphone develops a will and life of its own. Some time before this, John Daborn, a 24-year-old British film-maker, produced a 16mm pixillated film entitled *Two's Company,* which uses accelerated motion and abnormal locomotion techniques to develop the rivalry of two men over a girl seated on a park bench. But pixillation is perhaps most alive in the works of the Polish animators Lenica and Borowczyk, who use the technique in conjunction with iconography, collage, and object animation to extend animation photography in a surreal direction.

While continuous movement pixillation has received little commercial attention, staccato action pixillation has received almost none. In this effect, individual frames of camera original are represented by more than one frame of picture on the projected strip of film. The effect on the screen is that of continually truncated action, which may be perceived either as a series of stills held together by movement, or as action punctuated by "freezes" or stops. The mind imposes upon the projected series of photographs a kinetic and temporal continuity similar to that which it imposes upon an ordinary movie; thus, appearances, disappearances, and metamorphoses can be effected upon the screen. The pixillated effect may be achieved either by hold-printing selected frames of movie film, or by projecting still camera originals and rephotographing them onto movie film. Both techniques offer the possibility of interpretation, revision, and rhythmic control, but the still camera technique offers greater opportunities for versatility and improvisation.

For instance, if a moving subject is photographed against an indeterminate background, such as the sky, a white wall, etc., the still camera may be hand-held and moved to any position for each individual shot. The movement of the camera will, in final projection, be interpreted as movement of the subject, for the mind does not demand the kind of displacement continuity that would be expected in an ordinary movie. Thus impossible movements, contortions, and reversals can be realized.

Once in possession of his camera originals, the film-maker can decide which images to rephotograph, what part of each image to rephotograph, and in what order the images should appear. Because each individual still image can

be "held" on the movie film for any number of frames, the film-maker has absolute rhythmic control over the pixillated action, which may even be synchronized to a musical track.

Thus the pixillator has a formative control over his raw material which approaches that of the cell animator. If the original still pictures are projected upon a white matte board for rephotographing, drawn-in backgrounds and three-dimensional objects may be mixed with the photographic image simply by positioning them appropriately on the matte board. It is even possible to make an alteration on the pixillated image itself simply by drawing the alteration on a white sheet of paper and moving it to the appropriate position for each new still photograph. Hand-drawn cell animation may be combined with pixillated "live" action in the same way that one might animate over a still background. Strangely enough the eye does not question the unlikely combination of hand-drawn images and photographic reality, but accepts the amalgamation along with the staccato pixillated movement.

Pixillation, as a combination of still and motion photography, utilizes many of the inherent potentialities of both art forms. A still photograph can freeze the elusive moment of form in motion; but pixillation can combine this frozen-motion quality with the illusion of stylistic motion itself.

Other qualities of a still photograph may be exploited in conjunction with motion: for instance, an object may be made to hang in mid-air by pixillating a series of photographs taken of that object as it falls through a particular point in space. People may be made to float through the air by using the same technique. The possibilities for improvisation here seem to be unlimited.

Borowczyk's RENAISSANCE

Norman McLaren has stated that "the creative potentialities of this stop-motion live-action technique are quite considerable—not so much for a straight action movie involving speech and lip synchronization but for a new genre of filmic ballet and mime." Perhaps we would do well to exploit these potentialities. Most recent technical innovations in films, such as color, wide screen, Circlevision, etc., have worked toward transforming the film into a vehicle for the apparent representation of an event as it might be seen by some monstrous, vacuous, disembodied eye. Pixillation, however, is a movement away from the strictures of the naturalistic aesthetic and toward the expressive freedom inherent in highly stylized art. It scarcely needs to be demonstrated that the canons of plausibility which we apply to everyday reality are not necessarily applicable to art. If an artist wishes to make a fantastic event seem credible, he must signal his audience that an abnormal kind of plausibility is operative. The pixillated image performs this signal function, and is itself a perfect vehicle for the integration of fantasy and reality

Though film is a medium between the artist and his audience, any particular film tends to promote the illusion that its experienced content is immediate. For this reason every film tends to predicate its own existential projection; tends to say that the way things are in the movie is like the way things are in life. Unless clear attention is called to the fact that a particular film is artifice, the audience will tend to confuse the projected images with the representation of reality.

Since a film can never be completely true to life, it can only be true to itself—to its own central contentions. Nevertheless many audiences accept fictitious film as fact. It is therefore our responsibility as film-makers to recognize, and help our audiences recognize, that a film does

not occur, it is made; and that even the most "objective" documentary is, after all, a fabrication.

So let us openly declare our willingness to use reality as raw material to be atomized and restructured. Let us forge our own reality, and call it a forgery, and hope that someday nature imitates art.

NOTES

1. William E. Jordan, "Norman McLaren: His Career and Techniques," *Quarterly of Film, Radio and TV*, Vol. VIII, No. 1. (Also available as NFB pamphlet.)
2. Norman McLaren, "Pixillation," *Canadian Film News*, October, 1953, p. 3. The following McLaren quotations are from the same source.
3. Maurice Bessy and Lo Duca, *Georges Méliès*. Paris: Prisma, 1945, p. 56.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
5. Harold Benson [Derek Hill], " 'Pixillation'—New Idea in Movie Making," *American Cinematographer*, November, 1954, p. 568.

GREGG BARRIOS

Naming Names: The films of Carl Linder

"Oh let me be as a flower. Let ugliness arise without care and grow side by side with beauty . . ."
—Michael McClure in DARK BROWN

"No actions or doings of the spirit should be called ugly . . . ugliness, beauty and bliss if they are felt are to be named . . . suffering as well as joy should be titled . . . each genetic immeasurable titan manbeast must name his names and the shapes visible to his senses."
—Michael McClure in MEAT SCIENCE ESSAYS

Carl Linder is one of the new breed of film-makers who seem to follow in no one's footsteps. Though his work is created with the knowledge of what has preceded in experimental film, he brings to each of his films an originality that owes little to the past but provides an index for some viable future direction that others may pursue.

Unlike many young film-makers, Linder has discontinued showing his earlier movies for the simple and honest reason that he feels they aren't representative of his better work. This attitude is indeed rare in an age where experimental film directors seem obsessed with the notion that every frame—whether under- or over-exposed—should be included in their filmic repertoire. By devoting my attention to the films Linder still has in distribution (and certainly his better work), I will leave the earlier work (*The Allergist, The Black & White Peacock*, etc.) to find an audience after people become acquainted with his more important contributions to film art.

Linder's first major film was *The Devil is Dead* (1964). This movie, a phantasmagoric exploration into the violence we house within ourselves, has moments as fearful and surreal as much of Hieronymus Bosch—especially in his depictions of *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. *The Devil is Dead* is not an excremental vision, as some critics have been tempted to call it. This, however, is not to say that excrement is not a part of this film. *The Devil is Dead* is a disconcerting tale of possession in all senses of the word. The characters in the film seem possessed

not occur, it is made; and that even the most "objective" documentary is, after all, a fabrication.

So let us openly declare our willingness to use reality as raw material to be atomized and restructured. Let us forge our own reality, and call it a forgery, and hope that someday nature imitates art.

NOTES

1. William E. Jordan, "Norman McLaren: His Career and Techniques," *Quarterly of Film, Radio and TV*, Vol. VIII, No. 1. (Also available as NFB pamphlet.)
2. Norman McLaren, "Pixillation," *Canadian Film News*, October, 1953, p. 3. The following McLaren quotations are from the same source.
3. Maurice Bessy and Lo Duca, *Georges Méliès*. Paris: Prisma, 1945, p. 56.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
5. Harold Benson [Derek Hill], " 'Pixillation'—New Idea in Movie Making," *American Cinematographer*, November, 1954, p. 568.

GREGG BARRIOS

Naming Names: The films of Carl Linder

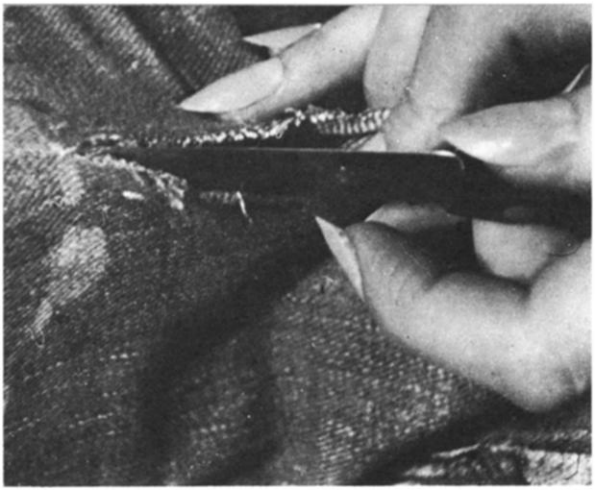
"Oh let me be as a flower. Let ugliness arise without care and grow side by side with beauty . . ."
—Michael McClure in DARK BROWN

"No actions or doings of the spirit should be called ugly . . . ugliness, beauty and bliss if they are felt are to be named . . . suffering as well as joy should be titled . . . each genetic immeasurable titan manbeast must name his names and the shapes visible to his senses."
—Michael McClure in MEAT SCIENCE ESSAYS

Carl Linder is one of the new breed of film-makers who seem to follow in no one's footsteps. Though his work is created with the knowledge of what has preceded in experimental film, he brings to each of his films an originality that owes little to the past but provides an index for some viable future direction that others may pursue.

Unlike many young film-makers, Linder has discontinued showing his earlier movies for the simple and honest reason that he feels they aren't representative of his better work. This attitude is indeed rare in an age where experimental film directors seem obsessed with the notion that every frame—whether under- or over-exposed—should be included in their filmic repertoire. By devoting my attention to the films Linder still has in distribution (and certainly his better work), I will leave the earlier work (*The Allergist, The Black & White Peacock*, etc.) to find an audience after people become acquainted with his more important contributions to film art.

Linder's first major film was *The Devil is Dead* (1964). This movie, a phantasmagoric exploration into the violence we house within ourselves, has moments as fearful and surreal as much of Hieronymus Bosch—especially in his depictions of *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. *The Devil is Dead* is not an excremental vision, as some critics have been tempted to call it. This, however, is not to say that excrement is not a part of this film. *The Devil is Dead* is a disconcerting tale of possession in all senses of the word. The characters in the film seem possessed



THE DEVIL IS DEAD

by a surreal representation of what they spiritually have become in a world that has closed in on them. Not the world we ordinarily are aware of, though, for Linder probes into the miniscule, everyday world of dirt, hair, spit, food, and household fixtures. The film begins as a woman is inspected by the camera with superimposed images of her limbs, face, etc. She combs her hair as if getting ready for something—perhaps a bout with the devil? A young man is seen reading a book—on his head is a mortarboard with a window shade which he pulls down over his face, hoping we will not see that he is actually looking at erotic drawings of sexual intercourse. Color slides are flashed on the shade. Finally the young man puts on blinders to go to sleep—perhaps to prevent his being deflowered by a nocturnal succubus. Suddenly Boschean figures begin to emerge apparently from the cracks in these characters' splintered world. A hairy belly mocks a ghoulish mouth, lips are superimposed over eyes, ears and eyes become extensions of everything. A masked devil holds a red bulb in its mouth, blood dribbles down a woman's mouth. On the sound track abrasive noise jars the ears and keys up the nerves. Fingers poke maliciously at the viewer. Then new figures appear: a man gorges himself with a gelatinous substance of blood color followed by glimpses of more masked ghouls. A man is seen courting his vacuum cleaner and attending to its every need. Again we see the gluttonous man as an overflow of peas runs down his unsated jowls. A girl bares parts of her body like an animal about to be sectioned for slaughter and as she slowly opens her thighs we hear a door creak open. Then Linder closes in for a crotch shot. The devil laughs between another pair of legs, sticking out his penis/tongue at us. Ductless glands secrete fluids and our tactile sense has been pricked.

The tempo is accelerated with flashing alchemical whirls and sounds of ripping, tearing, ravishing. A church bell attempts to ring out but it is silenced. The images become more violent. A menacing young bitch uses a sharp knife to cut a defenseless victim's jeans. The path of the blade is shown in a microscopic tracking shot. Our eyes have been slit. Toward the end of the film we have a retracing of the characters and images back to the beginning (was it a dream? an extension by association?) as an avalanche is heard, burying us beneath a barrage of nightmarish images.

The mood and tone in this masterful film are heightened through Linder's use of shadow-filled tints of flesh color. He also relies on heavy superimpositions for contrasting imagery, and on close-ups that turn everything they magnify into varying degrees of grotesqueness—putting the animal flesh itself on the same level as the shiny veneer of manufactured objects. (The flesh surrealism is akin to Peter Weiss's *Hallucinations,* in which impersonal limbs and flesh stem from one another in horrifying mutilations).

Yes, Linder is going against the grain of our etherized sensibilities. In this vision of meat poetry his characters howl out to us in the realization that in this age of motorized romance the unknown still lurks and must be named. He seems to be asking us to accept the fact that everything we touch or come in contact with has the ability to take on our own characteristics—to become a possession full of our own vibrations. A metamorphosis created by the fusion of the animate with the inanimate, of the possible with the impossible. *The Devil is Dead* acknowledges that we are indeed victims of a neurotic eroticism, and this revolution against our tin

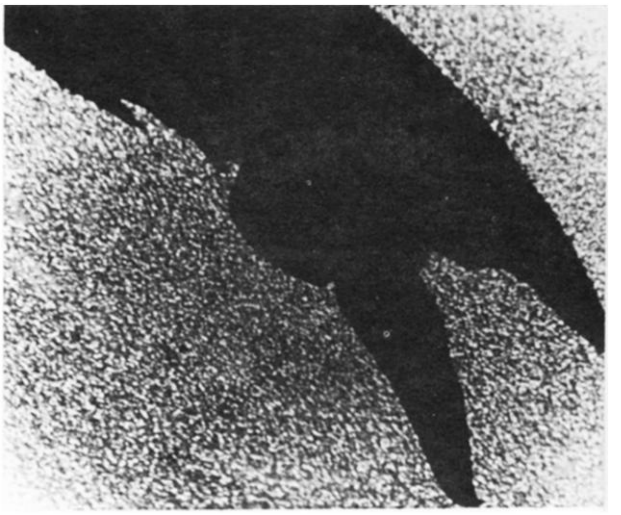
hearts give rise to the painful birth of the new mutant: modern man becoming the mechanical sensorium. Amazing that we can even respond: "The devil is dead, long live the devil."

In his next film, *Skin,* Linder continues the same photographic techniques employed in *The Devil is Dead* but in the new film their use serves a lyrical purpose. In *Skin,* flowers are seen in all their lush, feminine beauty—glowing inwardly and outwardly; bees, pollen, stamens —all the reproductive beauties of flowers are shown, with quick subliminal flashes of their human counterparts.

The human characters are limited to an onanistic one: a zealous flower thief who lurks in a green house, engaging in his secret "preversions," abusing and dismembering lovely plants. It is outrageously serious camp by Jack Smith—looking like Cocteau in *The Testament of Orpheus*—painting a portrait of the flower as the narcissistic symbol of self-immolation.

Soft-focus abstractions and the lush music of Gabrieli add to the romantic quality of the film. Though *Skin* seems antipodal to *The Devil is Dead,* it is actually a continuation of the Boschean vision in a more naturalistic setting. Skin becomes/is the outerleaf of the body—the exposed. Skin is the porous, delicate sense of touch. And as the flower thief is seen in the end escaping with his carpetbag through green botanical gardens we realize all this must not be stolen or allowed to wither away.

It readily becomes evident that one cannot relate in linear synopsis what occurs in Linder's movies, since the images that make up his films defy pat categorizations. *Detonation* is a continuation of this complex style. Here again, the film-maker stresses the interchangeability of humans into animals. Large reptiles crawl with slimy elegance as their human counterpart arches her thighs in a parallel manner. The viewer soon senses an uneasiness and feels, once again, the irritating quality present throughout *The Devil is Dead.* However, the tension this time is relieved in the form of a horse race. And the precarious balance of manbeast is echoed in the body of a woman evolving into a vain peacock. In the final sequence, a girl in a bikini



SKIN

stalks like a caged animal on a landscape of shimmering sand, and we are once again where we were several centuries ago.

Overflow is the conclusion of the beautiful cycle of work begun in *The Devil is Dead.* The microscopic intensity of the earlier films is replaced in *Overflow* by a telescopic overview of the earlier work—yet it is as rich in imagery as the lyrical *Skin.* Ripeness is all. Seeing *Overflow* can remind one of Naomi Levine's *Yes* and of Stan Brakhage's *Song XVI* (both films stress the pastoral beauty of the body via super-impositions). Though *Overflow*'s landscape is the geography of the body, the film also seems to operate on several other levels as well.

Overflow begins with a howling wind causing fragile flower stems to sway rhythmically as bees pollinate their soft centers. This is contrasted with shots of the protoplasmic delicate balance of life in the sea (the home of Venus) and up to the foamy surf where a young girl serenely plays in the water while elsewhere waves explode against the shore. On the sound track a monotonic voice speaks of "discouragement and despair." Hooting owls reply as antennaed beetles relay the communication in a language of their own. A healthy and very naked woman plays volleyball with the lithe grace of a living mammal—which she is. The sound of a horse-race bugle is heard. Everything has been set into motion and the game has begun. The sound overlaps from scene to scene of beaches, children, and vibrant nudity (much as in *The*

OVERFLOW

Banquet, by Lawrence Booth). A blonde flower child arches her soft pubic center and a man's penis bounces with animation. Is the dream beginning or are we awakening? Air-raid sirens are heard as the voice of Yma Sumac ebbs into song. The screen takes on a new brilliance as fireworks flash and explode. Red spotlights explore the dense terrain of body hair, and camouflaged bodies; sulfurous yellow skies are probed and screaming red deserts turn to dark (the colors of the sexual spectrum) as all this idyllic imagery finally bursts into kaleidoscopic color and the cheerleader/majorette at a football rally ignites this storehouse of energy, this explosive substance—this overflow harnessed in the roar of high-school pubescents, with a huge bonfire both pagan and primitive, an echo of the Nuremberg rallies which forecasted the real bombings and air raids. Hands reach out in the darkness. She becomes a prime mover and the howitzer salutes her in open adoration. Young Aphrodite rushes back to a now darkened sea, a white foam flowing—overflowing and embracing her ankles—and like a precocious child smiles archly in the nocturnal dreams of all young men.

The success of this complex film is due to its level of unconscious awareness of sex, adolescence, war, nature, and mythology tempered with a mock-heroic attitude that is both comic and beautiful. *Overflow* is perhaps Linder's best film.

Each succeeding film in this quartet becomes a complement to the other—they draw sustenance from each other, combine to provide a unity of vision. The amount of compressed imagery in these four films is formidable; and the viewer should realize that in films like Linder's the "meaning" of each image is not important; instead it is the over-all impression—the kinetic movement—of each film that counts. Only in Brakhage's *Dog Star Man,* which this quartet closely equals, is there such rich intensity.

From the gentle humor of *Overflow* to the satire of *Womancock* is a shattering departure in Linder's film-making. *Womancock* is thematically close to the quartet since the subject is woman in her various guises. (The female is ever present in Linder's work). What we are exposed to in *Womancock* are the popular images that constitute our twentieth-century view of the female.

As *Womancock* begins we hear a Carmen Miranda type of voice singing a lilting Latin song as a group of women are seen lifting up their skirts and writhing suggestively over the credits. Then a close-up of a woman munching on a pear (or apple) is coupled with scenes of Bacchantes with waving *thyrsi* plotting on devouring the godhead. Close-ups of a bulging contact-lensed eye, women's tongues and mouths shot upside down: large mysterious orifices. Troupes of fashion models in pop animations feign charisma as a hillbilly chanteuse bewails the womanly lot: "You'll be an apple without any seeds when I'm gone." A woman plays suggestively with a mechanical toy, placing it between her thighs like a dildo. Women's buttocks squirm with delight as the sound track climaxes with: "life rushes forth . . . " and a pressurized shaving can spews cream through a metal contraceptive. And throughout, collage scenes of women, fashion-magazine superlatives, underwear, twats, and Everett Dirksen remarking: "It's a two-way street."

It is all very eclectic and quite lively, yet lurking in the background is a striking contrast to this lightness. Juxtaposed, we see a half-naked woman rubbing oil on one of her nipples. She stares hypnotically at the viewer, as if to engage

him with her autoeroticism—one of the most erotic scenes I have ever seen on film. Later, another woman (or perhaps the same one?) is seen toying maliciously with fistfuls of precious "jewels." The black-and-white photography is crisp and sharp while superimpositions are used meagerly and both images can be discerned without strain.

The film succeeds in its attempt to take all of the symbols and attributes of women and force them into an orgy of images. *Womancock* is an exploration into the wiles and myths women create—but also those imposed upon them. Though the women in this film might remind some people of Robert Nelson's masturbating felines in *Confessions of a Black Mother Succuba,* these women are not as impersonal and seem more like real people—closer to Vittoria and her friends who get together and let themselves go in Antonioni's *The Eclipse*: women caught in an unguarded moment without men—but the entire film pointing to men because of their absence. These fragile yet tough creatures, sexual and bisexual, are almost like captive animals.

This change in Linder's usually complex visual style coupled with his use of hip black humor—which up to now was more macabre—is in retrospect a bridge to his newer work—an antithesis that reaches for a new direction and style full of life yet just as complex.

Linder's newest film, *Closed Mondays,* is a complete and successful reversal of his earlier traits and style. Initially his approach to the subject appears entirely new for there is no superimposition or grating abstraction in either image or audio. Instead we have a beautiful film-portrait of a young girl/woman who bears a striking resemblance to Warhol's "superstar," Nico.

Her name is Michele Overman and she speaks about her life in her own words. She is, despite the adult body, a high-school teenybopper, who can still regress into an infantile state with relative ease. She is a Nabokovian nymphet teetering on the last stages of development. Her life, despite the glamorous fact that she is in a movie and that people in movies are supposedly more exciting, is average and ordinary. The camera follows her during a day: we move from her house, to school, go on a car and train trip, visit Linder's apartment and attend various informal activities (all these moments are detailed in 100-feet sequences) with her friends. One fantastic moment is devoted entirely to her ritual before the mirror as she combs her hair (as arresting as the real Nico in *The Chelsea Girls*).

Michele speaks about her desire to remain young and carefree, of her fears of growing up, and the fact that she will ultimately have to bear responsibility. She recounts the delightful way she can get away with swimming in the park, or skip a test, or panhandle a meal (only to test her desirability) from an older man. She enjoys clowning on the phone, giggles over her recollections of "Froggy the Gremlin," and explains in level-headed terms her preference for Donovan over Dylan. Occasionally in the background, we hear snatches of the music she loves: *Legend of a Girl Child Linda*—which she explicates, unconsciously sensing the message of the song which corresponds with her own inevitable maturation.

In *Closed Mondays,* Linder employs a style that owes much to the contemporary documentary film via *cinéma-vérité* and Warholian real-reel cinema. And lest we slumber into thinking we are being put on, Linder on occasion lets his camera stray, purposely, to give us a nice thigh or crotch shot that makes us realize that this

CLOSED MONDAYS

harmless young girl houses within herself the same destructive qualities that his other women possess. In this sense, we have returned to the earlier film quartet, and certainly to *Womancock.*

Carl Linder is currently working on a historical documentary of sorts: using footage of filmmakers in the process of shooting, and superimposing their work over these shots as a contrast. He is also working on a script for a feature-length movie.

Though his earlier work shows a disrespect for simplistic and moralistic messages of humanity and his point of view is a highly personal dream microcosm instead of a universal vision, Linder is nonetheless naming that which he thinks is worth seeing and talking about, and in doing this he does affirm (us) our humanity in a way most of us might dismiss. He shows us a beauty and an ugliness which we fail to see: the dark, mysterious, almost forbidden.

His view of women is compassionate—yet ambivalent and male-oriented. In deflating their *image* there is not disrespect but awe—a feeling that men and women are indeed different but are still bound by the flesh and compelled to find part of the one in the other. (His vision is not this simple or dogmatic but it does speak of these things.) His attitude seems to be changing to a more humanistic-optimistic one now that the early dissections have been made and the hallucinations analyzed.

ELODIE OSBORN

Animation in Zagreb

The arrival in the United States of a group of films from the animation studio in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, is an event worthy of some attention. Word of the unusually high quality and an increasingly interesting level of production from this studio has created an advance reputation for the so-called "Zagreb School."

On the occasion of the first showing of these films at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Zelimir Matko, producer at Zagreb Studios, as well as two of the young artists whose work has contributed to this reputation, Boris Kolar and Zlatko Bourek, were present. We had an opportunity to ask these gentlemen about the mechanics of financing their film experimentation and something of the philosophy behind the production.

Mr. Matko engagingly discussed the various ways that young film-makers in Yugoslavia were encouraged toward excellence. The government does not sponsor the work of the studios completely, but willingly helps. First, a studio must develop an idea for a film and then put it into presentable form to be judged by a central committee. If the idea is approved, the committee votes on how much money will be given toward its production. The amount given varies with the merit of the idea. Then, the rest of the money must be raised by borrowing from other sources known to the studios. (On cross-questioning, Mr. Matko replied that, as a general rule, the studio was fortunate in its encounters with committeemen; members of the committee were acknowledged fairly liberal in their tastes and judgments.)

But help doesn't stop here, since there are other rewards for quality. Once completed, the film distributed, it may win prizes within the country, and if it is so honored, there is a tax forgiveness which returns to the studio. I presume that the author of the film is then further encouraged by this response to produce new films which will again bring him rewards. The Yugoslav system of financing appears to be in between a socialist and a capitalist approach with rewards of funds as well as a seal of approval. Moreover, if the film is financially successful too, that in turn increases the artist's opportunity to continue his work. But the commercial success of a film is never the primary guide for future production.

It was in 1949 that a group of newspapermen, artists and cartoonists working for the Zagreb humorous weekly *Kerempuh* first decided to try to make an animated film. With no previous experience, they made a train trip from Zagreb to Karlovac, measuring the passage of time by the intervals

harmless young girl houses within herself the same destructive qualities that his other women possess. In this sense, we have returned to the earlier film quartet, and certainly to *Womancock.*

Carl Linder is currently working on a historical documentary of sorts: using footage of filmmakers in the process of shooting, and superimposing their work over these shots as a contrast. He is also working on a script for a feature-length movie.

Though his earlier work shows a disrespect for simplistic and moralistic messages of humanity and his point of view is a highly personal dream microcosm instead of a universal vision, Linder is nonetheless naming that which he thinks is worth seeing and talking about, and in doing this he does affirm (us) our humanity in a way most of us might dismiss. He shows us a beauty and an ugliness which we fail to see: the dark, mysterious, almost forbidden.

His view of women is compassionate—yet ambivalent and male-oriented. In deflating their *image* there is not disrespect but awe—a feeling that men and women are indeed different but are still bound by the flesh and compelled to find part of the one in the other. (His vision is not this simple or dogmatic but it does speak of these things.) His attitude seems to be changing to a more humanistic-optimistic one now that the early dissections have been made and the hallucinations analyzed.

ELODIE OSBORN

Animation in Zagreb

The arrival in the United States of a group of films from the animation studio in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, is an event worthy of some attention. Word of the unusually high quality and an increasingly interesting level of production from this studio has created an advance reputation for the so-called "Zagreb School."

On the occasion of the first showing of these films at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Zelimir Matko, producer at Zagreb Studios, as well as two of the young artists whose work has contributed to this reputation, Boris Kolar and Zlatko Bourek, were present. We had an opportunity to ask these gentlemen about the mechanics of financing their film experimentation and something of the philosophy behind the production.

Mr. Matko engagingly discussed the various ways that young film-makers in Yugoslavia were encouraged toward excellence. The government does not sponsor the work of the studios completely, but willingly helps. First, a studio must develop an idea for a film and then put it into presentable form to be judged by a central committee. If the idea is approved, the committee votes on how much money will be given toward its production. The amount given varies with the merit of the idea. Then, the rest of the money must be raised by borrowing from other sources known to the studios. (On cross-questioning, Mr. Matko replied that, as a general rule, the studio was fortunate in its encounters with committeemen; members of the committee were acknowledged fairly liberal in their tastes and judgments.)

But help doesn't stop here, since there are other rewards for quality. Once completed, the film distributed, it may win prizes within the country, and if it is so honored, there is a tax forgiveness which returns to the studio. I presume that the author of the film is then further encouraged by this response to produce new films which will again bring him rewards. The Yugoslav system of financing appears to be in between a socialist and a capitalist approach with rewards of funds as well as a seal of approval. Moreover, if the film is financially successful too, that in turn increases the artist's opportunity to continue his work. But the commercial success of a film is never the primary guide for future production.

It was in 1949 that a group of newspapermen, artists and cartoonists working for the Zagreb humorous weekly *Kerempuh* first decided to try to make an animated film. With no previous experience, they made a train trip from Zagreb to Karlovac, measuring the passage of time by the intervals

between telephone poles in an effort to discover the secret of animating drawn figures. This original team consisted of Dusan Vukotic, Boris Kolar, Nikola Kostelac, Fadil Harzic and others who later achieved fame. As they had no studio, the artists worked in an apartment with very primitive equipment, including a camera built from "found objects." They had no opportunity to compare their work with what was being done in other countries until they started competing at international film festivals.

At first influenced by the animated films from the Disney studios, they soon departed from these conventions.* Under the leadership of Vukotic, they attempted to connect the content of their films with reality and this approach has been characteristic of the Zagreb School ever since. In 1957, they received their first prize at Oberhausen for Kostelac's *Opening Night* and they have gone on from one triumph to another. With more than 100 films produced to date, they have netted over 80 international festival prizes. The only Oscar award even given to a non-American cartoon was presented to Vukotic for his *Ersatz* in 1961.

Just as the early silent comedies of Chaplin, Sennett, and Keaton had a universal appeal because the stories were told visually, the Yugoslav cartoons reach a wide audience of different nationalities by projecting their ideas with sound and image only. This effort may have been made in the first place for consumption in Yugoslavia because the various dialects of the country preclude a single language track, but curiously, the situation on the domestic market reveals that audiences rarely see shorts, particularly in the provinces. Moreover, Zelimir Matko confided: "Believe it or not, whether a short film will be shown often depends upon the good will of the projectionist. On the other hand, in last year alone, 857 copies of the animated films were shown in the cinemas of 45 other countries." At the present time, several of the artists are under contract to co-produce cartoon films for foreign countries, but the studio shuns the further financial security in such arrangements because contracts of this nature could stultify artistic progress and individual experiment.

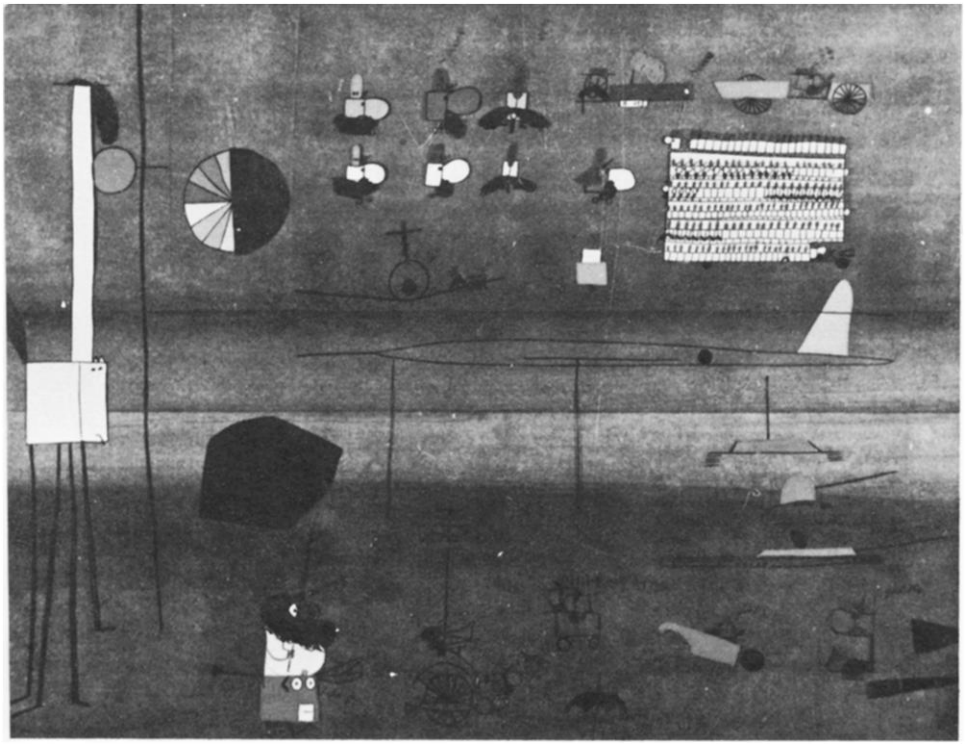
In the catalog of the Cambridge Animation Festival, November, 1967, Vukotic tells about one of the major efforts of the studio to arrive at a new approach to animation. In making a package of thirteen short commercial cartoons each lasting only 30 seconds to one minute, they experimented with great freedom. They subjected to a detailed analysis all elements of the film: the script, the drawing, the backgrounds, the musical accompaniment and the rhythmical pattern of editing and timing. They arrived at reduced forms of drawing which resulted in a freedom from realistic movement and a characteristic stylization. At the same time the movements became functionally more expressive. Their first films of about ten minutes duration had contained 12,000 to 15,000 drawings on paper. In applying the "reduced animation" techniques which they created, they succeeded in diminishing the number of drawings to 4,000 to 5,000 without losing any visual richness.

This visual shorthand in turn placed new demands on the sound composition of the films. It was possible to do away with realistic noises since sound no longer accompanied realistic movement, and, instead they could employ a contrapuntal approach to music and sound effects. Vukotic also points out that the number of sound effects in the films increased and that the post-synchronization of noises had to be abandoned as impracticable and replaced with pre-synchronization, which, however, increases the time needed for the sound treatment of a film.

Many reasons have been offered for the international success of these films. Some critics attribute the consistent leaning toward modern graphic art and painting techniques as responsible for the continued progress in the studio; others feel that the specific contributions of the Zagreb group—this use of "reduced animation"—has brought them their reputation. While both of these innovations no doubt contribute, I believe that the reason goes deeper than technical finesse. The experimentation born of necessity is never a deterrent in developing

---

* With a certain pride I recall that at the "Vision 65" Conference held at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Illinois, October, 1965, Dr. Vera Horvat-Pintaric, Director of the Museum of Modern Art in Zagreb said: "In those days these pioneers of animated cartoons in Yugoslavia, being self-taught and lacking any tradition, had to grapple with the most basic technical difficulties. Before long, however, they succeeded in achieving outstanding results because in drawing they turned to positive models notably in the caricature of Robert Osborn and Saul Steinberg. Another major stimulus were the cartoons of Jiri Trnka and the United States group, UPA. It was this experience which enabled them to outgrow and abandon Disney's schemes. . . ."



= ANIMATION

Vlado Kristl's DON KIHOT

an understanding of an art. These men were forced to learn from their own mistakes and achievements; they did not simply adapt a method already in use. Their efforts to get away from stereotyped formulas led to more personal contributions. At the same time as they abandoned the Disney influence, they moved away from strict entertainment. Satire crept into the subject matter and these young artists directed their work toward the adult movie-goer. Again to quote Vukotic, "This approach offered unlimited possibilities for the graphic transformation of characters and progress from pure form to symbols. . . . The limits of the cartoon film coincide with the limits of the imagination. Anything can be drawn or expressed through drawing." This is a refreshingly open approach to the art of animation.

There is something too in Adrienne Mancia's statement: ". . . artists in other media—sculptors, writers, composers, painters, set designers—were all sought to lend their talents and share their ideas in a new art form. Yet if you ask an artist at Zagreb the reason for such an uncommon pool of creativity and professionalism, he will reply with a twinkle, 'Well, maybe it's the coffee shop in our backyard.' " (Introduction to Museum of Modern Art Program Notes, January, 1968.) The presence of the coffee shop and its effect on group activity is not to be dismissed. The basic humanism which characterizes the themes of most of the films, the charming witticisms which spring from the Yugoslav nature may be directly released by the informal social atmosphere in which these men create. Much of the avante-garde work in Paris during the twenties surely emerged from the discussions and exchanges of ideas which took place in the cafés.

What is most characteristic of the Zagreb School is that there is no one particular style. Each of the artists contributes something of his own. Many of them are artists in other fields as well—Zlatko Bourek is a sculptor, graphic artist and stage designer; Zvonko Loncaric is a painter as is Aleksander Marks, who also has a reputation as a graphic artist. Each man helps to develop the talents of his co-workers at a level quite unique in animation studios.

Cowboy Jimmy, the earliest of the films which I saw at the Museum, won a diploma at Berlin and one at Oberhausen in 1957 and 1958 respectively. This work of Vukotic's does show the early relationship to Hollywood production, but it is more oriented toward the renegade UPA studies than to Disney. Nevertheless, the rapid visual metamorphoses which take place in the characters, the wry

handling of the cowboy hero theme and the subtle criticisms present lend it a sparkle and delight not often present in the more heavily handled American cartoons.

The second film, chronologically speaking, was Vlado Kristl's *Don Kihot* (Don Quixote) of 1961 which brought him first prize at Oberhausen in 1962. Kristl, a well-known painter, who studied the work of the Russian Suprematist Kasimir Malevitch, has adapted the experience of strict geometrical abstractions to his own ends. Though he expresses himself through semifigurative images, he has been able to develop a very compact and penetrating cartoon language. Don Quixote appears as a nearly abstract form of vertical lines vaguely akin to Picasso's analytical cubist drawings; masses of mechanized little ant-like figures dash around the screen in groups and regiments while abstract signals jump up and down in response to radio bleeps as if from outer space. By contrast the windmill is introduced realistically, photographed in full color churning around against a blue sky. The rhythmic unity of images and sounds is extraordinary. One experiences Don Quixote's trials emotionally and in modern terms. At the end of the film all of this frantic movement comes to a halt—the audience is exhausted.

Another of my favorites was *Diogenes Perhaps,* directed by Nedeljko Dragic who also produced an interesting animated fable, *Tamer of Wild Horses.* Here the stylistic affinities are closer to Steinberg, but fluidity of movement lends the film a dimension which one cannot experience in caricature drawn on paper. Surely this is the development which these younger artists are carrying forward.

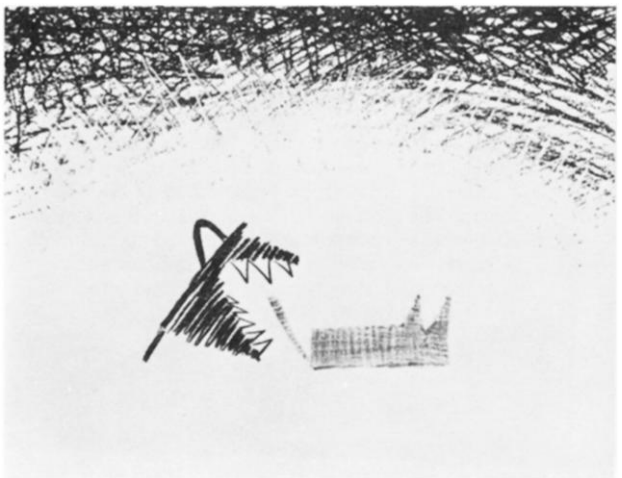
In general, the period between 1958 and 1962 is considered the golden age of the Zagreb School. The animated film was recognized as the most advanced factor in the Yugoslav film industry, surpassing both feature and documentary films. It should be pointed out that after 1962, both Vukotic and Mimica, who have been the leaders of the Zagreb School from the start, became more interested in feature films and Vlado Kristl, also one of the founders, went abroad. The development of the Zagreb School was thus left to a younger generation. This interruption in the studio did not affect these men long. The following year they produced a number of experimental projects which clearly identified them with even more condensed graphic improvisations or free forms as well as new ventures in short, witty, gag films of universal appeal.

Boris Kolar, who had been with the group from the beginning, and who had achieved great success with his film *Boomerang* in 1962, made two films which show his affinity for graphic experiment and synthesis. *The Monster and You,* made for the World Health Organization for the fight against tuberculosis was released in 1965, and *Vau-Vau* (Woof-Woof) which is in the present group being shown and circulated in the United States. The latter appears to be the most condensed graphic presentation (other than Kristl's *Don Kihot*) and I found it one of the most engaging of all. A dog, showing off his obvious feelings of superiority, frightens off a bird, a hedgehog, and a snail. A cat arrives, who indicates her lack of concern at the dog's bullying sound—she attacks, he retreats—but returns with new forces: a litter of puppies. The cat reappears with her own offspring and rivalry begins anew. Suddenly fight turns into play, puppies mew, kittens bark . . . and together they sing a song (in children's voices). Here is a delightful parable with all sorts of implications—political, social and psychological. The soundtrack is as inventive as the graphic symbols for animals: electronic sounds mingle with voices thrown through filters or played backwards on tapes.

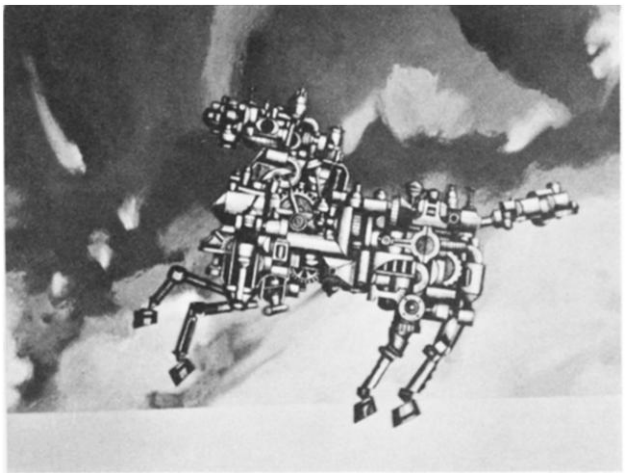
Among the short gag films by the younger artists which I saw were: Pavel Stalter and Zlatko Grgic's *The Fifth,* Dovnikovic's *Ceremony,* Zaninovic's *The Wall* and Zlatko Grgic's *The Musical Pig.*

The Fifth is simply a horn blower who keeps interrupting four fiddlers, making it impossible for them to complete their performance. The film says a great deal about persistence, resignation, cooperation, and ultimate disillusionment.

Ceremony opens on the efforts of a "photographer" to assemble a group of five men against a wall. He attempts to compose them for a shot. One sneezes, one leaves to go to the bathroom, one moves at an inopportune moment, a fly appears to disturb the silence—finally they are arranged. The



VAU VAU



TAMER OF WILD HORSES

camera shifts its position to reveal a squad of soldiers, rifles ready. There is a volley of shots, fade out, end. No message. Rather black and sick humor.

The Wall is similar in its ending. Two persnos attempt in various ways to deal with a wall which blocks their path. One resigns at once, the other refuses to give up, but cannot surmount the obstacle. Finally in despair, he smashes a hole in the wall with his head, paying with his life. The "resigned one" passes through the hole—only to find a second wall on the other side. . . .

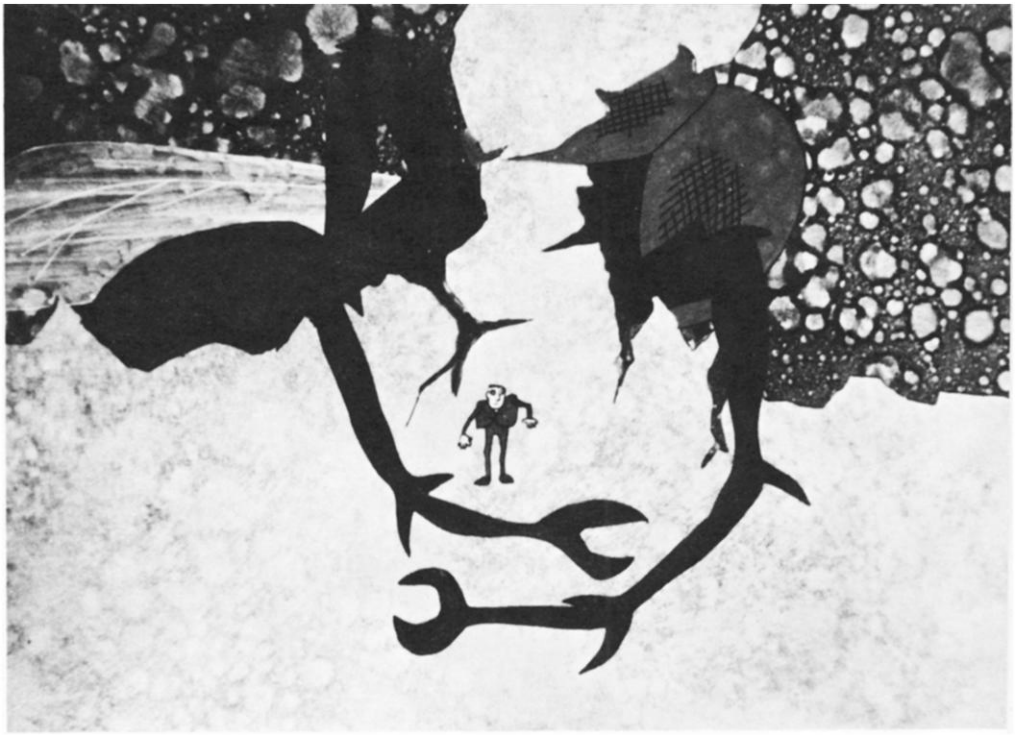
The Musical Pig is a talented creature who can sing all kinds of fine arias, but each person to whom he presents himself seems able to think of him only as roast pork. In the end, he is led off by a piper who appears more symathetic, but the final scene reveals that the pig eventually suffers the same fate as many misunderstood artists.

These films are clearly little parables with a message about the dignity of man as an individual, his feelings as a social being, his trials, small comforts, drives, weaknesses. Other titles such as *Curiosity, Obsession, Tolerance, Result, Metamorphoses* indicate the Yugoslav interest in human response. Perhaps the propinquity with Greece lends a philosophical inclination to their work. But it is tempered with the simplicity of themes common to all humanity and expressed in terms of Yugoslavian character and temperament.

Three more films should be mentioned. *Once Upon a Time There was a Dot*, by Mladen Pejakovic, is the only example of cartoons for children produced by the studio which I saw. Perhaps influenced by Norman McLaren, it is droll and utterly simple in story-line but sophisticated in technique. It represents an effort to reduce the cartoon to cogent signs of dots, circles, lines, and other geometric forms which delight the eye and the mind. A point becomes a line, the line is transformed into a circle, the circle becomes a baby, two circles become a carriage to hold the baby. Mama appears, then papa, and each time the cry of the child occurs, a new diversion is introduced by transforming the symbol on the screen into something else—a pacifier, a balloon, the balloon becomes a bicycle, then a waterwheel—rain turns sideways into waves, fish appear, a boat carries the family on the waves, the child's pinwheel becomes a propellor to move the boat, etc. Each transition is accomplished with the utmost ease and grace.

Dancing Songs, Zlatko Bourek's latest success, is a fantasy based on the motifs, music, and atmosphere of folk wedding-songs. Beautifully drawn and painted in a manner which to Western eyes seems kin to peasant painting and embroidery, it also takes certain inspiration from the paintings of Chagall. Richly colored costumes, simple doll-like figures set in flowery landscapes or carved and decorated architecture, the characters glide and dance through the verses of the folk ballads thus illustrated. It is sumptuous in color, fluid in movement and ornate in design. Bourek's work, to judge from other drawings exhibited at the Museum, appears to have consistently developed from a baroque feeling for caricature. In this, his most recent film, it is admirably controlled and engagingly woven into the fabric of the entire film so that figures, background, verse, and music are interdependent and give one the strong sense that they are the expression of one man.

If one had been able to view but one film of the Zagreb School, perhaps it would be best to settle for *The Fly*. Based on a script by Vatroslav Mimica, directed by Aleksander Marks and Vladimir Jutrisa, who have consistently searched for an acceptable style of their own, this film is a splendid multi-level graphic experiment of great intensity. Overtones of Kafkaesque imagery dramatize the plot. A man, aggravated by the persistence of a fly, attempts to do away with it. The continuing perseverance of the insect, the droning of his wings, become an obsession so great that the fly increases to monstrous proportions while the sound of the wings approaches the deafening noise of a jet bomber. In frozen fear, the man is possessed by the monster and he falls into unconsciousness, only coming back to reality after a dizzying descent. The fly reappears and after a few sallies around the man, he takes on human proportions and befriends the frightened soul.



THE FLY

As a visual depiction of anxieties, it is unparalleled. The beauty of the backgrounds against which the man and the fly are placed resemble watercolors of undersea landscapes, somewhat abstracted. This colorful pictorialization is unusual in an animated film. But even in this complex distillation of drawing against painting, the problem remains of integrating the figurative cartoon, a hangover from earlier approaches to animation. This criticism is also applicable to *The Tamer of Wild Horses,* which otherwise might have been an eminently successful visualization of man's attempt to deal with his changing environment in an age of mechanization, or to *Diogenes Perhaps,* by the same author—Nedeljko Dragic. The latter film, a thoroughly engrossing introduction to the art of living, as told by the cynic, is magnificent in every way except its integration of the story-telling figure with the visually inventive scenes. Like Steinberg, Dragic has been able to employ line drawing, collage, wash, graph paper, alphabet letters, etc., with equal facility in conjuring his ideological presentations and kept them moving from one concept into another with masterly control. It is a heavy hand from the past which brings in the ghost of Mr. Magoo to carry the story.

Only a few artists so far have been able to incorporate abstract design and painted backgrounds with figurative story-telling motifs so that there is a consistent style of expression throughout: Bourek, Kolar, Dovnikovic and Grgic have been most successful of those whose films I saw. It is to be hoped, however, that none of them will rest on present laurels, but continue to experiment, to search out new forms and ways of expression. It seems to be true in all the arts that the period of exploration, of seeking the new form, of learning the individual means of expression, is the moment of greatest vitality. Some, like Giacometti, never arrive at a solution and continue the search throughout their lives, perhaps in the knowledge that once learned, the form tends to become static, lifeless, flaccid, or redundant. What is happening in Zagreb is changing the art of animation. Instead of being dependent on the cinema of the photographed image, the work of these men seems more related to early hand-drawn films, such as those of Windsor MacKay. Let us hope that they will continue their perceptive and sensitive investigation into what the artist can bring to the art of animation through drawing, painting, collage and graphic design.

Reviews

MOUCHETTE

Written and directed by Robert Bresson. Based on the novel by Georges Bernanos. Music: Monteverdi. Photography: Ghislain Cloquet.

The visual qualities of *Mouchette* relate it closely to Bresson's other Bernanos adaptation, *The Diary of a Country Priest* (1950)—the first truly Bressonian film—though its use of sound equally clearly leads on directly from the innovations of *Balthazar*. It is not too much to call *Balthazar* the first true sound film, in that it is probably the first work in cinema history to re-create and exploit the physical texture of sounds in the same way as the camera in Bresson's films captures the physical reality of trees, grass, water, mud, and stone.* In *Mouchette* the clash of bottles in a metal crate, a lump of earth hitting a dress or a leather satchel, the battering together of dodgem cars, the scrape of a shovel removing ashes from a stove, the fluttering wings of a trapped pigeon, are presented, not just with unprecedented physical clarity, but carrying a wealth of emotional weight and implication. As early as *The Diary of a Country Priest*, Bresson was using sound as a counterpoint to the image, not as a mere adjunct to it, but in his last two films sound has become at least an equal partner, and may possibly be moving towards dominance: " . . . every time that I can replace an image by a sound I do so. And I do so more and more." (Interview in *Cahiers du Cinéma in English*, No. 8). Several of the most important incidents in *Mouchette*, including the girl's death and what is assumed to be the murder of Matthieu, are created purely by means of sound, allowing the spectator the freedom of imagination on which Bresson has come to lay so much stress.

Mouchette presents an almost perfect balance of visual and aural qualities. The visual style of the film is that which we have come to expect ever since *The Diary of a Country Priest:* Bresson aims at an interior presentation of eternal values rather than the seizure of temporary and conflicting emotions, hence the emphasis on parts of the human body (faces, hands, and feet), the ritualistic quality of movement, the constant placing of a character in relationship to a natural setting or a physical environment, the static nature of the images, which, as André Bazin has noted, derive their effect from a constant renewal of similar elements rather than from a forward progression. His films move through a series of sequences, each one stripping away more and more of what is accidental and ephemeral, until at last a state of equilibrium is attained. He is one of the new film-makers of whom the old cliché that he "paints with a camera" is really true: close-ups in his films have the spatial proportions and spiritual intensity of great painting (any of the stills reproduced with the *Cahiers* interview will confirm this).

Bresson seems in fact to have thought of *Mouchette* first of all in terms of the face of the central character: "I will take her, yes, the most awkward little girl, the least an actress, the least a player of roles (now children, little girls especially, are often that terribly much). In short: I will take the most awkward girl that exists, and I will try to draw from her all that she does not suspect that I am drawing from her. It is on that account that that interests me, and, obviously, the camera will not leave her." (*Cahiers*, p.27). His hatred of professional actors has become notorious; it has, as he is well aware, prevented him from receiving the financial support which would have enabled him to make more films (his slender output to date is not the result of fastidiousness, but of poverty); yet, in terms of what he is trying to do with the camera, it is perfectly logical. The professional actor, he claims, is always conscious that he is playing a part; however much he may try to

*Leonce-Henry Burel was his cameraman from *Diary of a Country Priest* to *The Trial of Joan of Arc;* Ghislain Cloquet filmed *Balthazar* and *Mouchette*. The essential visual qualities of the films have remained unchanged throughout.

discard them he is always conditioned by the habits he has picked up in the course of his career. This does not matter in the theater, but in the cinema it is the *camera* which creates, and not the actor. The actor is merely raw material, like the decor or the setting, to be moulded in a particular pattern for a particular purpose. The nonprofessional actor, therefore, who does not know what is expected of him, is more pliable and can be used more effectively to express the director's intention; being less self-conscious, he makes it possible for the director to create, or to catch, the "flash," as Bresson calls it, which reveals the essential nature of the character. Ultimately, what it comes back to is that for Bresson the cinema belongs above all to the camera and, more recently, the sound track; this does not mean that the human element is unimportant; rather, the viewer must approach it from an unaccustomed angle.

A bare summary of the plot of *Mouchette*, like any attempt to summarize what happens in *Balthazar*, gives a misleading impression of unrelieved gloom. Mouchette, 13 or 14 years old, is alternately exploited and ignored by her drunken father and indifferent elder brother. Her life is divided between a home where she has to look after her ailing mother and the new baby, and a school where she is bullied by her teacher and sneered at by the other children because of her shabby appearance and clothing. By the time we encounter her, she has retreated into a perpetual mood of ferocious sullenness, which softens only in the presence of her mother. The film centers round three or four key episodes in her life, all of them taking place within a few days of each other. At school she refuses to join in the singing lesson, is made to sing on her own, and is mocked for her inability to complete the song properly. One Sunday morning, after completing her work as helper in the local café and turning her wages over to her father, she is given money by a woman passing her and goes for a ride on the dodgem cars in the nearby fairground. Here she encounters a boy who appears to be interested in her; they seek one another out in a series of jousts in their cars. He follows her afterwards through the fair, passes her, stops at a stall, looks at her. She is about to approach him when her father appears, drags her away and hits her. A day or two later, after school, she wanders alone into a wood and is caught in a rainstorm. She is found by the local poacher, Arsène, who has just been involved in a fight with the gamekeeper, Matthieu. The professional hostility between the two men has been sharpened by their sexual rivalry over the barmaid in the café, which has been briefly but firmly etched in earlier in the film. Arsène takes her to his hut nearby, then goes out, ostensibly to find one of her galoshes, which she had lost in the mud earlier. She hears a shot, though Arsène's gun is still in the hut. He returns and begins a complicated attempt to get her to provide an alibi for him by saying she has been with him in a house in the village all night. They go into the village, but after a few minutes in the house there she tries to leave, saying that she wants to help him, but will do it in her own way. He blocks her way, and the attempt to stop her physically from leaving turns into a sexual assault which ends in rape.

The suicide of Mouchette.

She returns home in the early morning. Her father and brother have been out all night; her mother is seriously ill and demands some gin to relieve her pain. After drinking it, she dies. In the next scene the two men have returned and are inviting sympathy for themselves from the neighbors. Mouchette goes out for milk, swear-

ing at her father and brother as she leaves. She encounters various women neighbors who seem to sympathize with her and wish to help; Mouchette refuses to cooperate and thus brings to the surface the underlying hostility and even hatred which the women really feel for her. One of these women is the gamekeeper's wife, and Matthieu himself appears, unharmed (the mystery of the shot is never explained). Mme. Matthieu interrogates the girl and begins to suspect what has happened; under the guise of sympathy she tries to extract yet another piece of scandal. Another neighbor gloats over the fact that Mouchette's mother hasn't even got a decent shroud to be buried in, and patronizingly offers one, and some old clothes, to the girl. Mouchette leaves the village, encounters some hunters shooting hares, and finally drowns herself by wrapping herself in the clothes and rolling down a gently sloping embankment into a pond. The only background music in the film, part of a mass by Monteverdi, is heard as the camera focuses on the ripples of the pond spreading out and settling back into placidity.

The music at the end seems to be intended as a kind of counterpoint to the bleakness and despair which the girl's death would otherwise arouse in the viewer. The film is basically about violence done to the spirit and about the evil of the systematic denial of the human potential for tenderness and love, yet the serenity and majesty of the music perhaps indicate, to a Catholic, the possibility of divine grace being extended even to a suicide; to a non-Catholic, the music helps to give focus to a feeling of pity and compassion.

Bresson, as usual, however, does not make the achievement of sympathy an easy task for his audience. The camera remains objective, even aloof, throughout the film; Mouchette herself is observed and studied with the same detachment as the other characters are. With one exception, she responds to all situations with the same impassive sullenness or resignation; this impassivity is shared by the other characters and the dialogue is delivered in the flat emotionless monotone which has become Bresson's trademark (though this in itself can achieve a strangely haunting quality and the terse phrases and even the curt repetition of names often linger on the mind long after the film is over). Like *Balthazar*, the film is made up largely of short scenes filmed in static close-up or medium shot and ending in a slow fade-out; rhythm within each scene is achieved through cutting rather than camera movement, and the few pans or tracking shots which occur are gentle and almost imperceptible. Characters generally move into or out of frame and the camera rarely deigns to prepare for their entrance or follow their exit. This device in particular pays off handsomely, in both emotional and aesthetic effect, in two crucial scenes. In the fairground scene the sudden jarring appearance of the father just as Mouchette and the boy are beginning to approach one another is immensely powerful; and at Mouchette's death the camera does not follow the beginning or the ending of the final movement of her life. She rolls down the embankment into frame and then out; there is a cut and a similar movement is repeated, but slightly closer to the camera; she disappears and there is the sound of her body entering the water. In the film as a whole, in fact, movement always has a ritualistic and, paradoxically, even static character. In the two most violent scenes of the film—that of the dodgem cars and Arsène's assault on Mouchette—the camera hardly moves at all. The sensation of activity is created almost entirely by the cutting and by movement within the frame, and the rape scene in particular is filmed in a series of stylized, frozen gestures and positions, almost all of them taken in close-up or medium shot. The style, however, never draws attention to itself; the subtleties emerge on re-viewing or on analysis, and the impression given by the film is of a simplicity which corresponds to the elemental nature of the setting, characters, and events.

Once the viewer has adjusted to the rhythmic and visual bases of the film, these act as a controlling counterbalance to the emotions contained in the material, in much the same way as the formality of the rhyming couplets of Pope or

the Alexandrines of Racine provide a restraint on the emotions of the poetry. Emotion in *Mouchette* is rarely verbalized, except in the background relationships between the barmaid and Matthieu, and Matthieu and Arsène. Yet the emotions are certainly there, and Bresson's most impressive achievement in the film has been to create a complete and thorough understanding of Mouchette's position and her reactions to it purely in visual terms. One of his major means of doing this is the almost incidental creation of background detail, especially in the scenes within and outside the school, which catch perfectly the resentment, impotence and despair which she feels. Towards the end of the film, the delineation of the three neighbors who attempt to patronize her after her mother's death is equally incisive. On the face of it, their actions are well meant, but it takes only the girl's refusal to cooperate with their inquisitiveness and curiosity to bring out the prurience, morbidity, or self-satisfaction which forms their true motivation, and conditions their treatment of her.

The chief method which Bresson uses to present Mouchette to us, however, is a series of recurring images in which states of mind are expressed through physical movement or gesture. The tragedy of Mouchette is that of a girl whose very real potential for tenderness and joy has been stifled and almost, though not completely, eradicated. We have a glimpse of what she might have been in the scene at the fair, which is the only one in which her steady impassivity is broken down. As the boy draws attention to himself by continually bumping his car into hers, her face begins to break into a radiant smile of sheer joy and happiness, and she begins to act, for the only time in the film, in a positive and enthusiastic way, revealing openly for the first time the latent sensuality which has been previously indicated only by a turn of the head or a pout of the lips. No words are ever exchanged between them: the whole brief relationship is created through smiles, glances, movement.

Later in the film her capacity for affection and her need for it are poignantly presented in the scene where Arsène falls into an epileptic fit after they return to his house in the village, As she cradles his head on her lap, she sings to him the song she had earlier been forced to sing at school and which she had been unable, or unwilling, to complete. This time she sings it perfectly and this in itself provides a moving summary of her situation and the way in which the potential within her has been warped and destroyed. In the rape scene which follows, she at first resists Arsène, but finally submits, her arms tightening convulsively around him, and this too is a powerful image of the pathos of the loveless existence she has led.

Her father's total lack of concern for her is epitomized in the shapeless, over-large galoshes which she is forced to wear to school, and which provide a focus of ridicule and humiliation on the part of the other girls, She expresses her hopeless revolt at one point by stamping in a puddle with her Sunday shoes and dirtying her dress (and gets slapped for it); during the storm one of her galoshes sticks in a patch of mud and the total indifference and misery of her state of mind is summed by by the fact that she leaves it and goes on, knowing she will be punished for this later; when the old woman is talking about her mother's shroud and revelling in the idea of death and corruption, Mouchette expresses her disgust by rubbing the dirt from her galoshes into the carpet,

Her moral relationship with almost all the other major characters in the film is summed up at one stage or another by the image of Mouchette curved helplessly, comfortingly, or defiantly in physical relationship to the other person. The teacher seizes her by the neck and forces her to bend over the piano while she bangs on the keys and demands that she sing properly. She is hunched over the wheel of the dodgem car as she begins her abortive flirtation with the young man. She bends protectively over her mother and the young baby, and over Arsène in his fit. Again with Arsène, she is seen siting crouched under the tree in the storm when he finds her, and later huddles under a table and behind a bush to hide from him.

Her suicide at the end is presented as something tentative, almost accidental at first, yet ultimately, given the conditions created for us elsewhere in the film, we know it is inevitable. First of all she wraps herself in the clothes and rolls down the embankment almost like any young child playing a game, stopping well short of the water. As she moves back up the slope she sees a man driving a tractor; she begins to wave to him, but he does not see her. The impression aroused by this gesture is that if he, or anyone, had paid even the minimum of attention to her, her fate could have been avoided. She rolls down the slope again, but half heartedly enough to be stopped by a small bush. The third time, she succeeds. The whole episode sums up with the utmost subtlety and delicacy all the basic themes of the film and provides a moving reminder of the appalling youthfulness and even childishness of the life which has been wasted in this way.

Mouchette, like many other contemporary films such as Bresson's own *Balthazar,* Bergman's *Persona,* Resnais's *Muriel,* and almost any film of Godard, requires a sensitive audience which is prepared to work as it views the film, to catch nuances and implications, and to sense the significance of visual, spatial, and aural relationships. The aesthetic qualities of the film, especially in the control of rhythm, the composition and lighting (especially in the subtle shadings of light and darkness in the storm scene in the woods) and the brilliantly evocative use of sound are, even for Bresson, supreme, but these elements are all put to the service of a view of life which, because of its refusal to sentimentalize, succeeds in being deeply compassionate and moving. In many ways, *Mouchette* is reminiscent of Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles:* in both works the heroine is destroyed as much by the exploitation of her potential for goodness as by adverse circumstances, and, like Hardy, Bresson makes most of his moral points by means of visual imagery and by the association of his heroine with wounded, trapped, and hunted animals. Mouchette's story is placed in a framework in which the second scene shows Arsène trapping a pigeon and the next to last scene shows Mouchette watching as hunters encircle and slaughter a group of hares. *Mouchette,* like Hardy's novel, and like any great work of art, requires attention on several levels simultaneously; if it is given this attention, respect and admiration for the film should be unbounded.

—GRAHAM PETRIE

A GORILLA TO REMEMBER

PLANET OF THE APES. Directed by Franklin J. Schaffner. Producer: Arthur P. Jacobs. Scripts by Michael Wilson and Rod Serling, based on the novel by Pierre Boulle. Photography: Leon Shamroy. Music: Jerry Goldsmith. Fox.

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY. Produced and directed by Stanley Kubrick. Script by Kubrick, and Arthur C. Clarke. Photography: Geoffrey Unsworth. Music: Johann Strauss, Richard Strauss, and others. MGM.

Back in the old newsreels, Lew Lehr had a phrase for it. He'd come on bug-eyed, mustache twitching, to announce: "Monkees are de craziest peeple." And lo, as we watch the newest future fantasies from Hollywood, we find the phrase reversed: Peeple are de craziest monkees. Once again the big screen asks the big questions: Who is man? From whence cometh and to what destiny goeth? In 1962, the answer was *The Bible.* But in 1968, the answer turns up primatology—man "the naked ape"—in two very different, very expensive films which use Darwin as a launching pad to the millenium: the silly entertainment, *Planet of the Apes,* and Stanley Kubrick's beautiful swing across the universe, *2001: A Space Odyssey.* Both fantasies show Buck Rogers at the frontier of evolution. *Planet of the Apes* is well-worn melodrama; its theme song is disaster. *2001* is a spatial and visual achievement of contemporary cinema. It sings the eerie dream of weak little man, a brave speck of dust in a mighty machine. Yet oddly both space operas are scored by Queen Victoria. The future is projected through a hazy past.

Her suicide at the end is presented as something tentative, almost accidental at first, yet ultimately, given the conditions created for us elsewhere in the film, we know it is inevitable. First of all she wraps herself in the clothes and rolls down the embankment almost like any young child playing a game, stopping well short of the water. As she moves back up the slope she sees a man driving a tractor; she begins to wave to him, but he does not see her. The impression aroused by this gesture is that if he, or anyone, had paid even the minimum of attention to her, her fate could have been avoided. She rolls down the slope again, but half heartedly enough to be stopped by a small bush. The third time, she succeeds. The whole episode sums up with the utmost subtlety and delicacy all the basic themes of the film and provides a moving reminder of the appalling youthfulness and even childishness of the life which has been wasted in this way.

Mouchette, like many other contemporary films such as Bresson's own *Balthazar,* Bergman's *Persona,* Resnais's *Muriel,* and almost any film of Godard, requires a sensitive audience which is prepared to work as it views the film, to catch nuances and implications, and to sense the significance of visual, spatial, and aural relationships. The aesthetic qualities of the film, especially in the control of rhythm, the composition and lighting (especially in the subtle shadings of light and darkness in the storm scene in the woods) and the brilliantly evocative use of sound are, even for Bresson, supreme, but these elements are all put to the service of a view of life which, because of its refusal to sentimentalize, succeeds in being deeply compassionate and moving. In many ways, *Mouchette* is reminiscent of Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles:* in both works the heroine is destroyed as much by the exploitation of her potential for goodness as by adverse circumstances, and, like Hardy, Bresson makes most of his moral points by means of visual imagery and by the association of his heroine with wounded, trapped, and hunted animals. Mouchette's story is placed in a framework in which the second scene shows Arsène trapping a pigeon and the next to last scene shows Mouchette watching as hunters encircle and slaughter a group of hares. *Mouchette,* like Hardy's novel, and like any great work of art, requires attention on several levels simultaneously; if it is given this attention, respect and admiration for the film should be unbounded.

—GRAHAM PETRIE

A GORILLA TO REMEMBER

PLANET OF THE APES. Directed by Franklin J. Schaffner. Producer: Arthur P. Jacobs. Scripts by Michael Wilson and Rod Serling, based on the novel by Pierre Boulle. Photography: Leon Shamroy. Music: Jerry Goldsmith. Fox.

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY. Produced and directed by Stanley Kubrick. Script by Kubrick, and Arthur C. Clarke. Photography: Geoffrey Unsworth. Music: Johann Strauss, Richard Strauss, and others. MGM.

Back in the old newsreels, Lew Lehr had a phrase for it. He'd come on bug-eyed, mustache twitching, to announce: "Monkees are de craziest peeple." And lo, as we watch the newest future fantasies from Hollywood, we find the phrase reversed: Peeple are de craziest monkees. Once again the big screen asks the big questions: Who is man? From whence cometh and to what destiny goeth? In 1962, the answer was *The Bible.* But in 1968, the answer turns up primatology—man "the naked ape"—in two very different, very expensive films which use Darwin as a launching pad to the millenium: the silly entertainment, *Planet of the Apes,* and Stanley Kubrick's beautiful swing across the universe, *2001: A Space Odyssey.* Both fantasies show Buck Rogers at the frontier of evolution. *Planet of the Apes* is well-worn melodrama; its theme song is disaster. *2001* is a spatial and visual achievement of contemporary cinema. It sings the eerie dream of weak little man, a brave speck of dust in a mighty machine. Yet oddly both space operas are scored by Queen Victoria. The future is projected through a hazy past.

To begin with Darwin:

To use Darwin as a launching pad is characteristic of the way Hollywood film-makers often pick over—and turn into baby-talk—contemporary intellectual topics. It would have been hard for any scriptwriter or director to ignore the vast amount of literature, books and articles, which has appeared on the topics of anthropology and primatology since Robert Ardrey's best-sellers, *African Genesis* and *The Territorial Imperative*. Quantities of pop and scholarly studies have been made as scientists take their turn trying to explain man's violent behavior. In comic terms we get *The Naked Ape* (Desmond Morris), seriously *On Aggression* (Konrad Lorenz), and while most of these works contain statistics which should only be applied to rats, fish, geese—and monkeys—some lead to an easy verdict (and an ideological dead-end) that man is violent because he is violent. More to the point was a symposium held in Washington in 1967 called "War: the Anthropology of Armed Conflict and Aggression," which General Westmoreland may have missed. And a glance at any newspaper will convince us that the topic is vital. Yet, as the primates once again figure in the controversy between biological determination and human choice, it gets to sound like a contemporary version of the Victorian battle between apes and angels. Some of us may start longing for a little Victorian morality.

And that's the crux of *Planet of the Apes*. That's the controversy which screenwriters Michael Wilson and Rod Serling took from Pierre Boulle's novel and disguised under a load of stereotypes and jokes, using an old two-fisted frontier hero in a new space suit (Charlton Heston) and an entire textbook of Hollywood-simple pronouncements on race prejudice, government, censorship, the responsibility of science—you name it, they say it. What is said is very moral, full of concern about the evil nature and ways of man once thought due to original sin, but now attributed to man's evolutionary warp. Pierre Boulle's story rests on the sad information that of all animals, man is the only one to regularly kill his conspecifics, that of all primates, man is the only one to kill for sport, lust, and greed. Man is also the only animal to think and be creative, but that side of man's nature is usually ignored by those who measure lower connections. On screen the sad low facts are bemoaned by Maurice Evans, Roddy McDowall, and Kim Hunter, hidden inside plastic monkey masks—which go pop during monkey kisses. It's hard to stay low while laughing at how they look.

The various writers involved have also included other tidbits of irony: the original crew of astronauts had its minority contingent—a woman, dead on arrival, and a Negro, killed early and rediscovered stuffed as a display in a museum of natural history. Another astronaut, the one who suffers from idealism, gets a lobotomy. But Taylor (Heston) who is cynical and bitter, a no-nonsense power figure, wins the hearts of two chimp psychologists. Also, someone couldn't resist a lot of monkey business —jokes like "human sees, human does"; or the monkey tribunal which covers their eyes, ears, and mouth, when they hear blasphemy. Sometimes it's funny; more often ludicrous, for really, *Planet of the Apes* is meant as allegory.

The American astronauts, after 2,000 years of space travel, land on what they believe is a planet in the system of Orion, to find the earth situation altered: simians have the human place on the evolutionary scale and simians treat humans as if they were animals. The hunt of the wild humans by gorillas on horseback is the best scene in the film, brilliantly paced and full of deft exploitation of the shock of seeing the game reversed, as simians kill humans, pose with the trophies, stuff them, or use the survivors for scientific experiments, cage them in zoos. Familiar stuff. But the reason for the hunt is expressed in a simian commandment to beware of humans: "The human will make a desert of his home and yours. He is the harbinger of death." Thus Heston gets into a lot of trouble —first he can't talk, wounded. Then he talks and is treated like a freak of nature—they want to castrate him—but then, of course, his two-

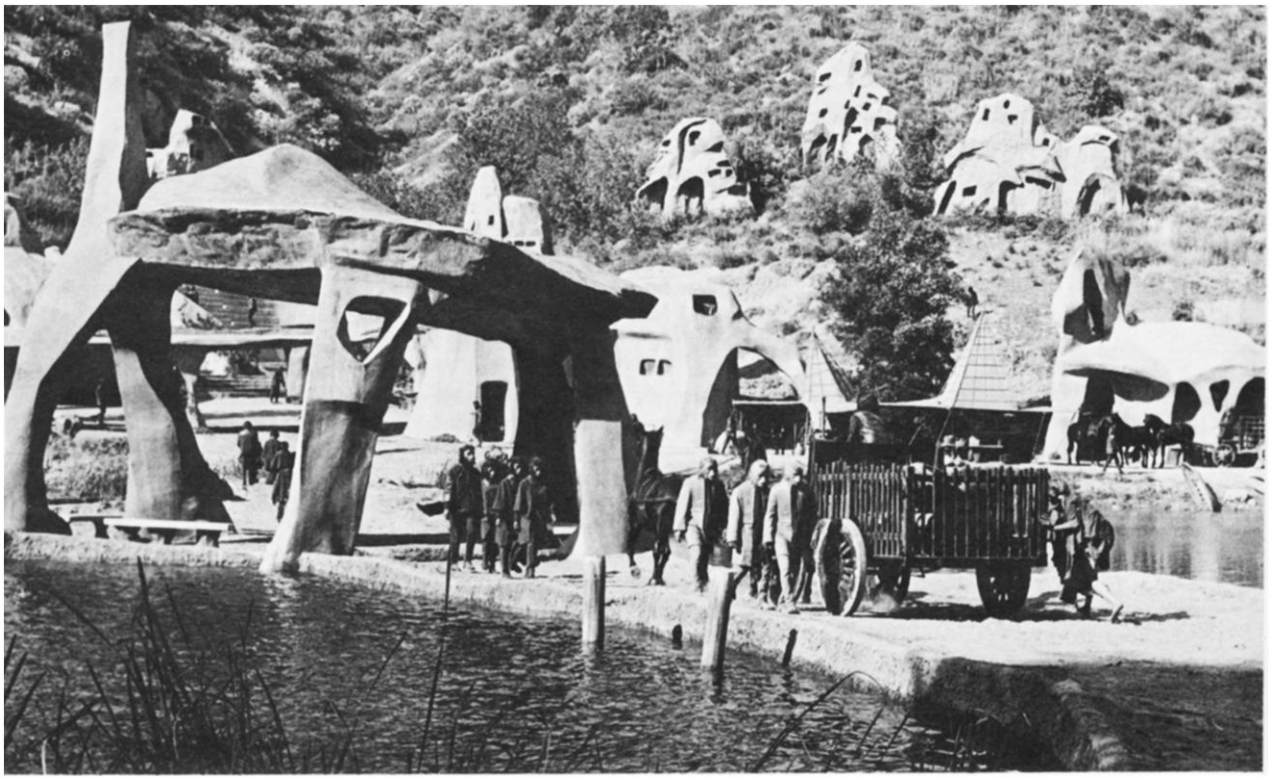
fisted grab for survival (and a wild lady) wins him the chance to discover the planet's secret. It's an obvious secret. We guess it right away, as soon as we discover that monkey-people are as bad as people-monkeys, that they're bigoted (blond orangutangs rank higher than black chimpanzees); that they're repressive (religious officials suppress scientific advances as heresy); and that the only reason they don't indulge in real shoot-em-up is because their weapons are small. No airplanes, napalm, antipersonnel bombs, just rifles and fists. An underdeveloped nation. But then we knew the secret as soon as we saw those monkey masks. "Monkees are the craziest peeple."

Under all that silly, sometimes amusing stuff, *Planet of the Apes* is a negative Utopia drawn from a Darwinian nightmare. It may be set in the future but it never left the nineteenth century. It is nineteenth century in its fixed morality and its inability to imagine life in other terms, developing other values, as if the logic of evolution—not just the history of evolution —moves life in only one direction. So, allegorically, the past is the future. The apes repeat all of man's mistakes. At the end of the film the Statue of Liberty is found washed up on a beach, the totem of an extinct tribe, but we know that someday, likewise, those bigoted totalitarian apes will do themselves in. They haven't eliminated violence, just repressed it—sometimes. *Planet of the Apes* is a pessimistic film, but it doesn't rate a prize for intelligence. If evolution is changed, why does it stay the same? Is there some other guiding force at work, perhaps celestial? Perhaps demonic? Tune in next film, for this entertainment does as entertainment is—something to kill an evening. We can't complain if in the process 20th Century-Fox kills an idea.

But we can go and apply to MGM, and to our most brilliant commercial director-producer, Stanley Kubrick, for illumination—a vision of a spectacular universe in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The same ideas are the springboard for Kubrick's flight to the future. the origin of man, the force of evolution, the most contemporary speculations in paleontology and primatology, as we start with a beautiful episode called "The Dawn of Man," and continue from there, three hours, to the moon, beyond Jupiter, through the time warp, to be mechanically reborn. Kubrick, by admission, celebrates the process—he is learning to love the machine —and perhaps he can teach us that secret as he once showed us how to learn to love the bomb. First he shows us *Australopithecus africanus*, hero of the first dramatic episode in humanity's evolutionary trip.

Against a barren landscape, Kubrick mixes real apes and dancer-actors in ape costumes so skillfully it's hard to tell the two apart. The scene proceeds on the edge of fantastic reality, until we see these "apes" devour raw meat and realize that no primate but man is carnivorous, that those screeches and gibbers are a rudimentary language, that we are watching a recreation of the newest candidate for "missing link"—the small, meat-eating warrior ape whose remains anthropologist Leakey discovered in Tanzania, thereby suggesting man is 4,000,000 years old. Before our eyes, *Australopithecus africanus* dances through evolution as a wielder of the first weapon-tool which started man's awesome technological progress. But whatever praise Kubrick and company deserve for vision, dies with the first appearance of the Slab, which throughout the epic can only be considered a monument to every artist who (alas) dug his narrative grave. At a high pitch in the electronic score, at dawn, that shiny metallic slab about eight to ten feet high appears from nowhere and somehow serves as the catalytic agent to turn a browbeaten ape aggressive. The Slab appears in the other two sections of the film, with similar lethal effect—but if we forget or excuse the lapses in narrative intelligence, we can watch and admire *2001* for its visual magic and sexual poetry. The same bone that won the waterhole flies skyward and is transformed to a spaceship, thereby establishing the basic motif of *2001*—the organic nature of technology or the biology of the machine.

Indeed, the cut from bone to space ship is



The ape city in PLANET OF THE APES

suggestive, for in the ice-blue majesty of space flight, the long space bus approaches and slowly, in a great copulative celebration, enters the round space station. The scene goes on and on, machines revolving to the um-pa-pa of a Johann Strauss waltz—the music that shocked the nineteenth century, for never before did man and woman swing such public circles locked in each other's arms. And never before have machines defied the limitations of our solar system; nor has cinema given us such an intoxicated and expert view of that new freedom. Using animation, models, optical printing, $10,000,000, during five long production years, Kubrick has succeeded in showing the romance of technology. His models of the lunar landscape are extraordinary. His attention to the details of space travel is accurate down to the toilet, or the Pan Am space hostess walking on the ceiling for the fun of it, a pen floating weightless in air, but especially he glorifies those pure white spacecraft waltzing in the ice-blue ether, a prelude to their copulation which gives birth (after another meeting with the slab) to a super-computer, the HAL 9000—alas—a monster.

In the process of creating one of the visual masterpieces of modern cinema, Kubrick somehow lost the narrative wit and élan which made *Lolita* and *Dr. Strangelove* masterpieces of film satire. *2001* is straight—and must be taken straight—in its celebration of technology, and it must be put down for its science fiction, the story expanded by Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke from Clarke's short story, "The Sentinel." The second part of *2001* most closely follows that story, as astronauts on the moon discover a slab, an object which gives off radio signals and has obviously been left on the moon by representatives of an intelligence more advanced than man. But as the story was expanded it filled with hot air. During 46 minutes of dia-

logue not an intelligent word is said. More questions are raised and left unanswered than merely, What's that slab? where did it come from? what does it represent? intelligence? evolutionary force? We are left hanging at the conclusion of the second part, wondering, How did Howard Johnson get that concession on the moon? Will the Russians ever learn about the slab? Will the American scientist ever get to speak with his wife on the vision-phone? These questions distract us from the visual magic of the film. It would have been better if Kubrick had abandoned all creaky leftovers from science fiction and given us his fascination with the cinematic myth of science undiluted.

But perhaps he couldn't; perhaps the central conflict with the computer HAL indicates that all is not smooth going in the romance of technology. There is a lingering repulsion for the machine, a connection with the nightmares of Frankenstein and the monster imbued with human feelings who wants love, love, but may do evil if it goes berserk. There is also the crucial element of "human failure" in the creation of a thing and the crucial response of superstition when man takes his creations for totems and worships their mystery. Many subtle taboos and a good lot of commercial pressure may explain why Kubrick and Clarke chose an unreliable computer as a dramatic device—for the HAL 9000 even violates Asimov's "first law of robotry," long a guide for science-fiction writers, that reads, "no robot may harm a human being" —well, perhaps robots who think they're human are exempt. Anyway, computers are a sure target for hostility from people who fearfully admire complex machines. A hostile computer is a dandy villain. For whatever reason, we are given this conflict with a title (added later) "Fourteen Months Later, in Deep Space." An American space ship, the 700-foot *Discovery,* is on a voyage to Jupiter, with a pair of astronauts in control and a trio of scientists in deep freeze. We later learn that the *Discovery* is after the slab.

The *Discovery* looks like the vertebrae of some extinct reptile as it speeds through the space night, an image which connects it to that bone old *Australopithecus africanus* hurled into the air. But the Astronauts, Poole (Gary Lockman) and Bowman (Keir Dullea) have left any animal nature far behind on earth. They are human machines, super-efficient, conditioned and adapted to life in the spacecraft, and psychologically checked out to the elimination of the last weak nerve. The ship is also run by the machine/human, HAL, who talks in a male voice but has a red eye shaped like a female breast. As soon as we hear the voice of this androgyne we know he's a fink. We simply wait for him to fink out. Meanwhile we watch the astronauts exercise, sun-bathe, eat baby food, go through all the complex computations and living difficulties we have come to expect from previous information on space travel—and the detail is fascinating, particularly the control boards set with dozens of small control screens flashing lights and mathematical symbols. These symbols and signs go on and off at a fantastic rate, much too fast for anyone (except perhaps HAL) to read, so I take them as a light show. They make pretty reflections on Keir Dullea's face as he rides his trusty spacepod in an attempt to rescue Gary Lockwood. They're also the razzle-dazzle of the scientist-priest, sparkling mysteries to keep the congregation in line. In fact, all the equipment on display was built to keep the viewer in awe, built to Kubrick's design by the Vickers-Armstrong Engineering Group at a cost of $750,000. Kubrick wanted a real mock-up of a space ship, complete with centrifugal gravity, and spent months planning the *Discovery* which is a real centrifuge, 38 feet in diameter, spinning on its axis at three miles an hour. Inside, Kubrick installed a closed-circuit TV system to monitor the activities of Dullea and Lockwood, and production activities were so complex a four-man operations team had to coordinate the work of a 106-man production unit. The statistics of the film are as dazzling as the control panel light show. But after the computer goes through its villainous paces, how is the dilemma solved? With all the cracker-barrel pragmatism of pulling out the plug.

No analysis. No follow-through on the real issue of human failure—why the HAL was programmed poorly, or what caused malfunction (the slab?). There is simply a token mention of Darwin again (poor Darwin) and the "law of survival" which has been misread or misinterpreted into an assumption that a machine programmed to feel and think like a human being must destroy if threatened by destruction. As if the logic of cognition goes in only one direction, as if man has not time and time again chosen to destroy himself rather than others. As long as we're programming, how about a few heroic connections? But then, of course, there'd be no conflict. We must accept HAL as the mad machine—gone mad for whatever reason prior to the film—functioning on screen like the mad machines and monsters in the old reels of science horror. Once more we see that Kubrick's futuristic effects are grand—Keir Dullea's blast back into the *Discovery* is thrilling—but then there's that loose-ended loose imagination of the creaky old plot. We giggle, waiting for the monster to be killed by a silver bullet or a stake in its heart, and sure enough the super-cool hero goes grimly about the business of unscrewing the machine. The sexual connection breaks.

But *2001* goes on to birth and rebirth. During the beautiful space walk, astronaut Lockwood leaves the mother ship but hangs close, attached to her by a lifeline. As he works outside her body in inhospitable space we hear the sound of breathing, gasps for air, the precious sustenance of life, which stops when HAL cuts that lifeline, just as "he" cuts off the life functions of the scientists in deep freeze. But Dullea survives; he re-penetrates the mother ship, dismantles HAL (who goes down in baby-talk) and when later the mother ship opens, Dullea leaves in a spacepod, a seed to mature and die in unexplored territory. This section is called "Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite," another title introduced by Kubrick after the film opened to criticism of its story and length. (He also cut twenty minutes—I don't know where.)

Dullea never gets to Jupiter because he meets the slab. Instead, all psychedelic hell breaks loose in Cinerama—shooting streams of irridescent color, day-glo landscapes, color wheels and strobes and multi-image projections, pulsating beams and intercuts of poor Keir Dullea with his eyes rolled up in his head. It's a gorgeous display, a carnival of light and motion, and if Dullea suffers it's because he knows the slab will get him, which it does, as he is projected somewhere, into someplace decorated in Louis XVI style, to watch the deterioration of himself as human and his re-creation as something new, as a foetus which holds a mysterious promise in its gigantic bug eyes. We have made the evolutionary trip to what? Only the Slab knows, and it stands at the foot of the bed, a monument for the plot.

2001 is a beautiful film, ultra-modern in its admiration of the material wonders it displays. It begins with an image of the sun, moon, and earth aligned in total eclipse until, with the dramatic opening notes of Richard Strauss's "World-Riddle Theme" from *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, the sun rises to celebrate the appearance of the Superman—he who, according to Nietzsche, will climax the development of the human race. The triple image and the triple note of triumph begins an epic divided into three sections, just as Kubrick has taken his love affair with technology through three stages, birth, death, and transformation. The epic sings romance and super-achievement, it moves to human breath and an electronic dream. But the face of the future is clouded with the ideology of the past.

Kubrick has stated (NY *Times*, April 14, 1968): "There is a sexiness to beautiful machines. . . . We are almost in a sort of biological machine society already. We're making the transition toward whatever the ultimate change will be. Man has always worshipped beauty and I think there's a new kind of beauty afoot in the world." But as he learns to love twentieth century technology, he remains squarely with the material adventurers of the old Empire days, when Brittania ruled the waves—for a time—and meanwhile, back on the ranch, the unruly Americans initiated their own powerful adventurers. When Kubrick

showed us how to learn to love the bomb, the joke was overripe, black and sickening. When he shows us how to love the machine, he fumbles like an adolescent for whom love is a new experiment, sexy, appealing, but frightening. For the world of material adventure is a celibate world. No women clutter up this space trip, but even to fall for a machine may violate those myths of the old, the new frontier, in which the conquering hero stays super-pure. The beloved is still a danger or worse—a dead end. As Kubrick says, we don't know the final relationship between man and machine, but if we look beyond "the new kind of beauty afoot" to the real issue, we may not only find a monster but onanism—the love of someone for his own thing—a sterile future. Already our adoration of things has proven destructive as people become objects to manipulate or to discard when obsolete. Man may become extinct before he has time to evolve into—what? Kubrick wonders. Man may be a "missing link" between animal and inanimate forms; perhaps he'll become pure energy, pure spirit. But then Kubrick offers a fabricated solution, a slab, a thing from outer space, which compounds our loss of inner space. He leaves us in a fixed arrangement of period furniture, because I suspect even Kubrick can't decide: if the slab is the agent which began the grim paradox of progress through aggression, is it benevolent? is it demonic? Is it the Great God of Nuts and Bolts which is why we'll never reach Jupiter? As in *Planet of the Apes* once more the mystery escapes the limitations of science and wanders in metaphysics. It took Kubrick and Clarke 2000 hours of collaboration to confront the logic of the nineteenth century—that if man began as an ape, all the exploration of all the heavens won't turn him into an angel. But as they say at a funeral in *Planet of the Apes*, "He was a gorilla to remember."

Perhaps the next big-screen big answer will tell more. Soon Hollywood will make *The Naked Ape*, which has been bought and already touted as a film to show the development of man in "humorous style" using "actors, animation, moving models and the new and varied cinema and multidimensional projection techniques that were so effective at Expo '67." Amen. Or we can return to the old beasts, the ones that slouched out of Hollywood in the black-and-white adventures, when the zoo was raided in the thirties and forties. *Then* there were gorillas to remember. Mighty Joe Young in the concert hall. And Kong, great Kong, brave slugger against the cruelties of the modern world. Yes, it's Kong who is the true child of Darwin in Hollywood's cartoon of life. Kong is the throwback to an earlier stage in history, when the individual unsuited to the changes in environment roared a noble agony before he lost the battle to survive. Pierre Boulle can have his sadistic simians. Stanley Kubrick can change *Australopithecus* into anything he likes. I'll go on sorrowing for Kong, for that sappy love look on his hairy black face as he regards the teeny blonde screaming in his fist. I'll cheer—the audience cheers—Yahoo—as Kong fights to the death against tyrannosaurus and pteradactyl, the ancient serpent, the modern police, the buzzing insolence of the US Air Force. On the top of the Empire State the archaic beast stands with his fist raised against technology. He rejects the changed environment. In dismay, in anguish, he rubs his wounds and casts a last sad glance of farewell to love, to screaming beauty, and then we see how Hollywood dealt with gorillas thirty-five years ago, how even then RKO kept faith with Queen Victoria. For as Kong plunges to his death the true impossibility of his passion is revealed. Philosophy? Science? Morality? Anthropology? Fooey. We see King Kong had no genitals.

JUDITH SHATNOFF

THERESE AND ISABELLE

Produced and directed by Radley Metzger. Photography: Hans Jutra. Screenplay: Jesse Vogel, based on a story by Viollet Leduc. Music: Georges Auric. Audubon Films.

If ever a film transcended its genre, it is Radley Metzger's *Therese and Isabelle*. Granted, some genres are easier to transcend than others, and of all the genres the easiest is probably that of the sex exploitation film. If the commoner term, "sexploitation," has about the same kind of unsavory ring that the label "bad Western" would have, it is probably a deservedly pejorative description, for few of the films in this class have done anything but exploit the most unsavory aspects of sex and the weaknesses of those who febrily fantasize on those aspects. Thus, almost by default, *Therese and Isabelle* is the first sexploitation film that is almost too good to be a sexploitation film. It is serious, even sober; it has a meticulously schemed mise-en-scène and one fine performance; and, in a dangerously ethereal way, it's dirty. Unfortunately, for cinéastes and devotees of the genre, this description could fit a number of recent films from major US studios. How, for example, does one distinguish between Metzger's picture and *The Fox*? By categorizing the latter as a "class" film with a lot of sexploitation elements, and *Therese and Isabelle* as a sexploitation film with a lot of class?

While congratulating the devotees on their new-found sources of sexual fulfillment, we must pity the cinéastes. Ten years ago it was much easier to tell the difference. Those were the days when, above ground, *Anatomy of a Murder* was being banned in Chicago for featuring (well, flaunting) the words "rape" and "panties" while, underground (in the seedy, not the Cinémathèque, sense), *The Immoral Mr. Teas* was returning grosses of $1,000,000 on a $25,000 investment. *Mr. Teas* had its share of court cases but, along with a few sexually outspoken foreign films like *The Lovers*, it opened the art-house door for domestic and continental films in which sex as it could be visually rendered was the main attraction and, whether the film-maker was a serious artisan like Louis Malle or a spurious one like Russ Meyer, in which this attraction was exploited to its full extent. Exhibitors would continue to link the two basically different types of pictures: a typical double-feature at the theaters that played such fare consisted of a home-grown "nudie" and a foreign picture. Early Bergmans were often discovered on the bottom halves of these bills and, in the mid-fifties, Bergman's commercial potential was thought to be more with the Dirties than with the Arties. One chain of Philadelphia nudie theaters presented the local premières of *Vivre Sa Vie*, *The Connection*, and *Kagi*. Because the city newspapers disapproved of the three houses, these films went unreviewed and, thus, unnoticed by the patrons who might have supported them had they shown at art theaters.

Metzger's company, Audubon Films, appeared around 1960. One of his earliest successes was *The Twilight Girls*, a French film about lesbianism in a girls' school, starring Christine Carere, who had played Pat Boone's girl-friend in *April Love*. During the early sixties, Audubon began to make its reputation with pictures, almost all French imports, which boasted relatively superior production values, adequate direction and, most importantly, attractive actresses several libidinous cuts about the scrofulous starlets who appeared in the pictures of such entrepreneurs of the epidermal as William Mishkin. (Mishkin refers to connoisseurs of his films as "slobs.") Metzger's artistic contribution to these early Audubon releases was limited to re-editing ("pacing" the films for an American audience), adding sexy footage to those of his films that lacked redeeming sexual significance (though he was usually careful enough to buy pictures with high titillation quotients), and preparing the titles and trailers. An Audubon Film could be spotted by Metzger's titles—*The Fourth Sex, Soft Skin on Black Silk, Sexus, Erotic Touch of Hot Skin*—and the trailers, which packed the picture's best (and, often, only) sex scenes into three torrid minutes, with a sexy female voice cooing

the title and ad-line: for *The Fourth Sex,* "They do everything!", for *The Dirty Girls,* "The picture that goes *too* far!" The tag would be repeated half a dozen times, until it finally penetrated the mind of a viewer understandably preoccupied with the visuals.

Metger's apprenticeship as a distributor taught him lessons he remembered as a director. The success of *The Twilight Girls* and *The Fourth Sex* showed him that films about lesbian love had a wider potential audience than those about homosexual love—provided the lesbians were sexy-looking. José Benazeraf's *Sexus* proved that even a well-made film could be profitable—if it had enough sex in it. (Metzger inserted a few erotic dance numbers, again lesbic, to give *Sexus* wider appeal, but the film was sexy and kinky enough to have stood on its own.) The Swedish import *I, A Woman* served as Metzger's letter of introduction to art houses desperate for product and accustomed to down-beat, nudity-filled films—and to his future super-star, Essy Persson. *I, A Woman* followed *Blow-Up* into many art theaters and became one of the highest-grossing foreign-language films in US theater history ($3,-000,000 so far; Metzger paid less than $25,000 for the American rights). In 1967, Audubon released only two films, an average output. Both *Carmen Baby* and *The Alley Cats* were directed by Metzger and produced by his Amsterdam Films in cooperation with an immemorably named German company (*not* Autobahn Films). These films contained less nudity than can be found in many current major-studio productions, but there was lots of sexual suggestion of an unwholesomely athletic nature. Perhaps Metzger was embarrassed to ask his performers to take their clothes off on screen; at any rate, his camera concentrated on the actors' passion-emblazoned faces while the sound-track's heavy breathing and throbbing score emphasized what was supposed to be happening off- (or under-) camera. Metzger got away with it (*Carmen Baby* registered large grosses in many of the *I, A Woman* art theaters, while *The Alley Cats* did well in the stroke houses), in part because his actresses looked so sexy with their clothes on that it was almost redundant for them to disrobe.

Therese and Isabelle has all these selling points—lesbianism, artful direction, art-house pretentions, suggestiveness—and a respectable literary property (Violette Leduc's memoir) besides. It appeals to both snobs and slobs, although the latter, and even the former, may find that Metzger is misleading them mercilessly. He dallies for forty minutes delineating the relationship of schoolgirl Therese (Essy Persson), her mother (slatternly Barbara Laage) who forfeits Therese's manic devotion upon remarriage, and Isabelle (Anna Gaël), a schoolmate. (In a way, it's a horny inversion of *The Graduate.*) The usual active-passive roles are reversed: Therese, with her short, dark hair and strong, lean figure, is the soft-hearted student of lesbic love; and Isabelle, with long, blonde hair and a Dairy-Queen body, is the strong-willed teacher. Neither girl has a father; both were raped by the same college boy. The rape scene, of Therese, during Isabelle's absence from school, is the first bit of sex in the picture, but it's pretty tame. The participants are fully clothed. In fact, unless her attacker's trousers were made of some break-away fabric or had an automatically operated fly, Therese's virginity remained intact, because the fellow's hands never left the screen.

Once begun, the sex scenes continue at an even clip of one every ten minutes for the next half-hour or so. The second scene, done in one 3½-minute shot, shows Therese's face while she masturbates in bed. (She is despondent because her mother seems to have left her forever.) The camerawork is careful, if obvious. We follow her hand from repose, to her face, and then under the bedcovers. The camera tracks back to her face for a few minutes of asthmatic ecstacy; the hand reappears and flops down on the bed. End of scene. The film's score is by Georges Auric, director of the Paris Opera and composer for many of Clair's and Cocteau's films. (What a *reductio ad absurdum* for poor Auric! but a guy's got to make a buck—Karl Freund was camera-

man for *Our Miss Brooks* in the fifties.) It is consistently trite and overstated, and in the masturbation scene it tries to reduce the visuals to illustrations of the score. Still, with Mozart making the charts via *Elvira Madigan,* there may be a chance for Auric's bulbously lush accompaniment (Op. 1, The Onanata Sonata).

The third scene occurs when Isabelle returns to school. Again, there's no nudity, but since this cunnilingual climax takes place in the school chapel, disrobing might connote disrespect; the two are discreetly hidden behind some furniture.

Finally, in a bedroom rendezvous, the girls take their clothes off (the sexploitation regulars have had to wait an hour and ten minutes for this). In other films of the genre, the camera would emphasize the girls' stripping; here Metzger closes in on their faces. There is a fleeting (ten seconds, perhaps) shot of the two facing each other in the nude, but when Isabelle begins rooting about inside Therese, Metzger reprises his minutes-long close-up of Therese's face (nobody has an orgasm like Essy Persson), which hereafter looks much softer and kinder. Isabelle's features harden, become cakey, like those of Therese's mother—and we sense that a separation is imminent.

There's one more sex scene, or at least nude scene: a *tableau vivant* with the lovers reclining by a moonlit brook. Here Metzger invokes the Kuleshov principle: the nude girls, barely caressing (just barely, that is), plus a steamy narration on the sound-track, suggest that the girls are performing the actions described. No such thing, of course, but it is effective. In fact, there's a lot less action in *Therese and Isabelle* than there is in a really dirty picture like *A Guide for the Married Man,* with its peek-a-boo nude shots and loving close-ups of Glendale glutes, or *The Thomas Crown Affair,* with its lewd chess game and story-board kissing scene ("Could we have a little more tongue, Faye?"). Metzger, the novice, only exploits sex; Jewison, the master, degrades it.

THERESE AND ISABELLE

The girls' final idyll has a delicate innocence that easily goes unnoticed in the hot-house atmosphere of an exploitation theater. This was also the case with a pure and refreshing swimming sequence in an otherwise forgettable film called *Infidelity, American Style;* in that scene the lovers' elan was heightened by a lovely melody played on solo guitar. Contrast this with the contrived innocence of the bathing sequence in *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush* with, we imagine, Clive Donner coaching Judy Geeson on how to run into the lake without displaying any pubic hair.

The morning after the loving friends' bucolic bat-session, Isabelle abandons Therese to go abroad, just as the latter's mother had done. When her mother went away, Therese found Isabelle. When Isabelle leaves, Therese discovers a spritely ten-year-old who tells her not to cry and starts playing ball with her . . . We expect a sequel: *Therese Meets Lolita.*

Metzger is attentive to, perhaps obsessed by, the idea of creating a visual style for the film, but what style *Therese and Isabelle* possesses is mostly cribbed from Max Ophuls. Metzger loves to track his camera around the old villa where most of the film is shot, to peep at his characters through ornate windows and slats in stairs, to spend time developing the character of the decor rather than creating living, coherent people. Therese's first remark to her mother about the school is, "The buildings are very interesting, historically and architecturally," and the buildings and well-kept parks that surround them seem to be Metzger's first interest. But, *chacun à son fétiche.* If Buñuel can have feet why can't Metzger have flora?

Metzger does demonstrate the ability to build drama from visual details: after Therese's mother has left the girl alone, the camera pans around the living room of the family apartment, and discovers pairs of men's and women's shoes, a cigar and a cigarette, a tumbler of scotch and a glass of sherry, and Therese, sitting in her mother's chair. Metzger also takes advantage of the wide screen: when Therese and Isabelle are thinking of separating, their bodies are at either edge of the frame; slowly they drift together at frame-center, and are reunited. Finally, his shifting of time, from present (a middle-aged Therese visits the school) to past (a young Therese looks up at her) to a melding of the two (the young takes the old's place), is adroit, if hardly novel or inspired.

Metzger directs his camera better than he does his actors. The roles other than those of the heroines are shoddily portrayed. Both Essy Persson and Anna Gaël are too mature, or maybe just too old, for their parts. (How about Cleopatra Rota, of *Young Aphrodites,* as Therese, and Patricia Gozzi as Isabelle?) At times Mlle. Gaël projects the demonia praecox that Marina Vlady embodied in *The Sorceress,* and her mouth provides a few minutes of enjoyment (she closes it, it seems, only to enter into conspiracy), but she generally comes on like a sleepwalking Elke Sommer. She should radiate sex without quite being aware of it; instead, she is aware of it, and so doesn't quite radiate it.

Essy Persson, however, is quite adept at conveying Therese's initial innocence. She has somehow perfected the teen-age slouch common to well-bred convent girls, and galumphs about in the manner of Rita Tushingham, whom she manages to resemble. The innocence of Siv, Essy's role in *I, A Woman,* was tense and false; the innocence of Essy's Therese is charming and relaxed. She has made both types of innocence, and both characters, convincing. Best of all, she has acquired that most delicious of actresses' mannerisms, Joan Fontaine Mouth, and executes superb shrugs and a dimpled grin that may make the grind-house's shriveled masturbator recall his first love, if he had one. Only in a single scene does Miss Persson betray her cinematic experience: she approaches her first kiss, with her rapist-to-be, as if she were about to consume a Dagwood sandwich.

Therese and Isabelle has three major faults—the script is weak, the supporting roles are ill-played, and the music is atrocious—and one major omission: any concentrated excitement. Metzger has taken so much care in putting his pieces together, plastically speaking, that he

never seemed to view the project as a whole. The film is admirable but, excepting Miss Persson, not really likeable. And who, except for desperate film freaks, wants to see an admirable sexploitation movie? Somewhere between *Twilight* and *Therese* or, more probably, between setting up some marvelous tracking shot and studying the editing principles of Eisenstein and Resnais, Metzger forgot how to make the sex-film fancier's temperature rise. It's really quite easy: Naked Ladies! Lots of Undressing! Ferocious Fizzy-Cons! She Took On Every Man in the Frat House—And Then Took Off for the Sorority! The Picture That Goes *Too* Far! Cinematic austerity is not the answer. The slobs don't care about scripts or stars or scores, but they do demand a few gutsy sexual crescendoes. Metzger has given them an adagio. Already they have probably begun to sneak into reputable theaters, with oversized raincoats and sheepish expressions, to catch the McQueen-Dunaway eating scene. Metzger can't compete, and perhaps he doesn't want to. His design on art-house respectability may have been motivated by aesthetic as well as commercial considerations. That *Therese and Isabelle* can be analyzed in any detail suggests that the film transcends its genre. Maybe now Metzger will go about transcending *Therese and Isabelle.* —RICHARD CORLISS

PETULIA

Director: Richard Lester. Producer: Raymond Wagner. Script by Lawrence B. Marcus, based on a novel by John Haase. Photography: Nicholas Roeg. Music: John Barry. Warners.

Petulia looks, at first glance, like another bag of Richard Lester's familiar tricks—subliminal flashbacks, flash-forwards, shock cuts, psychedelic light shows, blue filters. But I think a closer look shows *Petulia* to be the first Lester film since *A Hard Day's Night* in which his technique illuminates, rather than obscures his material. It is impossible to talk about what *Petulia* means without talking about how it is structured and composed; form, for once, is truly indistinguishable from content.

Most of the critics do not agree—they say Lester's sophisticated technique is concealing a drab little soap opera that, if told straight, could turn up on afternoon TV. I suppose this means that if you reduce *Petulia* to a capsule plot summary, it sounds trite and contrived: Archie (George C. Scott), a recently-divorced surgeon, meets Petulia (Julie Christie), an unhappily married, self-styled screwball, and after a good deal of wariness and some complications, they spend a night together; her husband finds her in Archie's apartment and beats her savagely; Archie saves her life, but after her recovery the two of them drift gradually further apart; she goes back to her husband, and Archie sees her for the last time just before she is to give birth to her husband's child.

But this same synopsis could make 100 different films; think what *King Lear* or *The Sound and the Fury* or *Jules and Jim* would sound like in digest form. Larry Marcus's script and Lester's direction of *Petulia* constantly play against sentimentality. Lester reportedly wanted to title the film, ironically, *Romance.* The ordinary way to film Romance, as in the recent Oskar Werner-Barbara Ferris *Interlude,* is to wallow in dozens of soft-focus shots of lovers walking hand in hand through green meadows frosted by blurs of red flowers, or rolling over and over in bed to crescendoes of classical music. The love scenes between Archie and Petulia are all joyless—an abortive tryst at a remote-controlled motel, where registration, room location, even sexual stimulation are done by machine; a jaunt through a tomblike supermarket late at night; an awkward, fumblingly lustful embrace in Archie's car. Even Petulia and Archie's night together is austerely filmed. There is not even a momentary shot of the lovers in a clinch; Lester implies the sexual union with three lingering, forlorn shots in early morning light—Petulia standing by the window as Archie sleeps in bed, Archie at his desk while Petulia sleeps, and finally the two of them in bed together, but fac-

never seemed to view the project as a whole. The film is admirable but, excepting Miss Persson, not really likeable. And who, except for desperate film freaks, wants to see an admirable sexploitation movie? Somewhere between *Twilight* and *Therese* or, more probably, between setting up some marvelous tracking shot and studying the editing principles of Eisenstein and Resnais, Metzger forgot how to make the sex-film fancier's temperature rise. It's really quite easy: Naked Ladies! Lots of Undressing! Ferocious Fizzy-Cons! She Took On Every Man in the Frat House—And Then Took Off for the Sorority! The Picture That Goes *Too* Far! Cinematic austerity is not the answer. The slobs don't care about scripts or stars or scores, but they do demand a few gutsy sexual crescendoes. Metzger has given them an adagio. Already they have probably begun to sneak into reputable theaters, with oversized raincoats and sheepish expressions, to catch the McQueen-Dunaway eating scene. Metzger can't compete, and perhaps he doesn't want to. His design on art-house respectability may have been motivated by aesthetic as well as commercial considerations. That *Therese and Isabelle* can be analyzed in any detail suggests that the film transcends its genre. Maybe now Metzger will go about transcending *Therese and Isabelle.* —RICHARD CORLISS

PETULIA

Director: Richard Lester. Producer: Raymond Wagner. Script by Lawrence B. Marcus, based on a novel by John Haase. Photography: Nicholas Roeg. Music: John Barry. Warners.

Petulia looks, at first glance, like another bag of Richard Lester's familiar tricks—subliminal flashbacks, flash-forwards, shock cuts, psychedelic light shows, blue filters. But I think a closer look shows *Petulia* to be the first Lester film since *A Hard Day's Night* in which his technique illuminates, rather than obscures his material. It is impossible to talk about what *Petulia* means without talking about how it is structured and composed; form, for once, is truly indistinguishable from content.

Most of the critics do not agree—they say Lester's sophisticated technique is concealing a drab little soap opera that, if told straight, could turn up on afternoon TV. I suppose this means that if you reduce *Petulia* to a capsule plot summary, it sounds trite and contrived: Archie (George C. Scott), a recently-divorced surgeon, meets Petulia (Julie Christie), an unhappily married, self-styled screwball, and after a good deal of wariness and some complications, they spend a night together; her husband finds her in Archie's apartment and beats her savagely; Archie saves her life, but after her recovery the two of them drift gradually further apart; she goes back to her husband, and Archie sees her for the last time just before she is to give birth to her husband's child.

But this same synopsis could make 100 different films; think what *King Lear* or *The Sound and the Fury* or *Jules and Jim* would sound like in digest form. Larry Marcus's script and Lester's direction of *Petulia* constantly play against sentimentality. Lester reportedly wanted to title the film, ironically, *Romance.* The ordinary way to film Romance, as in the recent Oskar Werner-Barbara Ferris *Interlude,* is to wallow in dozens of soft-focus shots of lovers walking hand in hand through green meadows frosted by blurs of red flowers, or rolling over and over in bed to crescendoes of classical music. The love scenes between Archie and Petulia are all joyless—an abortive tryst at a remote-controlled motel, where registration, room location, even sexual stimulation are done by machine; a jaunt through a tomblike supermarket late at night; an awkward, fumblingly lustful embrace in Archie's car. Even Petulia and Archie's night together is austerely filmed. There is not even a momentary shot of the lovers in a clinch; Lester implies the sexual union with three lingering, forlorn shots in early morning light—Petulia standing by the window as Archie sleeps in bed, Archie at his desk while Petulia sleeps, and finally the two of them in bed together, but fac-

ing away from each other, both asleep. Lester has never dealt convincingly with love (he has usually not even tried), but here he turns that weakness into strength: his peculiarly unromantic temperament transforms what might have been mawkish material into a bitter but compassionate drama of human isolation.

Archie is a successful San Francisco surgeon, equipped with fancy bachelor apartment, a relentlessly practical ex-wife who thinks that because she and Archie never fought they must have had a perfect marriage, two cute little boys, a girlfriend who runs a ladies' boutique, a doctor friend who offers stern moral advice even as he admits his own philandering. He seems to be living the contented doctor's life, but he knows that he is close to desperation. As he says, "I just want to feel something." Petulia seems to give him the chance—she approaches him impetuously at a charity ball and tells him they are going to be married; when their first attempt, at the electronic motel, backfires, she visits his apartment with a tuba she has stolen from a Chinatown pawnshop; she follows him cheerfully around the hospital and sends him, for no particular reason, an absurd gigantic portable greenhouse that operates entirely by push-button. To Archie Petulia is a kook. She seems to have escaped the traps of his regimented life, and she calls to him to join her in temporary insanity. At least that is the intention. The failure of the first scenes of the film is that Petulia is not nearly insane or interesting enough. The business with the tuba, for instance, which must have been meant as a charming madcap touch, is tedious and uninventive. If this is the best Petulia can do, she wouldn't even catch Archie's eye. Lester fails to find images that will make her unconventionality arresting, and he is not helped by Julie Christie's playing of these scenes. At later moments in the film, when she must be frightened or tender or melancholy, Christie is more than satisfactory; but when she is trying to be wild and zany, she is only arch, frozen, monotonously twitchy.

If the imagery and performance of these scenes fail, some interesting structural decisions almost save them. There are two brief flashbacks of Petulia and a Mexican boy that are not explained until much later in the film, and some cryptic glimpses of her life away from Archie—a visit to a Mexican family, a couple of tense scenes with her husband; these flashes of Petulia's life tantalize us and disturb us, exactly as Archie is disturbed as he begins cautiously to approach the first person he has met in a very long time whom he does not entirely understand.

Ultimately, though, what tantalizes Archie frustrates him; there is too much that he does not and cannot know about Petulia. The melancholy in all of their encounters makes the futility of their relationship clear enough, but the structure of the scenes is, again, even more telling. Lester and Marcus shatter time in fascinating ways. Gradually we learn the entire past experience of Petulia and the Mexican boy she has brought back to San Francisco from Tijuana; the flashbacks that we will eventually be able to piece together continue to interrupt the action almost until the end of the film. These flashbacks are not always presented through Petulia's consciousness. The cutting works something like this: from a shot of Petulia lying in Archie's apartment we flash back to a brief crowd scene in Tijuana, followed by a scene of Archie and his sons on a Bay cruise. At another point the film wedges a segment of Petulia's past between two scenes of Archie's hospital routines. This intercutting of one character's present with another character's past—I can't think of any clear precedent in other films—gives us exactly the feeling that Lester must have wanted to convey, the sense of two lives being lived simultaneously, intersecting but essentially, perpetually disjointed. There is no way that Archie can *ever* reach Petulia's past, no way for him to know the experiences that have made her what she is. Time past and time present do not meet; they are like two parallel lines, fragments from different lives. A simple intercutting of the *present* experiences of both characters would not so poignantly render their separateness.

PETULIA

That separateness becomes clear and irrevocable in one chilling scene after Petulia's recovery. Her husband David and his wealthy, reactionary parents have decided that she is well enough to be removed from the hospital, and they have taken her home without Archie's knowledge or approval. Knowing that it was her husband who beat her, he rushes angrily to her home to save her. But he finds her happily talking and laughing with the family. When, in bewilderment and fury, he accuses David of the beating, everyone denies it graciously and Petulia herself jokes cheerfully about what she now calls a "fainting spell." Because the scene is on the surface so genial—and Lester underscores the irony by his attention to the pretty, sunlit pastel colors of the bedroom—we are horrified all the more by what we do not understand of Petulia. Her life does make sense on its own terms, we learn later—she has peculiar emotional needs that make her acquiesce in her husband's brutality—but at this point we can only wonder at her, a little fearfully. The strangeness, the impenetrability of another human life has rarely been so eloquently communicated. Lester ends the sequence by underlining the lovers' separateness—as Archie loses control to a momentary gesture of rage on the lawn of the house, we hear Petulia's voice on the sound track, telling David, "You used to be the gentlest man I knew." After this scene of terrifying finality, and the recognition of all that divides them, we see the first moment of real tenderness between Archie and Petulia. They pass each other on the cable cars, and she follows him to a penguin show where he has taken his sons. He leaves the boys to sit beside her, and she touches his hand for only an instant, then silently gets up to leave; it is a lovely moment of wistfulness for what could never possibly be, a sympathetic acknowledgement of the gentle curiosity that is the most two people so different can ever feel for each other.

Lester uses detail effectively to reinforce the feelings of isolation, incongruity, melancholy that define the relationship of Petulia and Archie. His camera often settles for a moment on what seems a gratuitous face or group—laundresses working silently in the basement of the Fairmont Hotel, a clown selling balloons outside a supermarket, a Negro sitting alone in the furnace room of a hospital, gardeners spraying plants in front of Petulia's mansion, actors filming a commercial in Muir Woods, a group of nuns in the Japanese gardens or priests on the tour boat to Alcatraz. But this pageant has relevance; Lester is persistently calling our attention to the faces of strangers, faces from lives we will never know or understand, but that we glimpse and puzzle over for a moment as they pass us. Similarly, Archie's television runs on and on in the background of scenes, with messages from Vietnam, but Archie does not really know how to listen. Any of these things might upset his complacency if he looked hard enough; but other lives only rarely break through the barriers we have unconsciously built around ourselves.

I am less sympathetic to the flash-forwards—one- or two-second anticipations of scenes we will see later—that Lester uses throughout the film. It is hard to know the purpose of all of these, but like the isolated faces around the edges of the film, the flash-forwards do continue to unsettle us with an unintelligible glimpse, perhaps pertinent to a film about how we deal and fail to deal with what is new to us. Most of these flash-forwards anticipate something which

eventually becomes intelligible, but some of them remain undefined, like a brief rock dance scene which is flashed at us twice, and though it is later fleshed out slightly—it is a dance hall where Archie wanders by Petulia and her husband—we never know what Archie is doing there, or what exactly happens. Even in using a rather irritating trick, then, Lester tries to appropriate it to his theme.

In the last few scenes, as Petulia is reconciled to her husband, she takes over the emphasis of the film without ever quite coming into clear focus. When she finally embraces David and cries, "Poor baby, poor baby," it is quite disturbing, but are we to see her as a noble, self-sacrificing Earth Mother (she seems to have a compulsion to "save" people), or as a masochist every bit as neurotic as her sadistic husband? The question is never answered—but this seems to me evasion, not meaningful ambiguity. It would have been perfectly legitimate to leave Petulia unexplained, mysterious; but these scenes go on so long as to imply that the mystery is at last about to be solved, and when it is not, we have a right to feel cheated.

Richard Chamberlain as David gives the most surprising and probably the finest performance in the film, and Lester must deserve part of the credit. Chamberlain captures perfectly the hint of menace beneath California Golden Boy's mask of generosity and good cheer, and he brilliantly registers all of the subtle, frightening transformations of a twisted contemporary Dr. Jekyll. In a rage he orders Petulia to get the Mexican boy out of his house, but a moment later he is smiling and purring, cuddling the boy, sadistically exaggerating concern, then the next moment genuinely contrite, almost hysterical, pleading with the boy to like him. "No hard feelings, no hard feelings . . . " Petulia tells him that when she met him, he was "the most perfect thing I'd ever seen . . . like one of those plastic gadgets the Americans make so well . . . I had to have one." This dialogue is rather heavy, but Chamberlain does seem to suggest everything that is most enchanting and awful about plastic America, the cancer that spreads, invisible, within the beautiful bodies of the House Beautiful people.

Petulia is annoying from time to time. Lester cannot resist playing, throwing in coy comic bits that destroy the mood he has worked to achieve. Some of the straight satiric "business" —the mechanical furnishings of the motel, several hypocritical hippies, an unfeeling chorus of bystanders around Petulia's ambulance (reminiscent of *The Knack*), the stilted conversation of Petulia's inhuman father-in-law—is cold, obvious, predictable. The film's opening—fast cutting back and forth between crippled rich folks being wheeled into the Fairmont's basemen and a screaming rock band upstairs—is about as ugly and unpromising as that of any film this year. And Christie's mannered performance and the feeble invention of the next few scenes are not reassuring; it takes longer than is comfortable for *Petulia* to get control of itself. (It happens, I think, in the long, beautifully played scene between George C. Scott and Shirley Knight, as his ex-wife, which economically evokes the enervation of their married life.) In other words, the people who made this film have made mistakes. But even the mistakes are interesting and discussible. Every moment in the film is alert, intelligent, has a reason for being there. That is a rare enough quality in American films. The compassion and ability to sustain dramatic scenes that reveal a new maturity in Lester's talent are added pleasures.

—STEPHEN FARBER

CHINA IS NEAR

(La Cina e Vicina) Directed by Marco Bellochio. Script: Bellochio and Elda Tattoli, after an idea by Bellochio. Music: Ennio Morricone. Photography: Tonino delle Colli.

Marco Bellochio's second feature *China is Near* is a strident film. It laughs, sneers, and jeers at everything which is for Bellochio synonymous with depravity in Italy: the family, the bourge-

eventually becomes intelligible, but some of them remain undefined, like a brief rock dance scene which is flashed at us twice, and though it is later fleshed out slightly—it is a dance hall where Archie wanders by Petulia and her husband—we never know what Archie is doing there, or what exactly happens. Even in using a rather irritating trick, then, Lester tries to appropriate it to his theme.

In the last few scenes, as Petulia is reconciled to her husband, she takes over the emphasis of the film without ever quite coming into clear focus. When she finally embraces David and cries, "Poor baby, poor baby," it is quite disturbing, but are we to see her as a noble, self-sacrificing Earth Mother (she seems to have a compulsion to "save" people), or as a masochist every bit as neurotic as her sadistic husband? The question is never answered—but this seems to me evasion, not meaningful ambiguity. It would have been perfectly legitimate to leave Petulia unexplained, mysterious; but these scenes go on so long as to imply that the mystery is at last about to be solved, and when it is not, we have a right to feel cheated.

Richard Chamberlain as David gives the most surprising and probably the finest performance in the film, and Lester must deserve part of the credit. Chamberlain captures perfectly the hint of menace beneath California Golden Boy's mask of generosity and good cheer, and he brilliantly registers all of the subtle, frightening transformations of a twisted contemporary Dr. Jekyll. In a rage he orders Petulia to get the Mexican boy out of his house, but a moment later he is smiling and purring, cuddling the boy, sadistically exaggerating concern, then the next moment genuinely contrite, almost hysterical, pleading with the boy to like him. "No hard feelings, no hard feelings . . . " Petulia tells him that when she met him, he was "the most perfect thing I'd ever seen . . . like one of those plastic gadgets the Americans make so well . . . I had to have one." This dialogue is rather heavy, but Chamberlain does seem to suggest everything that is most enchanting and awful about plastic America, the cancer that spreads, invisible, within the beautiful bodies of the House Beautiful people.

Petulia is annoying from time to time. Lester cannot resist playing, throwing in coy comic bits that destroy the mood he has worked to achieve. Some of the straight satiric "business" —the mechanical furnishings of the motel, several hypocritical hippies, an unfeeling chorus of bystanders around Petulia's ambulance (reminiscent of *The Knack*), the stilted conversation of Petulia's inhuman father-in-law—is cold, obvious, predictable. The film's opening—fast cutting back and forth between crippled rich folks being wheeled into the Fairmont's basemen and a screaming rock band upstairs—is about as ugly and unpromising as that of any film this year. And Christie's mannered performance and the feeble invention of the next few scenes are not reassuring; it takes longer than is comfortable for *Petulia* to get control of itself. (It happens, I think, in the long, beautifully played scene between George C. Scott and Shirley Knight, as his ex-wife, which economically evokes the enervation of their married life.) In other words, the people who made this film have made mistakes. But even the mistakes are interesting and discussible. Every moment in the film is alert, intelligent, has a reason for being there. That is a rare enough quality in American films. The compassion and ability to sustain dramatic scenes that reveal a new maturity in Lester's talent are added pleasures.

—STEPHEN FARBER

CHINA IS NEAR

(La Cina e Vicina) Directed by Marco Bellochio. Script: Bellochio and Elda Tattoli, after an idea by Bellochio. Music: Ennio Morricone. Photography: Tonino delle Colli.

Marco Bellochio's second feature *China is Near* is a strident film. It laughs, sneers, and jeers at everything which is for Bellochio synonymous with depravity in Italy: the family, the bourge-

oisie, interclass sexual relationships, the alliance between the Christian-Democrats and the Socialist party, the Church, the game of politicking. In the desert he creates with his pitiless irony, one thing remains untouched: the childish acts of terrorism of a young pro-Chinese revolutionary, Camillo, a Greco-looking boy with a serious beauty and an intransigent attitude. Since *Fists in the Pocket* (1965), Bellochio has not unclenched his fists, but he has abandoned autobiography and has gotten out of the Freudian family inferno which limited his view considerably. There is still a family nucleus in *China is Near* (two brothers and one sister) but not only do they not form a solid block, they represent all potential tendencies: Elena the conservative, Vittorio the compromising Socialist, and Camillo the pro-Chinese revolutionary; they mix with two outsiders, Carlo and Giovanna, both of proletarian origins. The major differences between Bellochio's two films is the devastating humor which gives *China is Near* its respiration and its dialectical balance. The film see-saws between a sordid drama of ambition, sex, and betrayal and a satire on political mores. The latter reacts over the former in such a way that contrary to *Fists in the Pocket*, we can disengage ourselves from the operatic squalor of the plot and avoid taking it seriously. It is François Mauriac revisited by Allen Ginsberg.

By comparison to Jean-Luc Godard's *La Chinoise* which it forecasts (*China* was made in the summer of 1966 and *La Chinoise* in the spring of 1967), *China is Near* is infinitely more desperate because it offers no solution. Pro-Chinese tactics are merely another face of politics in Italy, even if presented with no contempt. For the rest, Bellochio does not have enough sarcasm. Vittorio, the Socialist municipal candidate, is a well-to-do intellectual who bears the stigma of gutlessness and decadence typical of the Italian bourgeoisie. He is a mixture of pettiness and grandiloquence. Elena, his sister, is the placid sexual object who is upset only when sex interferes with order, as when she is pregnant from the "unmarriable" Carlo, a sincere socialist, and Giovanna, who both appear as committed idealists in love with each other at the beginning of the film, turn out to be ambitious parasites who make deals to force Elena and Vittorio to marry them respectively. Nothing redeems any of them. Vittorio bribes a policeman and invites his pious aunts to get their votes; Carlo betrays both Giovanna and Elena since he makes her pregnant only to marry her; Giovanna cheats Vittorio by blackmailing him through the baby she is expecting from Carlo. And so political compromises are exposed through rut and impregnation.

Where Godard was a poet, Bellochio is a novelist making a moral judgment on people involved in politics. Cheap melodrama and social ridicule are Bellochio's instruments of criticism whereas Godard was using games, puns, playlets, and psychological irreality. Paradoxically, Bellochio's characters also become abstract; they finally represent things more than they exist by themselves. This is why the image is bleak, overexposed and constantly washed out. Grotesque contrasts à la Buñuel abstractionalize further the socially rooted protagonists: Vittorio is shown crying "God, why hast thou forsaken me?" while on the pot, Camillo in his Jesuit uniform discusses political intransigence while accompanying on the piano choir boys serenading an old bed-ridden padre, Carlo caresses Elena near a display of antiques among which the shoe of a Pope is kept behind glass doors. Catholicism is only a dusty relic near which the worker fecundates the upper class, says Bellochio's humor in that very personal combination of rage, lucidity, and taste for the freakish side of people which seems to be his trademark. (Incidentally, the characters of *China is Near* are ordinary people and not psychological monsters as in *Fists in the Pocket*). But the film's irony should not make us shrug off the seriousness of the drama, for Bellochio, after some humor, comes back with more sordidness. The ending is, for that matter, exemplary. After a political meeting where Vittorio is prevented from finishing his speech by the launching on him of cats and watchdogs by his brother's Maoist friends, we see the two

women impregnated by Carlo doing maternity exercises and we learn that Carlo is indeed going to marry the rich Elena, and Vittorio the proletarian Giovanna. This is the ultimate victory of political compromise.

Camillo, a partisan of violence, is the "pure" counterpart of the Véronique of *La Chinoise* and the opening scenes of *China is Near*, where Camillo lectures two unattentive followers on sexual education according to Chairman Mao's precepts, resemble the indoctrination of the quintet of students in Godard's film. But if Camillo is spared Bellochio's disdain, he still represents only one of the political tendencies X-rayed by the director, whereas Godard concentrated exclusively on pro-Chinese French students. It could not be foreseen at the time a small group of revolutionaries would be a prophecy on the future. The events of May 1968 in France have proven that indeed it was true that a minority of pro-Chinese "enraged" students at the University of Nanterre could spark a revolutionary movement which would extend to the entire nation. It is to be feared that Bellochio's pessimism is in tune with the political stagnation of Italy (where the Communists, the governmental alliance of the Christian-Democrats and the Socialists are deadlocked) and that, contrary to the inscription on a wall in the "red" city of Imola which inspired the title of the film, China is still far away from the Italians.

—CLAIRE CLOUZOT

Short Notices

The Bride Wore Black. François Truffaut has followed his Hitchcock interest into pure murder. A woman (Jeanne Moreau) kills two rather ordinary young men whom she never personally met, before we find out why, and she goes on to kill another three. It's a revenge story with some sharp cinematic touches—jump cuts, flash-backs, a marvelous close-up of escaping feet—the color photography by Raoul Coutard is, as ever, first rate, and this time postcard pretty: against Coutard's bright lush background of the Riviera, Truffaut dresses his revenger white or black, sometimes half white, half black. Her two-value garb reflects her compulsive dedication; she is outside the colorful life. Conversely, her victims are quite lively. They are introduced by short vignettes of their loves, friends, weaknesses, work, which make their murders disturbingly real. Thus the bride's revenge and its romantic justification grow progressively more grotesque, particularly in an episode with an artist-illustrator (Charles Denner), a womanizer who falls for the femme fatale posing as Diana, goddess of the hunt. He dreams of her as a full-color nude; she shoots him down but lets the image stay. Here, the sexuality which has lingered in earlier murders emerges as a motif of the bereaved virgin who comes to despise love, but neither warped passion nor the moral puzzle of revenge (a religious confession only spurs Miss Moreau on) develops a thematic core for the film. Instead, as the loss of love turns the bride into a murdering robot, so the no-comment no-emotion style turns the film into a literal see-it-happen. It's a case of film entropy. Brilliant elements work against each other. Style and color cumulatively work against ideas. The division of sympathy between bride and victims works against sympathy for any. The film moves into an esthetic mode, French, methodical, no Hitchcock surprise, no terror anywhere, until, when the last murder is contrived, the film goes flat. Of all Truffaut's work this is the one that leaves us in neutral.

—JUDITH SHATNOFF

A Dandy in Aspic. Unromantic spy films are nothing unusual by now, but this one does have an unusual twist; the anti-hero, flawed, sordid, but still sympathetic, is one of *them*—a Communist double-agent who wants desperately to go home to Mother Russia. In fact, the Russian agents in the film are all likable, while the British are cold, devious,

women impregnated by Carlo doing maternity exercises and we learn that Carlo is indeed going to marry the rich Elena, and Vittorio the proletarian Giovanna. This is the ultimate victory of political compromise.

Camillo, a partisan of violence, is the "pure" counterpart of the Véronique of *La Chinoise* and the opening scenes of *China is Near*, where Camillo lectures two unattentive followers on sexual education according to Chairman Mao's precepts, resemble the indoctrination of the quintet of students in Godard's film. But if Camillo is spared Bellochio's disdain, he still represents only one of the political tendencies X-rayed by the director, whereas Godard concentrated exclusively on pro-Chinese French students. It could not be foreseen at the time a small group of revolutionaries would be a prophecy on the future. The events of May 1968 in France have proven that indeed it was true that a minority of pro-Chinese "enraged" students at the University of Nanterre could spark a revolutionary movement which would extend to the entire nation. It is to be feared that Bellochio's pessimism is in tune with the political stagnation of Italy (where the Communists, the governmental alliance of the Christian-Democrats and the Socialists are deadlocked) and that, contrary to the inscription on a wall in the "red" city of Imola which inspired the title of the film, China is still far away from the Italians.

—CLAIRE CLOUZOT

Short Notices

The Bride Wore Black. François Truffaut has followed his Hitchcock interest into pure murder. A woman (Jeanne Moreau) kills two rather ordinary young men whom she never personally met, before we find out why, and she goes on to kill another three. It's a revenge story with some sharp cinematic touches—jump cuts, flash-backs, a marvelous close-up of escaping feet—the color photography by Raoul Coutard is, as ever, first rate, and this time postcard pretty: against Coutard's bright lush background of the Riviera, Truffaut dresses his revenger white or black, sometimes half white, half black. Her two-value garb reflects her compulsive dedication; she is outside the colorful life. Conversely, her victims are quite lively. They are introduced by short vignettes of their loves, friends, weaknesses, work, which make their murders disturbingly real. Thus the bride's revenge and its romantic justification grow progressively more grotesque, particularly in an episode with an artist-illustrator (Charles Denner), a womanizer who falls for the femme fatale posing as Diana, goddess of the hunt. He dreams of her as a full-color nude; she shoots him down but lets the image stay. Here, the sexuality which has lingered in earlier murders emerges as a motif of the bereaved virgin who comes to despise love, but neither warped passion nor the moral puzzle of revenge (a religious confession only spurs Miss Moreau on) develops a thematic core for the film. Instead, as the loss of love turns the bride into a murdering robot, so the no-comment no-emotion style turns the film into a literal see-it-happen. It's a case of film entropy. Brilliant elements work against each other. Style and color cumulatively work against ideas. The division of sympathy between bride and victims works against sympathy for any. The film moves into an esthetic mode, French, methodical, no Hitchcock surprise, no terror anywhere, until, when the last murder is contrived, the film goes flat. Of all Truffaut's work this is the one that leaves us in neutral.

—JUDITH SHATNOFF

A Dandy in Aspic. Unromantic spy films are nothing unusual by now, but this one does have an unusual twist; the anti-hero, flawed, sordid, but still sympathetic, is one of *them*—a Communist double-agent who wants desperately to go home to Mother Russia. In fact, the Russian agents in the film are all likable, while the British are cold, devious,

women impregnated by Carlo doing maternity exercises and we learn that Carlo is indeed going to marry the rich Elena, and Vittorio the proletarian Giovanna. This is the ultimate victory of political compromise.

Camillo, a partisan of violence, is the "pure" counterpart of the Véronique of *La Chinoise* and the opening scenes of *China is Near*, where Camillo lectures two unattentive followers on sexual education according to Chairman Mao's precepts, resemble the indoctrination of the quintet of students in Godard's film. But if Camillo is spared Bellochio's disdain, he still represents only one of the political tendencies X-rayed by the director, whereas Godard concentrated exclusively on pro-Chinese French students. It could not be foreseen at the time a small group of revolutionaries would be a prophecy on the future. The events of May 1968 in France have proven that indeed it was true that a minority of pro-Chinese "enraged" students at the University of Nanterre could spark a revolutionary movement which would extend to the entire nation. It is to be feared that Bellochio's pessimism is in tune with the political stagnation of Italy (where the Communists, the governmental alliance of the Christian-Democrats and the Socialists are deadlocked) and that, contrary to the inscription on a wall in the "red" city of Imola which inspired the title of the film, China is still far away from the Italians.

—CLAIRE CLOUZOT

Short Notices

The Bride Wore Black. François Truffaut has followed his Hitchcock interest into pure murder. A woman (Jeanne Moreau) kills two rather ordinary young men whom she never personally met, before we find out why, and she goes on to kill another three. It's a revenge story with some sharp cinematic touches—jump cuts, flash-backs, a marvelous close-up of escaping feet—the color photography by Raoul Coutard is, as ever, first rate, and this time postcard pretty: against Coutard's bright lush background of the Riviera, Truffaut dresses his revenger white or black, sometimes half white, half black. Her two-value garb reflects her compulsive dedication; she is outside the colorful life. Conversely, her victims are quite lively. They are introduced by short vignettes of their loves, friends, weaknesses, work, which make their murders disturbingly real. Thus the bride's revenge and its romantic justification grow progressively more grotesque, particularly in an episode with an artist-illustrator (Charles Denner), a womanizer who falls for the femme fatale posing as Diana, goddess of the hunt. He dreams of her as a full-color nude; she shoots him down but lets the image stay. Here, the sexuality which has lingered in earlier murders emerges as a motif of the bereaved virgin who comes to despise love, but neither warped passion nor the moral puzzle of revenge (a religious confession only spurs Miss Moreau on) develops a thematic core for the film. Instead, as the loss of love turns the bride into a murdering robot, so the no-comment no-emotion style turns the film into a literal see-it-happen. It's a case of film entropy. Brilliant elements work against each other. Style and color cumulatively work against ideas. The division of sympathy between bride and victims works against sympathy for any. The film moves into an esthetic mode, French, methodical, no Hitchcock surprise, no terror anywhere, until, when the last murder is contrived, the film goes flat. Of all Truffaut's work this is the one that leaves us in neutral.

—JUDITH SHATNOFF

A Dandy in Aspic. Unromantic spy films are nothing unusual by now, but this one does have an unusual twist; the anti-hero, flawed, sordid, but still sympathetic, is one of *them*—a Communist double-agent who wants desperately to go home to Mother Russia. In fact, the Russian agents in the film are all likable, while the British are cold, devious,

vicious. It's refreshing, for a change, to have the conventions reversed. But the film is sophisticated in other ways. The first half hour is about as good as a spy movie can be—stylishly filmed, taking time to introduce several three-dimensional characters, but with just enough ominous, inexplicable moments—like an outburst of rage in a shooting gallery—to make us uneasy. Unfortunately, once the movie gets into full swing, it falls victim to a prevalent contemporary menace—incoherence. The convoluted plot is advanced imaginatively—we learn that a man has been murdered inside a dimestore photo booth when we notice that in the fourth photograph in the receptacle, he is mysteriously slumped over—and the dialogue is unusually good, but it's hard to come away feeling very pleased by a movie that is impossible to understand. Anthony Mann died near the end of the filming, and Laurence Harvey finished the shooting and supervised the editing himself, which may explain some of the confusion, and also why the cutting is blatant and inconsistently slick, out of keeping with the subtlety of much of the film's detail. Harvey's performance, though, is surprisingly good—he has "done" weariness and self-loathing many times already, but he also sustains a few tender scenes that manage to make us care about one more spy coming in from the cold. Mia Farrow, in a kind of trial run for *Rosemary's Baby*, is very charming even in a flimsier part. The astonishingly impressive supporting cast includes Tom Courtenay, Lionel Stander, Per Oscarsson, Harry Andrews, Peter Cook; Courtenay's and Oscarsson's performances are particularly fine. In other words, individual contributions to this film—writing, performances, Christopher Challis's elegant compositions, Quincy Jones's music, even the opening titles—are far above average for the genre, but they never jell satisfyingly. The parts are exciting, the movie as a whole tepid.—STEPHEN FARBER

The Detective. Policemen, no doubt, are livid about this film, which unflinchingly exposes them to impressionable moviegoers as smug, sophisticated hooligans who are only slightly more scrupulous than the Mafia. The term "Fascist Pig," a synonym for policeman among blacks, students, and hippies, is crude but, as we see in the film, fairly accurate. Unfortunately, most Americans are either ignorant of police savagery, or, more likely, applaud it as appropriate treatment of groups that they, too, despise. Members of the New York Police Department are the villains of the film, most of them being rotten to the core, or, at least, infested with enough bigotry and contempt for the underdog that they should be pipe fitters or bottle washers rather than wielding weapons in the name of justice. We see how the callousness of a bully with a badge can touch off a race riot. We see them cursing and pummeling homosexuals, boozing it up in bars while on duty, and using Gestapo tactics instead of tact to get confessions from unwilling suspects. The audience watches this contemptible behavior from the standpoint of a tough, honest detective (Frank Sinatra) who gains fame and a promotion by tracking down the killer of a mutilated homosexual. The film recounts the struggle between his passion for police work and his disgust at being part of a hopelessly corrupt department. Cinematically, *The Detective* is disjointed and unimaginative, though director Gordon Douglas manages to maintain a fair degree of suspense. Sinatra gives a high-quality performance for the first time since *Man With A Golden Arm*. Lee Remick, who is aging ungracefully, makes the role of his nymphomaniac ex-wife seem as exciting as day-old dishwater. Al Freeman, Jr., as the unsavory, ambitious black cop, is not as effective as he was in *Dutchman*. Unwisely, the film was shot in color. A shadowy, frightening city like New York has its essential grittiness softened by the sweetness of color. Here is a thought to toy with—if this is what the New York Police, supposedly America's best, are like, then what manner of monster is patrolling the streets, in the name of the law, in all the other cities?—DENNIS HUNT

The Green Berets. What can you say about a movie so incompetently directed that, imediately prior to Jim Hutton being impaled on a bed of spikes, you can see the "blood" splotches on his shirt? Or one in which, not once but several times, stunt men are shown standing poised to leap and somersault into the air *prior to* the "mortar shell" going off behind them? The liberals should love this movie, even though it's a crude bore, for it makes John Wayne's kind of "hawk" look incredibly stupid. The quintessential scene: Aldo Ray, confronting a platoon of press representatives, his sergeant's stripes aquiver with righteous indignation, dumps a batch of (he says) Russian, Chinese, and Czechoslovakian-made small arms and ammunition on a table between them and fairly shouts, "You don't have to draw me a picture to show me that what we're up against here is Communist domination of the world!" And so it goes in this World War II rendition of Vietnam that, for half its length, looks like a Southeast Asian re-enactment of *The Alamo*:

vicious. It's refreshing, for a change, to have the conventions reversed. But the film is sophisticated in other ways. The first half hour is about as good as a spy movie can be—stylishly filmed, taking time to introduce several three-dimensional characters, but with just enough ominous, inexplicable moments—like an outburst of rage in a shooting gallery—to make us uneasy. Unfortunately, once the movie gets into full swing, it falls victim to a prevalent contemporary menace—incoherence. The convoluted plot is advanced imaginatively—we learn that a man has been murdered inside a dimestore photo booth when we notice that in the fourth photograph in the receptacle, he is mysteriously slumped over—and the dialogue is unusually good, but it's hard to come away feeling very pleased by a movie that is impossible to understand. Anthony Mann died near the end of the filming, and Laurence Harvey finished the shooting and supervised the editing himself, which may explain some of the confusion, and also why the cutting is blatant and inconsistently slick, out of keeping with the subtlety of much of the film's detail. Harvey's performance, though, is surprisingly good—he has "done" weariness and self-loathing many times already, but he also sustains a few tender scenes that manage to make us care about one more spy coming in from the cold. Mia Farrow, in a kind of trial run for *Rosemary's Baby*, is very charming even in a flimsier part. The astonishingly impressive supporting cast includes Tom Courtenay, Lionel Stander, Per Oscarsson, Harry Andrews, Peter Cook; Courtenay's and Oscarsson's performances are particularly fine. In other words, individual contributions to this film—writing, performances, Christopher Challis's elegant compositions, Quincy Jones's music, even the opening titles—are far above average for the genre, but they never jell satisfyingly. The parts are exciting, the movie as a whole tepid.—STEPHEN FARBER

The Detective. Policemen, no doubt, are livid about this film, which unflinchingly exposes them to impressionable moviegoers as smug, sophisticated hooligans who are only slightly more scrupulous than the Mafia. The term "Fascist Pig," a synonym for policeman among blacks, students, and hippies, is crude but, as we see in the film, fairly accurate. Unfortunately, most Americans are either ignorant of police savagery, or, more likely, applaud it as appropriate treatment of groups that they, too, despise. Members of the New York Police Department are the villains of the film, most of them being rotten to the core, or, at least, infested with enough bigotry and contempt for the underdog that they should be pipe fitters or bottle washers rather than wielding weapons in the name of justice. We see how the callousness of a bully with a badge can touch off a race riot. We see them cursing and pummeling homosexuals, boozing it up in bars while on duty, and using Gestapo tactics instead of tact to get confessions from unwilling suspects. The audience watches this contemptible behavior from the standpoint of a tough, honest detective (Frank Sinatra) who gains fame and a promotion by tracking down the killer of a mutilated homosexual. The film recounts the struggle between his passion for police work and his disgust at being part of a hopelessly corrupt department. Cinematically, *The Detective* is disjointed and unimaginative, though director Gordon Douglas manages to maintain a fair degree of suspense. Sinatra gives a high-quality performance for the first time since *Man With A Golden Arm*. Lee Remick, who is aging ungracefully, makes the role of his nymphomaniac ex-wife seem as exciting as day-old dishwater. Al Freeman, Jr., as the unsavory, ambitious black cop, is not as effective as he was in *Dutchman*. Unwisely, the film was shot in color. A shadowy, frightening city like New York has its essential grittiness softened by the sweetness of color. Here is a thought to toy with—if this is what the New York Police, supposedly America's best, are like, then what manner of monster is patrolling the streets, in the name of the law, in all the other cities?—DENNIS HUNT

The Green Berets. What can you say about a movie so incompetently directed that, imediately prior to Jim Hutton being impaled on a bed of spikes, you can see the "blood" splotches on his shirt? Or one in which, not once but several times, stunt men are shown standing poised to leap and somersault into the air *prior to* the "mortar shell" going off behind them? The liberals should love this movie, even though it's a crude bore, for it makes John Wayne's kind of "hawk" look incredibly stupid. The quintessential scene: Aldo Ray, confronting a platoon of press representatives, his sergeant's stripes aquiver with righteous indignation, dumps a batch of (he says) Russian, Chinese, and Czechoslovakian-made small arms and ammunition on a table between them and fairly shouts, "You don't have to draw me a picture to show me that what we're up against here is Communist domination of the world!" And so it goes in this World War II rendition of Vietnam that, for half its length, looks like a Southeast Asian re-enactment of *The Alamo*:

vicious. It's refreshing, for a change, to have the conventions reversed. But the film is sophisticated in other ways. The first half hour is about as good as a spy movie can be—stylishly filmed, taking time to introduce several three-dimensional characters, but with just enough ominous, inexplicable moments—like an outburst of rage in a shooting gallery—to make us uneasy. Unfortunately, once the movie gets into full swing, it falls victim to a prevalent contemporary menace—incoherence. The convoluted plot is advanced imaginatively—we learn that a man has been murdered inside a dimestore photo booth when we notice that in the fourth photograph in the receptacle, he is mysteriously slumped over—and the dialogue is unusually good, but it's hard to come away feeling very pleased by a movie that is impossible to understand. Anthony Mann died near the end of the filming, and Laurence Harvey finished the shooting and supervised the editing himself, which may explain some of the confusion, and also why the cutting is blatant and inconsistently slick, out of keeping with the subtlety of much of the film's detail. Harvey's performance, though, is surprisingly good—he has "done" weariness and self-loathing many times already, but he also sustains a few tender scenes that manage to make us care about one more spy coming in from the cold. Mia Farrow, in a kind of trial run for *Rosemary's Baby*, is very charming even in a flimsier part. The astonishingly impressive supporting cast includes Tom Courtenay, Lionel Stander, Per Oscarsson, Harry Andrews, Peter Cook; Courtenay's and Oscarsson's performances are particularly fine. In other words, individual contributions to this film—writing, performances, Christopher Challis's elegant compositions, Quincy Jones's music, even the opening titles—are far above average for the genre, but they never jell satisfyingly. The parts are exciting, the movie as a whole tepid.—STEPHEN FARBER

The Detective. Policemen, no doubt, are livid about this film, which unflinchingly exposes them to impressionable moviegoers as smug, sophisticated hooligans who are only slightly more scrupulous than the Mafia. The term "Fascist Pig," a synonym for policeman among blacks, students, and hippies, is crude but, as we see in the film, fairly accurate. Unfortunately, most Americans are either ignorant of police savagery, or, more likely, applaud it as appropriate treatment of groups that they, too, despise. Members of the New York Police Department are the villains of the film, most of them being rotten to the core, or, at least, infested with enough bigotry and contempt for the underdog that they should be pipe fitters or bottle washers rather than wielding weapons in the name of justice. We see how the callousness of a bully with a badge can touch off a race riot. We see them cursing and pummeling homosexuals, boozing it up in bars while on duty, and using Gestapo tactics instead of tact to get confessions from unwilling suspects. The audience watches this contemptible behavior from the standpoint of a tough, honest detective (Frank Sinatra) who gains fame and a promotion by tracking down the killer of a mutilated homosexual. The film recounts the struggle between his passion for police work and his disgust at being part of a hopelessly corrupt department. Cinematically, *The Detective* is disjointed and unimaginative, though director Gordon Douglas manages to maintain a fair degree of suspense. Sinatra gives a high-quality performance for the first time since *Man With A Golden Arm*. Lee Remick, who is aging ungracefully, makes the role of his nymphomaniac ex-wife seem as exciting as day-old dishwater. Al Freeman, Jr., as the unsavory, ambitious black cop, is not as effective as he was in *Dutchman*. Unwisely, the film was shot in color. A shadowy, frightening city like New York has its essential grittiness softened by the sweetness of color. Here is a thought to toy with—if this is what the New York Police, supposedly America's best, are like, then what manner of monster is patrolling the streets, in the name of the law, in all the other cities?—DENNIS HUNT

The Green Berets. What can you say about a movie so incompetently directed that, imediately prior to Jim Hutton being impaled on a bed of spikes, you can see the "blood" splotches on his shirt? Or one in which, not once but several times, stunt men are shown standing poised to leap and somersault into the air *prior to* the "mortar shell" going off behind them? The liberals should love this movie, even though it's a crude bore, for it makes John Wayne's kind of "hawk" look incredibly stupid. The quintessential scene: Aldo Ray, confronting a platoon of press representatives, his sergeant's stripes aquiver with righteous indignation, dumps a batch of (he says) Russian, Chinese, and Czechoslovakian-made small arms and ammunition on a table between them and fairly shouts, "You don't have to draw me a picture to show me that what we're up against here is Communist domination of the world!" And so it goes in this World War II rendition of Vietnam that, for half its length, looks like a Southeast Asian re-enactment of *The Alamo*:

as the wave of Viet Cong guerillas sweeps toward the Panavision cameras stationed behind the line of American troops during the night attack, all that's missing is "The Yellow Rose of Texas" and Dmitri Tiomkin. Instead, we have Miklos Rozsa, making the Green Berets sound, at times, mysteriously like Roman centurions. Of course, it is possible for sophisticated viewers to ignore the politics and concentrate on the picture, like with Godard: but take away the politics here and you have no picture. Most of the time is spent, not on the kind of mindless action everyone expects at the very least from a John Wayne movie, but on political speeches about why we're over there. In the last scene, with Barry Sadler's song drowning out poor Rozsa on the sound track for the last time, Wayne takes the hand of a small Vietnamese boy and walks along an incredible beach while his dubbed-in voice says, "You're what we're fighting for." But, ultimately, it all makes us leftists look better: How can we lose the ideological battle, with Godard on our side?—DAN BATES

Holy Ghost People is a film record of an evening with a congregation of fundamentalists in West Virginia —people who speak in tongues, handle rattlesnakes and copperheads, and drink strychnine, following their interpretation of certain scriptures. Beginning with interviews with some of the central figures, the film follows the very informal procedures in a cool, descriptive, ethnographic way. There is no condescension and no phoney explanation in the film; it simply presents these remarkable people to us. The film records the progress of the ceremony into trance states (with music and dance), and it records also the biting of one of the presiding men —perhaps, it occurs to viewers, because he handled the snake after the holy state had passed, and for the benefit of the camera. . . . Such films appear easy to make; with a synch system, nothing easier! Yet when we look around at the ethnographic, urban-documentation and similar films being made, there are few that are convincing and thorough, evidently because the tact required of film-makers operating in such situations is rare. Peter Adair and his collaborators seem to have possessed it in abundance; and so their film is thoughtful and thought-provoking. It is one of those films which provides an admirably concrete basis for discussions in psychology and other social sciences; and for anyone with an interest in hypnosis and related states, it provides an extremely suggestive instance of ordinary square Americans in turned-on rituals that make rock ballroom dancing look like a throwback to another and very domestic kind of "true religion."—E. C.

The Householder was made in 1963 by Oakland-born James Ivory, prior to his successful *Shakespeare Wallah*. It is the simple and humane story (based on a novel by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, as was *Shakespeare Wallah*) of the conjugal difficulties of a young Indian schoolteacher educated in the old code (Shashi Kapoor), and his beautiful bride (Leela Naidu), a more realistic modern woman who simply wants to be happy and cherished by her husband. Their slow and subtle accomplishment is seen in one long flashback at the occasion of a friend's wedding. Contrary to *Mahaganar* which it resembles by the mood and the subject, *The Householder* deals with the problem of "husband versus wife" as representatives of the old and new order from *inside* the characters and particularly from within the personality of Shashi Kapoor. Satyajit Ray seemed to strive to cope with Arati, the liberated woman of *Mahaganar*, whereas Ivory effortlessly empathizes with both husband and wife. (And, paradoxically, he is the foreigner.) He poses very clearly the conflict between the rigid principles of strong wifely respect for the husband and the solutions which are offered by others in the course of the film—the idealism of Americans searching in India for a mystique and the example of the swami who has abandoned everything to follow God. The film finds its balance in the trivia which compose conjugal life: quarrels on how to keep a house clean, how to look proper, the lack of money, the buying of candies or of material for a sari. There, Ivory's look is generous and his tone tender. With the mother and the principal, he is satirical as illustrated by the tea party during which the camera travels from the row of men sipping tea to the row of women singing Indian chants—a perfect caricature of English India meeting Indian India. With the Americans, he is outwardly ironical, as when Kapoor arrives at the Americans' villa and hears Beethoven's Ninth blasted on a record-player while an old Englishman crouches stupidly among flowerbeds. Somewhere between the materialism of the couple's life and the "utopia" of the Americans a solution must lie. According to the parable of the "Householder," Shashi Kapoor, after having known that the light exists, returns to his wife and future child to protect the household. He has realized by then how vain are the tyranny of his mother, the dictatorship of the principal, and the idealism of the

as the wave of Viet Cong guerillas sweeps toward the Panavision cameras stationed behind the line of American troops during the night attack, all that's missing is "The Yellow Rose of Texas" and Dmitri Tiomkin. Instead, we have Miklos Rozsa, making the Green Berets sound, at times, mysteriously like Roman centurions. Of course, it is possible for sophisticated viewers to ignore the politics and concentrate on the picture, like with Godard: but take away the politics here and you have no picture. Most of the time is spent, not on the kind of mindless action everyone expects at the very least from a John Wayne movie, but on political speeches about why we're over there. In the last scene, with Barry Sadler's song drowning out poor Rozsa on the sound track for the last time, Wayne takes the hand of a small Vietnamese boy and walks along an incredible beach while his dubbed-in voice says, "You're what we're fighting for." But, ultimately, it all makes us leftists look better: How can we lose the ideological battle, with Godard on our side?—DAN BATES

Holy Ghost People is a film record of an evening with a congregation of fundamentalists in West Virginia —people who speak in tongues, handle rattlesnakes and copperheads, and drink strychnine, following their interpretation of certain scriptures. Beginning with interviews with some of the central figures, the film follows the very informal procedures in a cool, descriptive, ethnographic way. There is no condescension and no phoney explanation in the film; it simply presents these remarkable people to us. The film records the progress of the ceremony into trance states (with music and dance), and it records also the biting of one of the presiding men —perhaps, it occurs to viewers, because he handled the snake after the holy state had passed, and for the benefit of the camera. . . . Such films appear easy to make; with a synch system, nothing easier! Yet when we look around at the ethnographic, urban-documentation and similar films being made, there are few that are convincing and thorough, evidently because the tact required of film-makers operating in such situations is rare. Peter Adair and his collaborators seem to have possessed it in abundance; and so their film is thoughtful and thought-provoking. It is one of those films which provides an admirably concrete basis for discussions in psychology and other social sciences; and for anyone with an interest in hypnosis and related states, it provides an extremely suggestive instance of ordinary square Americans in turned-on rituals that make rock ballroom dancing look like a throwback to another and very domestic kind of "true religion."—E. C.

The Householder was made in 1963 by Oakland-born James Ivory, prior to his successful *Shakespeare Wallah*. It is the simple and humane story (based on a novel by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, as was *Shakespeare Wallah*) of the conjugal difficulties of a young Indian schoolteacher educated in the old code (Shashi Kapoor), and his beautiful bride (Leela Naidu), a more realistic modern woman who simply wants to be happy and cherished by her husband. Their slow and subtle accomplishment is seen in one long flashback at the occasion of a friend's wedding. Contrary to *Mahaganar* which it resembles by the mood and the subject, *The Householder* deals with the problem of "husband versus wife" as representatives of the old and new order from *inside* the characters and particularly from within the personality of Shashi Kapoor. Satyajit Ray seemed to strive to cope with Arati, the liberated woman of *Mahaganar*, whereas Ivory effortlessly empathizes with both husband and wife. (And, paradoxically, he is the foreigner.) He poses very clearly the conflict between the rigid principles of strong wifely respect for the husband and the solutions which are offered by others in the course of the film—the idealism of Americans searching in India for a mystique and the example of the swami who has abandoned everything to follow God. The film finds its balance in the trivia which compose conjugal life: quarrels on how to keep a house clean, how to look proper, the lack of money, the buying of candies or of material for a sari. There, Ivory's look is generous and his tone tender. With the mother and the principal, he is satirical as illustrated by the tea party during which the camera travels from the row of men sipping tea to the row of women singing Indian chants—a perfect caricature of English India meeting Indian India. With the Americans, he is outwardly ironical, as when Kapoor arrives at the Americans' villa and hears Beethoven's Ninth blasted on a record-player while an old Englishman crouches stupidly among flowerbeds. Somewhere between the materialism of the couple's life and the "utopia" of the Americans a solution must lie. According to the parable of the "Householder," Shashi Kapoor, after having known that the light exists, returns to his wife and future child to protect the household. He has realized by then how vain are the tyranny of his mother, the dictatorship of the principal, and the idealism of the

as the wave of Viet Cong guerillas sweeps toward the Panavision cameras stationed behind the line of American troops during the night attack, all that's missing is "The Yellow Rose of Texas" and Dmitri Tiomkin. Instead, we have Miklos Rozsa, making the Green Berets sound, at times, mysteriously like Roman centurions. Of course, it is possible for sophisticated viewers to ignore the politics and concentrate on the picture, like with Godard: but take away the politics here and you have no picture. Most of the time is spent, not on the kind of mindless action everyone expects at the very least from a John Wayne movie, but on political speeches about why we're over there. In the last scene, with Barry Sadler's song drowning out poor Rozsa on the sound track for the last time, Wayne takes the hand of a small Vietnamese boy and walks along an incredible beach while his dubbed-in voice says, "You're what we're fighting for." But, ultimately, it all makes us leftists look better: How can we lose the ideological battle, with Godard on our side?—DAN BATES

Holy Ghost People is a film record of an evening with a congregation of fundamentalists in West Virginia —people who speak in tongues, handle rattlesnakes and copperheads, and drink strychnine, following their interpretation of certain scriptures. Beginning with interviews with some of the central figures, the film follows the very informal procedures in a cool, descriptive, ethnographic way. There is no condescension and no phoney explanation in the film; it simply presents these remarkable people to us. The film records the progress of the ceremony into trance states (with music and dance), and it records also the biting of one of the presiding men —perhaps, it occurs to viewers, because he handled the snake after the holy state had passed, and for the benefit of the camera. . . . Such films appear easy to make; with a synch system, nothing easier! Yet when we look around at the ethnographic, urban-documentation and similar films being made, there are few that are convincing and thorough, evidently because the tact required of film-makers operating in such situations is rare. Peter Adair and his collaborators seem to have possessed it in abundance; and so their film is thoughtful and thought-provoking. It is one of those films which provides an admirably concrete basis for discussions in psychology and other social sciences; and for anyone with an interest in hypnosis and related states, it provides an extremely suggestive instance of ordinary square Americans in turned-on rituals that make rock ballroom dancing look like a throwback to another and very domestic kind of "true religion."—E. C.

The Householder was made in 1963 by Oakland-born James Ivory, prior to his successful *Shakespeare Wallah*. It is the simple and humane story (based on a novel by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, as was *Shakespeare Wallah*) of the conjugal difficulties of a young Indian schoolteacher educated in the old code (Shashi Kapoor), and his beautiful bride (Leela Naidu), a more realistic modern woman who simply wants to be happy and cherished by her husband. Their slow and subtle accomplishment is seen in one long flashback at the occasion of a friend's wedding. Contrary to *Mahaganar* which it resembles by the mood and the subject, *The Householder* deals with the problem of "husband versus wife" as representatives of the old and new order from *inside* the characters and particularly from within the personality of Shashi Kapoor. Satyajit Ray seemed to strive to cope with Arati, the liberated woman of *Mahaganar*, whereas Ivory effortlessly empathizes with both husband and wife. (And, paradoxically, he is the foreigner.) He poses very clearly the conflict between the rigid principles of strong wifely respect for the husband and the solutions which are offered by others in the course of the film—the idealism of Americans searching in India for a mystique and the example of the swami who has abandoned everything to follow God. The film finds its balance in the trivia which compose conjugal life: quarrels on how to keep a house clean, how to look proper, the lack of money, the buying of candies or of material for a sari. There, Ivory's look is generous and his tone tender. With the mother and the principal, he is satirical as illustrated by the tea party during which the camera travels from the row of men sipping tea to the row of women singing Indian chants—a perfect caricature of English India meeting Indian India. With the Americans, he is outwardly ironical, as when Kapoor arrives at the Americans' villa and hears Beethoven's Ninth blasted on a record-player while an old Englishman crouches stupidly among flowerbeds. Somewhere between the materialism of the couple's life and the "utopia" of the Americans a solution must lie. According to the parable of the "Householder," Shashi Kapoor, after having known that the light exists, returns to his wife and future child to protect the household. He has realized by then how vain are the tyranny of his mother, the dictatorship of the principal, and the idealism of the

Americans in India. The acceptance of daily chores will be his path to God. In realistic as well as poetic terms, *The Householder* shows that the real wisdom of man, be he Indian or American, is to go back to the sources of life. An American friend of Kapoor tells him, when the latter reports that his wife has left him: "Detach yourself from the world; the Essence is the only problem." No, says James Ivory, life is the only true problem. And he proves it in his film.—CLAIRE CLOUZOT

I Love You, Alice B. Toklas. For her hashish fudge, of course, which, in the course of this wild comedy, blows the minds of an entire family of Los Angeles suburbanites. Peter Sellers plays the Jewish lawyer, wealthy, successful, not too dissatisfied with the ordinary 9-to-5 pressures, nagged by his domineering mama, his self-effacing papa, and his aging secretary-fiancée who has finally persuaded him to be married. The film sketches the tensions of Establishment living tersely and hilariously, and then introduces the fly in the erntment—Sellers's hippie brother from Venice. The brothers' first scenes together are excellent satire, because both characters seem equally insane. When the hippie attends the funeral of the family butcher in his Hopi Indian garb, the film even manages to sustain—though just barely—one of the most outrageous, most tasteless bits of slapstick in any recent film. But after that point, about a third of the way into the movie, it's all downhill. Sellers is enchanted by a flower girl, zonked by the Toklas brownies, and he drops out to groove and meditate. The jokes on hippies are flat, labored, thoroughly predictable. Perhaps hippies are not interesting enough to bear all of the burlesque they have inspired in the past year, or perhaps Hollywood is still too far from Haight-Ashbury to be able to come up with any but the broadcast cartoon figures. Much of the Jewish satire (with the exception of Jo van Fleet's pasteboard Yiddisha Mama) seems to grow from close observation and the experience of writers Larry Tucker and Paul Mazursky; it has a personal resonance uncommon in Hollywood comedy. The hippie satire, on the other hand, grows only from the observation of TV shows and other movies. Sellers's performance highlights the difference. His anxiety-racked lawyer is one of the finest things he has ever done—almost painfully accurate, and as funny as a great comic actor can be when he seems to thoroughly believe what he is doing; his stupefied hippie is only one of his clever impersonations, funny too, but in a cheaper way, because Sellers is condescending to the character. As the flower girl a young ingenue, Leigh Taylor-Young, has the insipid, glassy-eyed prettiness that fits well enough with her part, but the film-makers are unaccountably billing her as a major discovery. I like some of the writing, which can be surprisingly sophisticated—as when a guru recites Tennyson's "Flower in a Crannied Wall" to a couple of disciples, and the awestruck girl coos, "Wow! Who wrote that? Ginsberg?" Hy Averback's direction is always several cuts below his material.—STEPHEN FARBER

The Odd Couple alone among Neil Simon's plays draws its laughs from a genuinely human comedy—two recently divorced men who set up house together only to find their relationship turning into a nightmarish travesty of their failed marriages. Fussy, compulsively clean Felix becomes "wife" to gruff, grubby Oscar, but the match proves to be disastrous. Simon shrewdly perceives the role-playing integral to all relationships, in marriage or outside of it, and the way in which any two people in close contact begin to seem intent on driving each other insane; like the very best comedies, *The Odd Couple* is only a breath away from tragedy. Not that *The Odd Couple is* one of the very best comedies—Simon cannot resist a good gag line even if it is totally out of the speaker's character, and he likes to throw in low comedy bits—for example, a scene with two dopey, giggly English girls—for the crowds in Boise. Still, there are many moments when *The Odd Couple* may strike you as a farce version of *Virginia Woolf,* especially if you recall the rumors that Albee's George and Martha were originally two men whose relationship was not so innocently homosexual. I have been speaking about *The Odd Couple* as a play; it has not really become a film, though it *is* now on celluloid. Like most inept photographings of hit plays, it has been "opened up"—not as clumsily as some—for a few irrelevant scenes on the streets, in a restaurant, at the local bowling alley. The problem is not that most of the film still takes place inside Oscar's apartment, but that the director, George Saks, simply does not know how to stage action for the camera. But the film is worth seeing for anyone who has not seen the play—for the winning performances of Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau, the ingenuity of the sets, and the flickerings of anguish just beneath the comic surface of the film.

—STEPHEN FARBER

In **Portrait of Jason,** a man talks to the camera for almost an hour and a half; yet the film is intensely

Americans in India. The acceptance of daily chores will be his path to God. In realistic as well as poetic terms, *The Householder* shows that the real wisdom of man, be he Indian or American, is to go back to the sources of life. An American friend of Kapoor tells him, when the latter reports that his wife has left him: "Detach yourself from the world; the Essence is the only problem." No, says James Ivory, life is the only true problem. And he proves it in his film.—CLAIRE CLOUZOT

I Love You, Alice B. Toklas. For her hashish fudge, of course, which, in the course of this wild comedy, blows the minds of an entire family of Los Angeles suburbanites. Peter Sellers plays the Jewish lawyer, wealthy, successful, not too dissatisfied with the ordinary 9-to-5 pressures, nagged by his domineering mama, his self-effacing papa, and his aging secretary-fiancée who has finally persuaded him to be married. The film sketches the tensions of Establishment living tersely and hilariously, and then introduces the fly in the erntment—Sellers's hippie brother from Venice. The brothers' first scenes together are excellent satire, because both characters seem equally insane. When the hippie attends the funeral of the family butcher in his Hopi Indian garb, the film even manages to sustain—though just barely—one of the most outrageous, most tasteless bits of slapstick in any recent film. But after that point, about a third of the way into the movie, it's all downhill. Sellers is enchanted by a flower girl, zonked by the Toklas brownies, and he drops out to groove and meditate. The jokes on hippies are flat, labored, thoroughly predictable. Perhaps hippies are not interesting enough to bear all of the burlesque they have inspired in the past year, or perhaps Hollywood is still too far from Haight-Ashbury to be able to come up with any but the broadcast cartoon figures. Much of the Jewish satire (with the exception of Jo van Fleet's pasteboard Yiddisha Mama) seems to grow from close observation and the experience of writers Larry Tucker and Paul Mazursky; it has a personal resonance uncommon in Hollywood comedy. The hippie satire, on the other hand, grows only from the observation of TV shows and other movies. Sellers's performance highlights the difference. His anxiety-racked lawyer is one of the finest things he has ever done—almost painfully accurate, and as funny as a great comic actor can be when he seems to thoroughly believe what he is doing; his stupefied hippie is only one of his clever impersonations, funny too, but in a cheaper way, because Sellers is condescending to the character. As the flower girl a young ingenue, Leigh Taylor-Young, has the insipid, glassy-eyed prettiness that fits well enough with her part, but the film-makers are unaccountably billing her as a major discovery. I like some of the writing, which can be surprisingly sophisticated—as when a guru recites Tennyson's "Flower in a Crannied Wall" to a couple of disciples, and the awestruck girl coos, "Wow! Who wrote that? Ginsberg?" Hy Averback's direction is always several cuts below his material.—STEPHEN FARBER

The Odd Couple alone among Neil Simon's plays draws its laughs from a genuinely human comedy—two recently divorced men who set up house together only to find their relationship turning into a nightmarish travesty of their failed marriages. Fussy, compulsively clean Felix becomes "wife" to gruff, grubby Oscar, but the match proves to be disastrous. Simon shrewdly perceives the role-playing integral to all relationships, in marriage or outside of it, and the way in which any two people in close contact begin to seem intent on driving each other insane; like the very best comedies, *The Odd Couple* is only a breath away from tragedy. Not that *The Odd Couple is* one of the very best comedies—Simon cannot resist a good gag line even if it is totally out of the speaker's character, and he likes to throw in low comedy bits—for example, a scene with two dopey, giggly English girls—for the crowds in Boise. Still, there are many moments when *The Odd Couple* may strike you as a farce version of *Virginia Woolf,* especially if you recall the rumors that Albee's George and Martha were originally two men whose relationship was not so innocently homosexual. I have been speaking about *The Odd Couple* as a play; it has not really become a film, though it *is* now on celluloid. Like most inept photographings of hit plays, it has been "opened up"—not as clumsily as some—for a few irrelevant scenes on the streets, in a restaurant, at the local bowling alley. The problem is not that most of the film still takes place inside Oscar's apartment, but that the director, George Saks, simply does not know how to stage action for the camera. But the film is worth seeing for anyone who has not seen the play—for the winning performances of Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau, the ingenuity of the sets, and the flickerings of anguish just beneath the comic surface of the film.

—STEPHEN FARBER

In **Portrait of Jason,** a man talks to the camera for almost an hour and a half; yet the film is intensely

Americans in India. The acceptance of daily chores will be his path to God. In realistic as well as poetic terms, *The Householder* shows that the real wisdom of man, be he Indian or American, is to go back to the sources of life. An American friend of Kapoor tells him, when the latter reports that his wife has left him: "Detach yourself from the world; the Essence is the only problem." No, says James Ivory, life is the only true problem. And he proves it in his film.—CLAIRE CLOUZOT

I Love You, Alice B. Toklas. For her hashish fudge, of course, which, in the course of this wild comedy, blows the minds of an entire family of Los Angeles suburbanites. Peter Sellers plays the Jewish lawyer, wealthy, successful, not too dissatisfied with the ordinary 9-to-5 pressures, nagged by his domineering mama, his self-effacing papa, and his aging secretary-fiancée who has finally persuaded him to be married. The film sketches the tensions of Establishment living tersely and hilariously, and then introduces the fly in the erntment—Sellers's hippie brother from Venice. The brothers' first scenes together are excellent satire, because both characters seem equally insane. When the hippie attends the funeral of the family butcher in his Hopi Indian garb, the film even manages to sustain—though just barely—one of the most outrageous, most tasteless bits of slapstick in any recent film. But after that point, about a third of the way into the movie, it's all downhill. Sellers is enchanted by a flower girl, zonked by the Toklas brownies, and he drops out to groove and meditate. The jokes on hippies are flat, labored, thoroughly predictable. Perhaps hippies are not interesting enough to bear all of the burlesque they have inspired in the past year, or perhaps Hollywood is still too far from Haight-Ashbury to be able to come up with any but the broadcast cartoon figures. Much of the Jewish satire (with the exception of Jo van Fleet's pasteboard Yiddisha Mama) seems to grow from close observation and the experience of writers Larry Tucker and Paul Mazursky; it has a personal resonance uncommon in Hollywood comedy. The hippie satire, on the other hand, grows only from the observation of TV shows and other movies. Sellers's performance highlights the difference. His anxiety-racked lawyer is one of the finest things he has ever done—almost painfully accurate, and as funny as a great comic actor can be when he seems to thoroughly believe what he is doing; his stupefied hippie is only one of his clever impersonations, funny too, but in a cheaper way, because Sellers is condescending to the character. As the flower girl a young ingenue, Leigh Taylor-Young, has the insipid, glassy-eyed prettiness that fits well enough with her part, but the film-makers are unaccountably billing her as a major discovery. I like some of the writing, which can be surprisingly sophisticated—as when a guru recites Tennyson's "Flower in a Crannied Wall" to a couple of disciples, and the awestruck girl coos, "Wow! Who wrote that? Ginsberg?" Hy Averback's direction is always several cuts below his material.—STEPHEN FARBER

The Odd Couple alone among Neil Simon's plays draws its laughs from a genuinely human comedy—two recently divorced men who set up house together only to find their relationship turning into a nightmarish travesty of their failed marriages. Fussy, compulsively clean Felix becomes "wife" to gruff, grubby Oscar, but the match proves to be disastrous. Simon shrewdly perceives the role-playing integral to all relationships, in marriage or outside of it, and the way in which any two people in close contact begin to seem intent on driving each other insane; like the very best comedies, *The Odd Couple* is only a breath away from tragedy. Not that *The Odd Couple is* one of the very best comedies—Simon cannot resist a good gag line even if it is totally out of the speaker's character, and he likes to throw in low comedy bits—for example, a scene with two dopey, giggly English girls—for the crowds in Boise. Still, there are many moments when *The Odd Couple* may strike you as a farce version of *Virginia Woolf,* especially if you recall the rumors that Albee's George and Martha were originally two men whose relationship was not so innocently homosexual. I have been speaking about *The Odd Couple* as a play; it has not really become a film, though it *is* now on celluloid. Like most inept photographings of hit plays, it has been "opened up"—not as clumsily as some—for a few irrelevant scenes on the streets, in a restaurant, at the local bowling alley. The problem is not that most of the film still takes place inside Oscar's apartment, but that the director, George Saks, simply does not know how to stage action for the camera. But the film is worth seeing for anyone who has not seen the play—for the winning performances of Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau, the ingenuity of the sets, and the flickerings of anguish just beneath the comic surface of the film.

—STEPHEN FARBER

In **Portrait of Jason,** a man talks to the camera for almost an hour and a half; yet the film is intensely

Americans in India. The acceptance of daily chores will be his path to God. In realistic as well as poetic terms, *The Householder* shows that the real wisdom of man, be he Indian or American, is to go back to the sources of life. An American friend of Kapoor tells him, when the latter reports that his wife has left him: "Detach yourself from the world; the Essence is the only problem." No, says James Ivory, life is the only true problem. And he proves it in his film.—CLAIRE CLOUZOT

I Love You, Alice B. Toklas. For her hashish fudge, of course, which, in the course of this wild comedy, blows the minds of an entire family of Los Angeles suburbanites. Peter Sellers plays the Jewish lawyer, wealthy, successful, not too dissatisfied with the ordinary 9-to-5 pressures, nagged by his domineering mama, his self-effacing papa, and his aging secretary-fiancée who has finally persuaded him to be married. The film sketches the tensions of Establishment living tersely and hilariously, and then introduces the fly in the erntment—Sellers's hippie brother from Venice. The brothers' first scenes together are excellent satire, because both characters seem equally insane. When the hippie attends the funeral of the family butcher in his Hopi Indian garb, the film even manages to sustain—though just barely—one of the most outrageous, most tasteless bits of slapstick in any recent film. But after that point, about a third of the way into the movie, it's all downhill. Sellers is enchanted by a flower girl, zonked by the Toklas brownies, and he drops out to groove and meditate. The jokes on hippies are flat, labored, thoroughly predictable. Perhaps hippies are not interesting enough to bear all of the burlesque they have inspired in the past year, or perhaps Hollywood is still too far from Haight-Ashbury to be able to come up with any but the broadcast cartoon figures. Much of the Jewish satire (with the exception of Jo van Fleet's pasteboard Yiddisha Mama) seems to grow from close observation and the experience of writers Larry Tucker and Paul Mazursky; it has a personal resonance uncommon in Hollywood comedy. The hippie satire, on the other hand, grows only from the observation of TV shows and other movies. Sellers's performance highlights the difference. His anxiety-racked lawyer is one of the finest things he has ever done—almost painfully accurate, and as funny as a great comic actor can be when he seems to thoroughly believe what he is doing; his stupefied hippie is only one of his clever impersonations, funny too, but in a cheaper way, because Sellers is condescending to the character. As the flower girl a young ingenue, Leigh Taylor-Young, has the insipid, glassy-eyed prettiness that fits well enough with her part, but the film-makers are unaccountably billing her as a major discovery. I like some of the writing, which can be surprisingly sophisticated—as when a guru recites Tennyson's "Flower in a Crannied Wall" to a couple of disciples, and the awestruck girl coos, "Wow! Who wrote that? Ginsberg?" Hy Averback's direction is always several cuts below his material.—STEPHEN FARBER

The Odd Couple alone among Neil Simon's plays draws its laughs from a genuinely human comedy—two recently divorced men who set up house together only to find their relationship turning into a nightmarish travesty of their failed marriages. Fussy, compulsively clean Felix becomes "wife" to gruff, grubby Oscar, but the match proves to be disastrous. Simon shrewdly perceives the role-playing integral to all relationships, in marriage or outside of it, and the way in which any two people in close contact begin to seem intent on driving each other insane; like the very best comedies, *The Odd Couple* is only a breath away from tragedy. Not that *The Odd Couple is* one of the very best comedies—Simon cannot resist a good gag line even if it is totally out of the speaker's character, and he likes to throw in low comedy bits—for example, a scene with two dopey, giggly English girls—for the crowds in Boise. Still, there are many moments when *The Odd Couple* may strike you as a farce version of *Virginia Woolf,* especially if you recall the rumors that Albee's George and Martha were originally two men whose relationship was not so innocently homosexual. I have been speaking about *The Odd Couple* as a play; it has not really become a film, though it *is* now on celluloid. Like most inept photographings of hit plays, it has been "opened up"—not as clumsily as some—for a few irrelevant scenes on the streets, in a restaurant, at the local bowling alley. The problem is not that most of the film still takes place inside Oscar's apartment, but that the director, George Saks, simply does not know how to stage action for the camera. But the film is worth seeing for anyone who has not seen the play—for the winning performances of Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau, the ingenuity of the sets, and the flickerings of anguish just beneath the comic surface of the film.

—STEPHEN FARBER

In **Portrait of Jason,** a man talks to the camera for almost an hour and a half; yet the film is intensely

PORTRAIT OF JASON

interesting. We hear some other voices besides his —an old friend named Carl, who berates him toward the end from offscreen, and a female voice (Shirley Clarke's) laconically directing the proceedings. The camera tracks Jason around from couch to chair, to hearth, from a fixed position; it zooms in and out on Jason's face; sometimes, when it goes out of focus, moments of soft, abstract image mask a hiatus in camera time (during which, we learn, the camera magazine was changed). Otherwise, it is almost as if we were looking at the Empire State Building with Andy Warhol: we are made to stare, in real camera time, at a real event. Its reality, however, soon proves questionable in every sense except the optical. For Jason is a performer; even his name is adopted. The first role he adopts is the genial, cynical black hustler, conning the white world; and we enjoy and admire the deftness and humor of his stories about a checkered past as houseboy, male prostitute, drifter. To a hip audience the opening is pure delight, for Jason engagingly puts down all the silliness of the common enemy, bourgeois white society. He would be the hit of any sophisticated party. There are, however, glimpses of other levels, when Jason stops smiling and sips a drink, looks for an instant at the camera without talking, or confesses (not for the first time) some ingratiating sin. As the evening wears on, such instants become more intriguing. We begin to watch for the revelation of "the real Jason," for the camera to show us the secret that lies behind his chronic, complex, ironic, and comically self-destructive role-playing. We wince at his reminiscences of his father, supposedly nicknamed "Tough," but we wonder at a certain saving affection there. We notice how he skirts the subject of his mother, though he is eager to put on a very bad imitation of Mae West. Toward the end, goaded by Carl, he becomes tearful, self-critical. Is this the real Jason? No, the film forces us to realize; we are no further beneath the surface than with the entertaining hipster of the opening. The role is the man. We now know, in a rough outline such as a psychiatrist might get from a good first session (Jason has had many), what Jason knows or will reveal about himself. We sense his residual endurance in the face of a desperate life, and we may suspect that only in film would his act really come across—though he yearns for a nightclub-comic career. This involuted film portrait, thus, may not be a film in the sense usually attached to the term, but it is certainly

an immensely curious psychological and social document. We find ourselves, with such novelties, still further from an answer to Bazin's question, What Is Cinema? *Jason* proves that cinema may be, among other things, compelling even if used as a simple recording device for a single person. The lens may be an explicit stand-in for the viewer; and Jason, or any of us, can speak to it and be dispassionately observed. The responses given by such a celluloid oracle may be shocking or inscrutable, like those of its ancient precursors; but men will consult it nonetheless.—E.C.

In the title role of **Rachel, Rachel,** Paul Newman's first movie as a director, he has cast his wife, Joanne Woodward. If there were nothing more to say about the film, it could at least occupy an odd class of its own, straddling movies directed by movie stars (Brando's *One-Eyed Jacks,* Laughton's *Night of the Hunter,* Olivier's Shakespeare) and movies made by men who like to direct their wives (Godard, Vadim, Fellini). But such freakshow categories are unnecessary, for *Rachel, Rachel* easily stands on its own as a delicately controlled work with a kind of narrative complexity and psychological richness lacking in most recent films. Rachel is a thirty-five-year-old schoolteacher in a small Canadian town. She lives with her hypochondriacal mother on the second floor of the funeral home owned by her father until his death fourteen years before. During the summer the film spans, she moves from the suspended animation of this prespinster state to a decision to leave town and take a job in Oregon. Despite the juxtaposition of the dead past and the present summer, *Rachel, Rachel* is no debased seasonal myth of the "take-off-your-glasses-my-dear-you're-beautiful" variety, nor is it a simple putdown of smalltown life. Joanne Woodward's strong and vital performance subtly projects the hesitancies and confusions in Rachel's inconclusive development. Newman's camera underlines Rachel's early self-absorption and her gradual emergence from the fantasies that have preoccupied her life. Unobstrusively, the camera picks out the world of cemeteries and death she has grown up in and suggests the possibilities of the life she is trying to find. The two catalysts of Rachel's change are Calla, a fellow schoolteacher who takes Rachel to a revivalist meeting, and Nick, an acquaintance from childhood who comes back from the city to visit his parents for a few weeks. Both are life forces of a sort, heavily tanned in contrast to Rachel's pasty grayness. Yet both also have a reality as characters that goes beyond their roles in Rachel's life. Estelle Parsons, fresh from the grasping whineyness of Blanche Barrow in *Bonnie and Clyde,* glides effortlessly into the comic zest of Calla. She conveys a tumultuous affection for Rachel, moving plausibly to a lesbian moment that is a welcome relief from the melancholic and self-conscious sensationalism of *The Fox.* James Olson as Nick similarly mingles the kind of freedom Rachel yearns for with an overlay of big-city cynicism. Newman's sensitivity to the detail of a smalltown milieu and to the nuances of acting that make a character believable enables the film to reflect the growth of its central character. There are a few false steps, but Newman uses some of the familiar devices of first-person films—slow-motion, blurred focus, voice-over—with great tact and effect. Perhaps the key word is "unobtrusive." Nothing is overemphasized or starkly symbolic. The play of images of life and death, the ambivalence of Rachel's final departure (the false pregnancy, taking her mother with her, the reflections of gravestones on her face as she looks out of the bus window), the happy farewell of Calla, all blend together for *Rachel, Rachel's* total effect; they are not symbols in themselves, but part of Rachel's personal mythology. The complex expression of character is the primary element in *Rachel, Rachel.* It is appropriate that the director is an actor.—LEO BRAUDY

Books

VIOLENCE AND THE MASS MEDIA

Edited by Otto N. Larsen. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968)

Never under-estimate the sheer stupidity of social scientists. It is possible for a whole pack of them to speculate on violence and the media, "touching only incidentally on . . . such factors as the breakdown of social institutions, or sexual frustration, or growing moral laxity, or economic deprivation, or population pressure." (Notice that not even in this list of what is *left out* do we find those great conditioners of urban brutal-

an immensely curious psychological and social document. We find ourselves, with such novelties, still further from an answer to Bazin's question, What Is Cinema? *Jason* proves that cinema may be, among other things, compelling even if used as a simple recording device for a single person. The lens may be an explicit stand-in for the viewer; and Jason, or any of us, can speak to it and be dispassionately observed. The responses given by such a celluloid oracle may be shocking or inscrutable, like those of its ancient precursors; but men will consult it nonetheless.—E.C.

In the title role of **Rachel, Rachel,** Paul Newman's first movie as a director, he has cast his wife, Joanne Woodward. If there were nothing more to say about the film, it could at least occupy an odd class of its own, straddling movies directed by movie stars (Brando's *One-Eyed Jacks,* Laughton's *Night of the Hunter,* Olivier's Shakespeare) and movies made by men who like to direct their wives (Godard, Vadim, Fellini). But such freakshow categories are unnecessary, for *Rachel, Rachel* easily stands on its own as a delicately controlled work with a kind of narrative complexity and psychological richness lacking in most recent films. Rachel is a thirty-five-year-old schoolteacher in a small Canadian town. She lives with her hypochondriacal mother on the second floor of the funeral home owned by her father until his death fourteen years before. During the summer the film spans, she moves from the suspended animation of this prespinster state to a decision to leave town and take a job in Oregon. Despite the juxtaposition of the dead past and the present summer, *Rachel, Rachel* is no debased seasonal myth of the "take-off-your-glasses-my-dear-you're-beautiful" variety, nor is it a simple putdown of smalltown life. Joanne Woodward's strong and vital performance subtly projects the hesitancies and confusions in Rachel's inconclusive development. Newman's camera underlines Rachel's early self-absorption and her gradual emergence from the fantasies that have preoccupied her life. Unobstrusively, the camera picks out the world of cemeteries and death she has grown up in and suggests the possibilities of the life she is trying to find. The two catalysts of Rachel's change are Calla, a fellow schoolteacher who takes Rachel to a revivalist meeting, and Nick, an acquaintance from childhood who comes back from the city to visit his parents for a few weeks. Both are life forces of a sort, heavily tanned in contrast to Rachel's pasty grayness. Yet both also have a reality as characters that goes beyond their roles in Rachel's life. Estelle Parsons, fresh from the grasping whineyness of Blanche Barrow in *Bonnie and Clyde,* glides effortlessly into the comic zest of Calla. She conveys a tumultuous affection for Rachel, moving plausibly to a lesbian moment that is a welcome relief from the melancholic and self-conscious sensationalism of *The Fox.* James Olson as Nick similarly mingles the kind of freedom Rachel yearns for with an overlay of big-city cynicism. Newman's sensitivity to the detail of a smalltown milieu and to the nuances of acting that make a character believable enables the film to reflect the growth of its central character. There are a few false steps, but Newman uses some of the familiar devices of first-person films—slow-motion, blurred focus, voice-over—with great tact and effect. Perhaps the key word is "unobtrusive." Nothing is overemphasized or starkly symbolic. The play of images of life and death, the ambivalence of Rachel's final departure (the false pregnancy, taking her mother with her, the reflections of gravestones on her face as she looks out of the bus window), the happy farewell of Calla, all blend together for *Rachel, Rachel's* total effect; they are not symbols in themselves, but part of Rachel's personal mythology. The complex expression of character is the primary element in *Rachel, Rachel.* It is appropriate that the director is an actor.—LEO BRAUDY

Books

VIOLENCE AND THE MASS MEDIA

Edited by Otto N. Larsen. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968)

Never under-estimate the sheer stupidity of social scientists. It is possible for a whole pack of them to speculate on violence and the media, "touching only incidentally on . . . such factors as the breakdown of social institutions, or sexual frustration, or growing moral laxity, or economic deprivation, or population pressure." (Notice that not even in this list of what is *left out* do we find those great conditioners of urban brutal-

an immensely curious psychological and social document. We find ourselves, with such novelties, still further from an answer to Bazin's question, What Is Cinema? *Jason* proves that cinema may be, among other things, compelling even if used as a simple recording device for a single person. The lens may be an explicit stand-in for the viewer; and Jason, or any of us, can speak to it and be dispassionately observed. The responses given by such a celluloid oracle may be shocking or inscrutable, like those of its ancient precursors; but men will consult it nonetheless.—E.C.

In the title role of **Rachel, Rachel,** Paul Newman's first movie as a director, he has cast his wife, Joanne Woodward. If there were nothing more to say about the film, it could at least occupy an odd class of its own, straddling movies directed by movie stars (Brando's *One-Eyed Jacks,* Laughton's *Night of the Hunter,* Olivier's Shakespeare) and movies made by men who like to direct their wives (Godard, Vadim, Fellini). But such freakshow categories are unnecessary, for *Rachel, Rachel* easily stands on its own as a delicately controlled work with a kind of narrative complexity and psychological richness lacking in most recent films. Rachel is a thirty-five-year-old schoolteacher in a small Canadian town. She lives with her hypochondriacal mother on the second floor of the funeral home owned by her father until his death fourteen years before. During the summer the film spans, she moves from the suspended animation of this prespinster state to a decision to leave town and take a job in Oregon. Despite the juxtaposition of the dead past and the present summer, *Rachel, Rachel* is no debased seasonal myth of the "take-off-your-glasses-my-dear-you're-beautiful" variety, nor is it a simple putdown of smalltown life. Joanne Woodward's strong and vital performance subtly projects the hesitancies and confusions in Rachel's inconclusive development. Newman's camera underlines Rachel's early self-absorption and her gradual emergence from the fantasies that have preoccupied her life. Unobstrusively, the camera picks out the world of cemeteries and death she has grown up in and suggests the possibilities of the life she is trying to find. The two catalysts of Rachel's change are Calla, a fellow schoolteacher who takes Rachel to a revivalist meeting, and Nick, an acquaintance from childhood who comes back from the city to visit his parents for a few weeks. Both are life forces of a sort, heavily tanned in contrast to Rachel's pasty grayness. Yet both also have a reality as characters that goes beyond their roles in Rachel's life. Estelle Parsons, fresh from the grasping whineyness of Blanche Barrow in *Bonnie and Clyde,* glides effortlessly into the comic zest of Calla. She conveys a tumultuous affection for Rachel, moving plausibly to a lesbian moment that is a welcome relief from the melancholic and self-conscious sensationalism of *The Fox.* James Olson as Nick similarly mingles the kind of freedom Rachel yearns for with an overlay of big-city cynicism. Newman's sensitivity to the detail of a smalltown milieu and to the nuances of acting that make a character believable enables the film to reflect the growth of its central character. There are a few false steps, but Newman uses some of the familiar devices of first-person films—slow-motion, blurred focus, voice-over—with great tact and effect. Perhaps the key word is "unobtrusive." Nothing is overemphasized or starkly symbolic. The play of images of life and death, the ambivalence of Rachel's final departure (the false pregnancy, taking her mother with her, the reflections of gravestones on her face as she looks out of the bus window), the happy farewell of Calla, all blend together for *Rachel, Rachel's* total effect; they are not symbols in themselves, but part of Rachel's personal mythology. The complex expression of character is the primary element in *Rachel, Rachel.* It is appropriate that the director is an actor.—LEO BRAUDY

Books

VIOLENCE AND THE MASS MEDIA

Edited by Otto N. Larsen. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968)

Never under-estimate the sheer stupidity of social scientists. It is possible for a whole pack of them to speculate on violence and the media, "touching only incidentally on . . . such factors as the breakdown of social institutions, or sexual frustration, or growing moral laxity, or economic deprivation, or population pressure." (Notice that not even in this list of what is *left out* do we find those great conditioners of urban brutal-

ity, the police and race conflict.) It is hard to find a suitably idiotic simile for such a procedure, but it is at least as bad as analyzing walking without remembering that people have legs. For violence is something people also learn in real life, and frequently it is something they need in order to survive—emotionally or culturally or simply physically. No ghetto kid can get along without becoming adept in physical violence, and white kids even in the suburbs are not exactly inborn pacifists; no middleclass kid destined for a business career is untrained in the subtler violence by which much money is made; no one who reaches the age of ten and can read (or simply listen) can escape our incessant national concern with war, armaments, guns; most subtle but perhaps most important, no American child escapes the widespread connection between sexual malaise and violence. It is unnecessary to be exposed to TV or comic books or movies in order to grow up in all these respects as a typical American. But the media are a convenient scapegoat; like our education and commercial pornography, they operate mostly at a mediocre level of imagination and execution, but even so, they focus many troublesome concerns. For people (and social scientists) who are conscious that we are in trouble but who are unwilling to consider basic issues or look at really grubby material, such as the operations of the police or courts, the media are a perfect subject. Everybody knows enough about them to have a couple of gruesome examples at hand, and they have the appeal of potential negative controllability: we may have no chance of eliminating street assaults except by reforming our society from the bottom up, but we can easily prohibit multiple stabbings on TV. To the American mind, indeed, such a step improves the image and thus constitutes Progress; it is how we conduct wars, soap campaigns, and welfare agencies.

It does not take an exquisite review of the literature to determine that no hard scientific knowledge exists on the effects of portrayed violence upon children (or adults). I tend to believe that we would be ahead, in psychology and sociology, if we worried more about soft knowledge and less about hard; for in these fields the one certain empirical generalization is that there is an inverse ratio between "hardness" and significance. But in this volume we don't even have any respectable soft knowledge. There is much description of violent scenes, as if violence in itself was interesting; and there is vague discussion of social effects. The passionate claims of Dr. Frederic Wertham are included, and they are based, he claims, on concrete evidence in individual cases; if violence in the media has bad effects, that is where we must study them. But we have no way of judging Wertham's sensitivity as an observer except by carefully reading his prose; and the amount of subtlety in human relationships which it conveys is modest indeed.

The writers in this volume worry about violence as if it were separable from other components of the media, which is ludicrous; it's like saying the thing wrong with rotten meat is the maggots. The portrayal of violence in the American media is not one whit more depraved or damaging, I submit, than their portrayal of love, or relations between persons generally. Indeed the treatment of violence may be less ominous; for children are not dopes, they know that violence is easy and fun to stage, and they adapt quickly to its absurd conventions. If anything is to be banned from TV, maybe it should be the portrayal of "affection."

The present volume, a reader aimed at college students, is characteristic of such books in sharing the middleclass blandness of current American social science. Thus it is perhaps inevitable that it ignores all important questions about the media—not only those middle-level factors listed at the outset, but also larger questions about the nature of the society (and why it needs the media it gets) and smaller questions about how the American media are owned and controlled, and for what purposes. One contributor, for instance, can discuss the control of media "as social systems" without mentioning who owns them, what else they own, and what criteria are basic to their management. There is nowhere (in this essay or in the volume) a hint that all countries do not manage their media as we do, and

that perhaps in certain respects others have solved problems that greatly vex us. Is this just academic imcompetence, or is it positive malfeasance? It would be shocking to a working newspaperman (whose paper is probably owned by a firm that also owns a local television station), and it is pitiful to anyone concerned with the long-range and very grave problems of democratic control and use of the media.

But that writer is not much further from reality than most of his colleagues, who are so hung up on media content that they forget the people watching have real lives, in which media violence is only a part, and an easily exaggerated part. The person who has just been clubbed by police during a demonstration against the war may find this experience considerably more important than any number of western shootouts on his TV. The slum kids familiar with knife-fights may not attach as much importance to comic-book mayhem as we suppose. The citizen who is conscious that his tax dollars finance the slaughter of Vietnamese, the maintenance of an occupying army in the ghettoes, and the mindless "renewal" of our cities for the convenience of cars, knows that Americans face and use violence in many forms in order to survive. Often they enjoy it. Without being particularly psychoanalytic, it is a measure of the unreality of this book's approach that Franju's slaughterhouse film, *The Blood of the Beasts,* would in its terms be "violent," while buying a pound of hamburger would be normal civilized action which raises no issues. It is such hypocrisy, of course, which Franju's film is about, and other artists engage in similar acts of purification.

As H. Rap Brown observed, America is a place where violence is not some kind of deviation or anomaly. The country was born in violent revolution against Britain; it was built by violence against the Indians in its frontier phase, held together by violence in the Civil War, developed by violence under slavery and in the industrial revolution; and it is maintained by violence now in its attempts to control the ghettoes and thwart the movement of countries like Cuba or Vietnam out of American economic and political domination. Contemporary American urban society, like its frontier forerunner, is a delicately balanced tissue of incipient and actual violence. Who knows, maybe the media *do* aid and abet this. The mystery would be if they didn't.

But what fun to blame it all on the TV, or movies! And above all, how comforting—as if nothing else was wrong.

—ERNEST CALLENBACH

THE GREAT FILMS
Fifty Golden Years of Motion Pictures

By Bosley Crowther. (New York: Putnam, 1967. $10.00)

During his long tenure as film critic of the *New York Times,* Crowther earned a wide reputation for obtuseness, which was compounded by the unhappy fact that the *Times* had (and to some extent still has) a power of life or death over imported films and independent American films. Crowther's blindness to innovating currents in contemporary film-making is suitably monumentalized in this book—both through outrageous inclusions *(Best Years of Our Lives, Shane, Tom Jones)* and through withering exclusions (neither *Jules and Jim* nor *8½* appear, though both *La Strada* and *La Dolce Vita* are included; no Godard, no Resnais; *The Silence* is omitted in favor of *The Seventh Seal,* etc.). But Crowther has *seen* them, seen them all. You can tell where he stands, take it or leave it: he was a man of sentimental, middleclass opinions who did not like artists to shock or experiment with new stylistic conventions, or indulge in complex ironies. But it has become clear since his departure that he possessed unnoticed compensating virtues. He had a basic regard for movies, and a decent historical grounding in the art; and as Jonas Mekas once pointed out, he attended underground showings more faithfully than any other New York critic. He had read far more widely and curiously about films than any other major-newspaper critic. And as this and his other books show, he *knew* something, whether one disputed his opinions or not. On balance, the net effect of the *Times* reviews is bound to be

that perhaps in certain respects others have solved problems that greatly vex us. Is this just academic imcompetence, or is it positive malfeasance? It would be shocking to a working newspaperman (whose paper is probably owned by a firm that also owns a local television station), and it is pitiful to anyone concerned with the long-range and very grave problems of democratic control and use of the media.

But that writer is not much further from reality than most of his colleagues, who are so hung up on media content that they forget the people watching have real lives, in which media violence is only a part, and an easily exaggerated part. The person who has just been clubbed by police during a demonstration against the war may find this experience considerably more important than any number of western shootouts on his TV. The slum kids familiar with knife-fights may not attach as much importance to comic-book mayhem as we suppose. The citizen who is conscious that his tax dollars finance the slaughter of Vietnamese, the maintenance of an occupying army in the ghettoes, and the mindless "renewal" of our cities for the convenience of cars, knows that Americans face and use violence in many forms in order to survive. Often they enjoy it. Without being particularly psychoanalytic, it is a measure of the unreality of this book's approach that Franju's slaughterhouse film, *The Blood of the Beasts,* would in its terms be "violent," while buying a pound of hamburger would be normal civilized action which raises no issues. It is such hypocrisy, of course, which Franju's film is about, and other artists engage in similar acts of purification.

As H. Rap Brown observed, America is a place where violence is not some kind of deviation or anomaly. The country was born in violent revolution against Britain; it was built by violence against the Indians in its frontier phase, held together by violence in the Civil War, developed by violence under slavery and in the industrial revolution; and it is maintained by violence now in its attempts to control the ghettoes and thwart the movement of countries like Cuba or Vietnam out of American economic and political domination. Contemporary American urban society, like its frontier forerunner, is a delicately balanced tissue of incipient and actual violence. Who knows, maybe the media *do* aid and abet this. The mystery would be if they didn't.

But what fun to blame it all on the TV, or movies! And above all, how comforting—as if nothing else was wrong.

—ERNEST CALLENBACH

THE GREAT FILMS
Fifty Golden Years of Motion Pictures

By Bosley Crowther. (New York: Putnam, 1967. $10.00)

During his long tenure as film critic of the *New York Times,* Crowther earned a wide reputation for obtuseness, which was compounded by the unhappy fact that the *Times* had (and to some extent still has) a power of life or death over imported films and independent American films. Crowther's blindness to innovating currents in contemporary film-making is suitably monumentalized in this book—both through outrageous inclusions *(Best Years of Our Lives, Shane, Tom Jones)* and through withering exclusions (neither *Jules and Jim* nor *8½* appear, though both *La Strada* and *La Dolce Vita* are included; no Godard, no Resnais; *The Silence* is omitted in favor of *The Seventh Seal,* etc.). But Crowther has *seen* them, seen them all. You can tell where he stands, take it or leave it: he was a man of sentimental, middleclass opinions who did not like artists to shock or experiment with new stylistic conventions, or indulge in complex ironies. But it has become clear since his departure that he possessed unnoticed compensating virtues. He had a basic regard for movies, and a decent historical grounding in the art; and as Jonas Mekas once pointed out, he attended underground showings more faithfully than any other New York critic. He had read far more widely and curiously about films than any other major-newspaper critic. And as this and his other books show, he *knew* something, whether one disputed his opinions or not. On balance, the net effect of the *Times* reviews is bound to be

negative, no matter who writes them. (It would be healthier for films if the *Times* just forgot about them for a year or two, and let things take their natural course.) But in retrospect we may begin rather to appreciate Crowther's even-tempered philistinism; as it has turned out, that's not necessarily the worst quality in a *Times* critic.—E.C.

PARE LORENTZ AND THE DOCUMENTARY FILM

By Robert L. Snyder. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968. $6.95)

This is a rather solemn liberal account of how Lorentz managed to pull together enough funds from various New Deal relief agencies to produce what were probably the only films of lasting consequence ever made by the American government. Like many films made in Hollywood, *The Plow That Broke the Plains, The River,* and the others owe their existence to the inadvertence of men of power, which gave to a devoted, talented man the chance to do something personal and useful. Once Lorentz's Film Service had to appeal to Congress for explicit appropriations, it was immediately killed—a touching testimony to the supposed propagandistic power of the medium, and perhaps a testimony to the lobbying power of the Hollywood industry. Lorentz himself predicted to a Senate subcommittee, "If we disappear from the government, it will return to the lackadaisical method of film-making that existed when we started in 1935." He was right.

Should anyone shed tears, at this point, over the story Snyder carefully documents? Everything considered, the Lorentz documentaries were, like their British contemporaries, expressions of middleclass hopefulness: poetic pleas that capitalist ravages of land and resources could somehow be controlled. In codas that now seem tacked on and halfhearted, they suggested that New Deal programs could solve these great problems of dislocation, waste, and disaster. They are probably the utmost in sophistication, both filmic and political, that we could expect from any American governmental films. The lesson, then, if any, is probably this: even if the government *were* implementing policies that made humane sense, it probably could not persuade Congress to institute a film service to publicize them. And considering the actual reality of present major policies, foreign or domestic, this is just as well for the souls of film-makers, and for the public. The real action is elsewhere, among films being made by *cinéma-vérité* and other film-makers who are filming what is really going on, according to the evidence they personally gather. Even Lorentz's "films of merit" would hardly help us now.—E.C.

CONTRIBUTORS

DAN BATES is a Texas newspaperman. GREGG BARRIOS, editor of the magazine *Harbinger,* also lives in Texas. LEO BRAUDY teaches at Columbia University. DAN BURNS is a student film-maker at the University of Iowa, in Iowa City. CLAIRE CLOUZOT also writes for *Sight & Sound* and *Cinéma '68,* and broadcasts over KPFA. RICHARD CORLISS formerly worked for Brandon Films, and is now on the staff of the Museum of Modern Art Film Department. DENNIS HUNT is a graduate student at Berkeley. DAVID MADDEN is a writer-in-residence at Louisiana State University, and has written a play based on commedia dell'arte scenarios. When he was attending a Toto comedy in Milan recently, he noticed that basreliefs on the theater walls juxtaposed Harlequin with Charlie. ELODIE OSBORN runs an active film society in Salisbury, Connecticut; she is the wife of cartoonist Robert Osborn. DAVID PALETZ, who earlier interviewed a sample of exhibitors for *FQ,* now teaches political science at Duke. GRAHAM PETRIE, who has written previously in this journal, teaches English at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

CLASSIFIED

negative, no matter who writes them. (It would be healthier for films if the *Times* just forgot about them for a year or two, and let things take their natural course.) But in retrospect we may begin rather to appreciate Crowther's even-tempered philistinism; as it has turned out, that's not necessarily the worst quality in a *Times* critic.—E.C.

PARE LORENTZ AND THE DOCUMENTARY FILM

By Robert L. Snyder. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968. $6.95)

This is a rather solemn liberal account of how Lorentz managed to pull together enough funds from various New Deal relief agencies to produce what were probably the only films of lasting consequence ever made by the American government. Like many films made in Hollywood, *The Plow That Broke the Plains, The River,* and the others owe their existence to the inadvertence of men of power, which gave to a devoted, talented man the chance to do something personal and useful. Once Lorentz's Film Service had to appeal to Congress for explicit appropriations, it was immediately killed—a touching testimony to the supposed propagandistic power of the medium, and perhaps a testimony to the lobbying power of the Hollywood industry. Lorentz himself predicted to a Senate subcommittee, "If we disappear from the government, it will return to the lackadaisical method of film-making that existed when we started in 1935." He was right.

Should anyone shed tears, at this point, over the story Snyder carefully documents? Everything considered, the Lorentz documentaries were, like their British contemporaries, expressions of middleclass hopefulness: poetic pleas that capitalist ravages of land and resources could somehow be controlled. In codas that now seem tacked on and halfhearted, they suggested that New Deal programs could solve these great problems of dislocation, waste, and disaster. They are probably the utmost in sophistication, both filmic and political, that we could expect from any American governmental films. The lesson, then, if any, is probably this: even if the government *were* implementing policies that made humane sense, it probably could not persuade Congress to institute a film service to publicize them. And considering the actual reality of present major policies, foreign or domestic, this is just as well for the souls of film-makers, and for the public. The real action is elsewhere, among films being made by *cinéma-vérité* and other film-makers who are filming what is really going on, according to the evidence they personally gather. Even Lorentz's "films of merit" would hardly help us now.—E.C.

CONTRIBUTORS

DAN BATES is a Texas newspaperman. GREGG BARRIOS, editor of the magazine *Harbinger,* also lives in Texas. LEO BRAUDY teaches at Columbia University. DAN BURNS is a student film-maker at the University of Iowa, in Iowa City. CLAIRE CLOUZOT also writes for *Sight & Sound* and *Cinéma '68,* and broadcasts over KPFA. RICHARD CORLISS formerly worked for Brandon Films, and is now on the staff of the Museum of Modern Art Film Department. DENNIS HUNT is a graduate student at Berkeley. DAVID MADDEN is a writer-in-residence at Louisiana State University, and has written a play based on commedia dell'arte scenarios. When he was attending a Toto comedy in Milan recently, he noticed that basreliefs on the theater walls juxtaposed Harlequin with Charlie. ELODIE OSBORN runs an active film society in Salisbury, Connecticut; she is the wife of cartoonist Robert Osborn. DAVID PALETZ, who earlier interviewed a sample of exhibitors for *FQ,* now teaches political science at Duke. GRAHAM PETRIE, who has written previously in this journal, teaches English at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

CLASSIFIED

New York Review Presentations

announces for immediate booking: 1968/69 Season

The New Yorker Theatre Film Series: (16mm & 35mm)

FAR FROM VIETNAM	Resnais, Klein, Ivens, Varda, Lelouch, Godard, edited by Marker	
BEFORE THE REVOLUTION	Bertolucci	35mm only
LES CARABINIERS LE PETIT SOLDAT	Godard	
THE KOUMIKO MYSTERY	Marker	35mm only
WALKOVER IDENTIFICATION MARKS: NONE	Skolimowski	
LES CREATURES	Varda	
SIX IN PARIS	Rohmer, Godard, Douchet, Chabrol, Pollet, Rouch	

Films available for single and group bookings

The Film-Maker Series:

in person

SHIRLEY CLARKE

with PORTRAIT OF JASON, or THE CONNECTION, or THE THE COOL WORLD

WILLARD VAN DYKE

with THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE: STUDENT FILMS, or THE AMERICAN UNDER-GROUND FILM

LIONEL ROGOSIN

with ON THE BOWERY, or COME BACK AFRICA, or GOOD TIMES, WONDERFUL TIMES

ROBERT DOWNEY

with BABO 73, or CHAFED ELBOWS, or NO MORE EXCUSES

ROBERT HUGHES

with ROBERT FROST: A LOVER'S QUARREL WITH THE WORLD, or VLADIMIR NABOKOV

Film-makers available also for Seminars and film department planning...

write or call:
New York Review Presentations
250 West 57th Street
New York, N.Y. 10019 (212) CO 5-1690