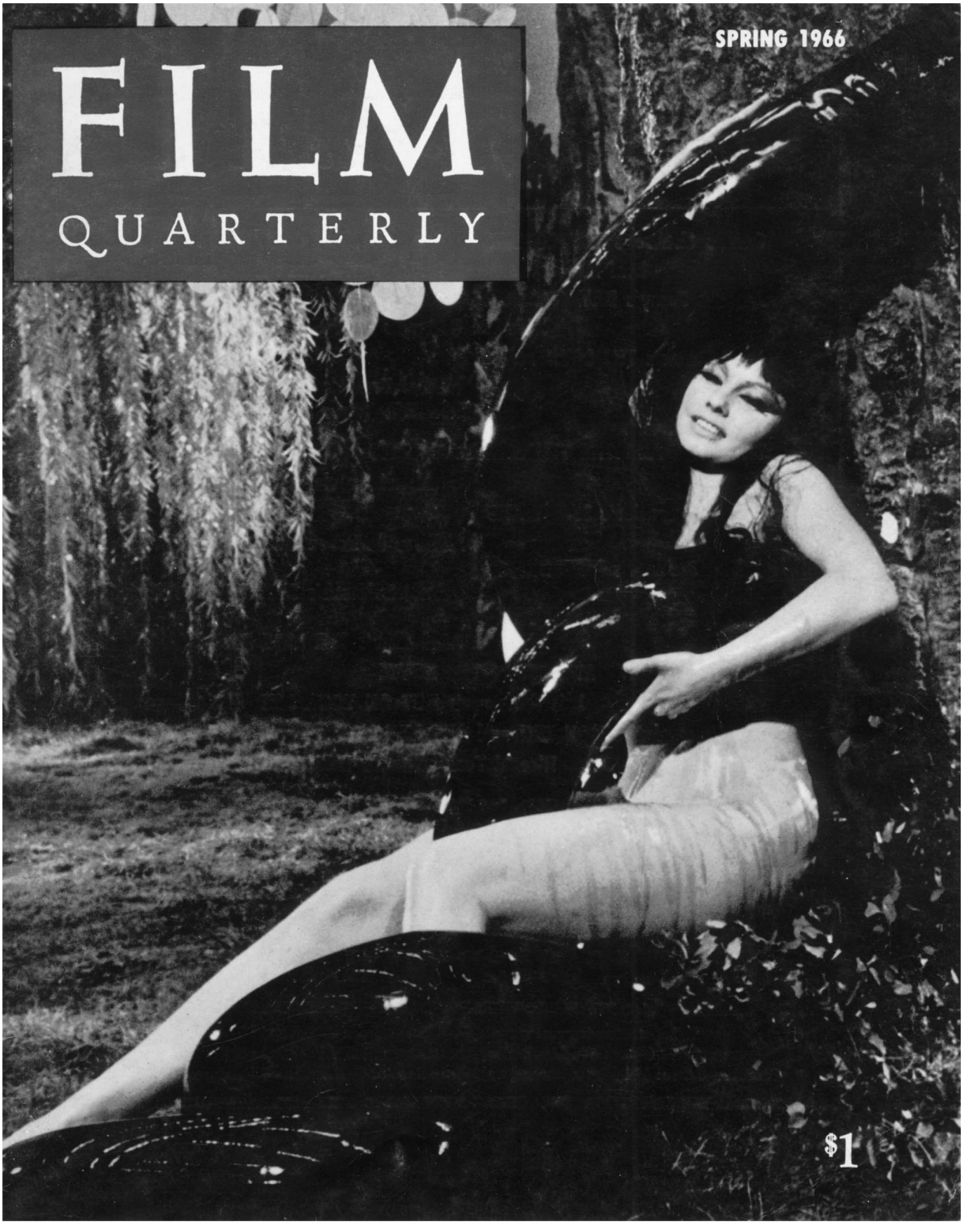
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VOL. XIX, NO. 3 SPRING, 1966

COVER: Fellini's *Giulietta degli Spiriti*

Editor's Notebook

AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE

A plan for an American Film Institute was first broached in this magazine [Summer, 1961] by Colin Young. The scheme, which at the time seemed wholesomely visionary in what it proposed to accomplish, and yet not impractical on the side of implementation, was suggested by the successes of the British Film Institute and the Cinémathèque Francaise—two institutions which, though in very different ways, have contributed largely to film education, film preservation, film exhibition, film journalism, and film-making. Since 1961, important film institutes have sprung up in other countries, most notably in Sweden.

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machinery also deserves a high priority of attenton; even with the best will in the world on the part of the trade, many worthwhile films both foreign and domestic (and, most of all, short films) have a lamentably restricted distribution in this country. Yet a substantial new audience has grown up, notably in our educational institutions throughout the country, which is hungry to see more of the new and unusual films being made. (Experiments in theatrical booking patterns are also a drastic need—but one which no individual firm in the industry can reasonably undertake alone, though the guidance of a disinterested institute would make it feasible.) There are many schemes afoot for film education on every level; for publication of books, monographs, and journals; for some system of revolving aid to independent small producers, especially of the short films on which new directors should get their training. These, at the minimum, are proper major concerns for an American Film Institute.

Because of the geographical extent of this nation, and the historical peculiarities which have led its film industry to center at a point 3,000 miles from its main centers of population and power, an American Film Institute faces difficult problems of scope. (Though even the British Film Institute, in the past year, has been working to counteract an excessive centralization in London, and is presently developing a system of regional centers.) An Institute located in Hollywood must be protected, as the Hollywood Museum was not, from local commercial pressures and conflicts, otherwise it might spend its energy fighting for the ability to fulfill educational and research objectives which the industry tends to find superfluous. An Institute in Washington would be distant from active film-making, and might be prone to the ossification of government bureaus. An Institute in New York alone would contribute to a further concentration of power in a city which has already shown that it might not know how to use it—the critics have made it impossible for some excellent films to survive, the exhibitors have made it impossible for many films to open, and Big Culture in all the arts contributes to an artistic faddism too easily manipulated in the interests of narrow tastes. A New York Institute, too, would preserve the existing unhealthy polarization of east and west coasts: both on the level of power (with the work in California and the money in New York) and on the level of regional feuds (New York "aestheticism" *vs.* west coast "commercialism").

What is needed is a film institute that can be *national*: that can meet the needs of east and west coasts, but also of the hinterland; that can look toward the time when film-making is as thoroughly spread over the country as printing now is, and when film activities have proliferated into our smaller cities everywhere. To guarantee that such a national pattern can develop, it seems imperative at this point that the Institute not be centered in any single spot; a firm tradition must be established that it has at the least an office on each coast—presumably, to start, in New York and Los Angeles.

It is to be hoped that ways will be found of integrating the Institute with the ferment of film activities that have grown up in the country since the war, particularly around the universities. Our universities train film-makers; they provide research facilities; they often provide, through student film societies or the university itself, for showings of films that are far more current, catholic in taste, and lively than those mounted by the trade. And since our universities are now heavily involved in the other arts, on both the scholarly and practicing sides, it would make sense to use them in strengthening the Film Institute; their facilities and their cultural importance would help ensure the Institute's necessary independence.

A major hazard for any film institute is that it might be brought under the sway of the film industry. But, of course, film institutes are necessary precisely to accomplish things the industry cannot or will not do. While strong and representative industry participation on the governing board is essential, it is equally essential that industry figures, and business allies who might be chosen as "public members" in the all too common pattern for such bodies, should not be a majority on the board. The board must be

knowledgeable and imaginative about the wide variety of functions the Institute is needed for. To that end it should include, among others, an active film director, an archivist, an artist from another medium (a novelist or painter, for instance), and a teacher of film. A board dominated by industrial figures will find it impossible to generate genuinely worthwhile projects and to gain the support and cooperation of those who think of film as an art. The Film Institute is to come into existence as part of a national program to foster the arts. It must not become a trade association or a "service organization" to the industry.

TV FILM MUTILATION SUITS

Is the film you see on television, shortened by perhaps a third and hacked up to insert a dozen or so commercials, the film its director made? George Stevens, a director who is relatively unique in Hollywood in having had full contractual control on *A Place in the Sun,* has brought the issue into a practical focus by suing Paramount and NBC for $2,000,000 if they cut the film or insert plugs. (Otto Preminger has a related but probably weaker case pending.) Stevens said, at the time of filing this suit, that "A motion picture should be respected as being more than a tool for selling soap, toothpaste, deodorant, used cars, beer, and the whole gamut of products advertised on television." Most of us share Stevens' distaste for the nightly fate of worthwhile movies, and will applaud his effort to save his own film, and perhaps some others. What is important to realize about the situation, however, is that films *are,* when broadcast by commercial television, precisely tools for selling soap. Otherwise, reasons the industry, why put them on? It is highly unlikely that the court, which must in effect weigh the relative damages to Stevens and to the television industry, is going to come down on the side of art—even art as widely acclaimed as *A Place in the Sun.* Curing commercial TV's treatment of films will require far more stringent remedies than a personal damage suit, and there is no use in evading the issue. Commercial television is part of the advertising industry; its overriding purpose is to sell soap, and despite occasional spectacular gestures it cannot reasonably be expected to do much of anything that won't obviously fulfill this function. If you want television that does something else, you must set up a noncommercial system like those common abroad. The Stevens court case is a brave tilt at a particularly nasty windmill, but the breeze isn't going to smell any sweeter whether he wins or loses.

CORRECTION

Robert Nelson, maker of *Oh Dem Watermelons* [reviewed in our last issue as *Watermelon*] writes that there was never a written scenario for the film, and that he was responsible for much of the invention. The film, though it was often shown in the context of the Mime Troupe's "Minstrel Show," was designed from the beginning as an independent work too. Nelson also contests our reviewer's report (which was secondhand since he saw the film only in a live-sound performance) that the sound track on the solo version is "rough." Nelson reports that some viewers in fact, have singled out the soundtrack—written and recorded by Steve Reich—for praise.

PERIODICALS

Cahiers du Cinéma in English, long-heralded, has published a first "Special Flashback Issue" edited by Andrew Sarris, containing outstanding items from the magazine's past: Bazin, Godard, Truffaut, Leenhardt, Astruc, Ophuls. Subscriptions to the monthly version, which will begin "very shortly," are $9.50 per year; 635 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10022.

Film Heritage in its first issue contains a defense of *The Condemned of Altona,* essays on Griffith and Alcoriza (Buñuel's frequent scriptwriter), a report on new developments at the UCLA film school, an interview with John Schlesinger, and a review of *I Lost It at the Movies.* 60¢ per copy; $2.00 per year ($2.50 foreign) from Box 42, University of Dayton, Ohio 45409—though the magazine is not officially affiliated to the University.

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PETER HARCOURT

The Secret Life of Federico Fellini

. . . as far as my personal feelings are concerned, the film I'm fondest of is LA STRADA.[1]

. . . I believe in prayers and miracles.[2]

There is a sequence in *La Strada* that is crucial for our understanding of the films of Federico Fellini. It begins with a wedding celebration taking place in the open air. To one side of a long banquet table, really quite unnoticed by the wedding party, Zampano and Gelsomina are performing one of their tatty numbers, a kind of raggle-taggle conga. Zampano is seated and is playing the drum, his huge form made awkward by the crumpled position necessary for him to hold the drum between his knees, while Gelsomina is performing her stiff little dance. Bowler hat on her head and clown's make-up on her face, she hops about in time to the music, thrusting her arms forward on every fourth beat. All about them both is the litter that is always associated with any festivity in Fellini; and although she is ignored by the wedding party, scarcely noticed by the adult world, while Gelsomina dances, a number of children in the background dance in unison with her. They respond in sympathy to what she is doing and imitate her movements. One of the guests offers Gelsomina some wine which, after a hurried sip, she passes on to Zampano. Then the lady-of-the-house calls them to come and eat, and the sad little performance ends. On her way to the house, however, Gelsomina is led away by the children who have been so attentive to her dancing. There is apparently something that they want her to see.

She is led up a narrow flight of stairs by the side of the house and along a network of corridors where she almost loses her way. At one moment we see a little boy dressed in a black cloak gliding along. We've never seen him before in this film and we'll never see him again; but the magical fascination of his sudden appearance holds us for that moment and gives us the sense of something festive about to take place as well as perhaps of something that we can't quite understand. Who is this boy? What is he doing here? What is going on?

Gelsomina is then led into a large dark room, all the windows shuttered to keep out the sun, at the end of which crouches Osvaldo, a little boy in a big bed. There are two small mobiles suspended above him, little universes that rotate before his eyes. Indeed, his eyes stare out of his misshaped head, for he is apparently some kind of spastic, in the film regarded as a little idiot boy. The children ask Gelsomina to try and make him laugh, but her imitative bird flutterings only strike more terror into the boy's already terrified eyes. Finally, in a moment impossible to describe without limiting its implications, she draws close to him—he staring in confused terror at her, her own eyes opening wide to receive the full impact of this stare. Then abruptly, she and all the children are chased out of the room by a nun.

What is the meaning of this moment in *La Strada*? What is it that she receives from those wild staring eyes? Is it that in this misformed child she recognizes some affinity with her own gentle strangeness? *Un po strana*, as her mother described her at the beginning of the film. Or is it that she senses in this blank unmovable face something beyond the powers of her simple goodness to affect in any way? And is it, then, a feeling of real terror that communicates itself to her, the result of a sudden recognition that at the end of long corridors hidden away in some sunless room there might lurk something terrible, something beyond our understanding, something deeply buried away and kept from conscious sight, but something terrifyingly real

nevertheless?[3] In the film, it is a moment of great power as Fellini creates it for us; and like the tatty party and the fleeting appearance of the bright-faced little boy, it is a moment that can remind us of similar moments in other films by Fellini. Yet it is essentially dumb. It defies confident interpretation. Just as the idiot boy's eyes do not fully give up their meaning to the inquisitive Gelsomina, so the scene holds back its full significance from us. It is a moment where something deep and irrational passes between these two people; and if we are temperamentally attuned to Fellini's particular universe sufficiently to receive it, then something equally deep and irrational passes through to us.

But the sequence continues. We cut to the kitchen where Zampano and the woman are stuffing themselves with food and talking about marriage. She is explaining how her first husband had been as big as he is and that no one subsequently has had any use for his clothes. Gelsomina appears and tries to tell Zampano about the sick boy she has seen; but she fails to communicate anything to him and is left alone with her meal and with the gradual realization of what is going on as Zampano and the woman go upstairs together, to see about those clothes.

Then a fade onto a typical Fellini post-festivity scene. The light of day has almost totally disappeared, making the foreground dark while the sky is still luminous beyond. Rags of streamers are hanging down from the house and posts nearby, and a single tree is isolated in mid-frame as one remaining couple carry on dancing to the sound of a lonely accordion player. Suddenly we notice a light-bulb dangling in the upper righthand corner of the frame, appearing comically out of place and apparently without function. But as we draw back a bit, we see that Gelsomina is in fact contemplating this scene from a barn window and the light-bulb begins to make a little more sense.

Zampano is trying on his new clothes, absurdly self-involved in his new-found pin-striped elegance. Meanwhile, Gelsomina begins to hum her little tune and relates how she had first heard it one day in the rain while standing by an open window. She wonders what it is called and asks Zampano if he will teach her to play it on the trumpet. But as he continues to ignore her, she gets angry with him and stomps about the barn, finally falling down a hole where she decides to spend the night.

A cock crows as we dissolve into morning. Gelsomina is determined to take her stand. She is going to leave Zampano and return home, not because she doesn't like the work but because she requires some human recognition. *Io me ne vado*, she keeps screaming to an unresponsive Zampano and later to the stillness of the morning; but then, after changing back into the togs she wore originally, taking care to return all of Zampano's property, she sets out on her way, waving in spite of herself at whomever she sees in a field nearby. There is no real sense of where she is going, simply the desire to get away.

After a bit (another dissolve), she sits down by the roadside, apparently in gloom. Then she notices a lady-bug or some such small creature and cannot help but become fascinated by it. She places it on her finger and blows it away. And immediately, without preparation, without a hint of plausibility in any social or psychological terms,[4] a characteristic Fellini miracle occurs. Her sense of wonder is renewed. The impulse to live again surges up inside of her as does her determination to continue her lonely journey in life. A little circus band of three musicians appears in the middle of a field, walking along by the side of the road; and in her turnabout way, she dances after them into town. Once in town she will come across another procession—a religious celebration—and, also in the rain as when she first heard her little tune, she will encounter Il Matto—the Fool—wearing an angel's wings and balancing precariously in the sky. Throughout the rest of the film, we will be aware of a strange affinity between Il Matto and Gelsomina, the stripes on his tights matching the stripes on her jersey as he also shares with her her little tune which he plays on a tiny violin.

There are more Zampanos in the world than bicycle thieves, and the story of a man who dis-

covers his neighbour is just as important as the story of a strike.[5]

I believe that everyone has to find truth by himself. . . . That is . . . the reason why my pictures never end. They never have a simple solution. I think it is immoral (in the true sense of the word) to tell a story that has a conclusion. Because you cut out the audience the moment you present a solution on the screen. Because there are no "solutions" in their lives. I think it is more moral—and more important—to show, let's say, the story of one man. Then every one, with his own sensibility and on the basis of his own inner development, can try to find his own solution.[6]

In essence, the whole of Fellini can be found in this sequence from *La Strada.* His thematic center is here. To begin with, reinforced by the title itself, there is the sense of life as a journey, as a constant tearing away from things known and a plunging into the unfamiliar. Unlike Bergman, however, whose allegoric wanderings are generally from place to place—in *Wild Strawberries,* the journey from Stockholm to Lund parallelling old Borg's journey along the path of increased self-knowledge—in Fellini, there is seldom any sense of direction or eventual goal. The form of his films tends to be circular, the characters usually ending where they began.

This restlessness of movement can work in different ways. Occasionally, as with the nuns in *La Strada,* there is the feeling that we must give up things dear to us before we get too fond of them; but more frequently there is the feeling that only by moving on, by probing and searching, can we ever come to know the purpose of life. Fellini's fondness for processions is obviously related to this. Indeed, it sometimes seems as if the celebration of movement such as we witness in processions may by itself *provide* the purpose, as if in terrestial terms there may be, in fact, no goal.

Of course, Fellini would reject such intellectual speculations. For Fellini is an intuitive in his response to life, a great muddle-headed irrationalist with very strong feelings and no clear thought. He lives life from the senses, yet his intelligence has informed him that the senses can deceive. Hence, the intellectual indecisions, the apparently inexhaustible interviews with all their self-contradictions. Yet, hence too all the passionate affirmations of his films. It is as if Fellini recognizes that "truth" must lie somewhere, though locked up in subjectivity, but he is unable to seize it with the merely rational surface of his mind. Hence all the turbulence, all the restless energy, the endless travelling along streets and long corridors. Whether it is the Vitelloni wandering about the beach or the town at night or Moraldo setting off at the end on his own for we don't know where; whether it is the peasant families at the end of *Il Bidone* (the little children with ricks on their backs recalling the first shot of Gelsomina) that walk by beyond the reach of the dying Augusto; or whether it is the complete Fellini-Anselmi entourage descending that vast structure at the close of *8½* and dancing round and round the circus ring together in an infinity of perfect movement—whatever the context and whatever the film, this perpetual movement is central to Fellini. And it is also central to his irrational view of life that the movement should be without origin or goal.

But in this sequence from *La Strada,* there are also some examples of the twin experiences that this directionless journey through life must entail—experiences of the freshness and unexpectedness of innocence which are immediately followed by the experience of something dreadful that in a world freed from the devil is now without a name. On the one hand, we have the presence of Gelsomina herself and of the somewhat querulous Il Matto who appears from on high; but more characteristically we have the fleeting image of that little boy in the cloak passing along the corridor that charms us so gratuitously. For it is also a part of Fellini's irrationality that especially childhood innocence should so often play such a formally gratuitous role in his films, that children should simply appear and then disappear—providing us with a momentary pleasure and perhaps re-

The image of innocence: Paola in La Dolce Vita.

newing our faith in the wonder of life but remaining essentially apart from the troubled business of life in Fellini's adult world. This goes a long way in *La Dolce Vita* towards explaining the floating presence of Paola, the little Umbrian angel, who has so universally been disapproved of as a facile resolution to that troubling, too-long film.[7] Initially, Paola simply passes into a short bridging sequence and passes out again, like the boy in the cloak. We see her setting the table at a seaside restaurant, misunderstanding Marcello's difficulties yet attracted by some quality in him, while deriving simple enjoyment from the loud assertions of "Patricia" playing on the juke-box, a simplicity that is emphasized by the later degradation which we experience towards the end of the film when Nadia strips to the same tune. But Paola has been placed there so that when she appears in the epilogue to the film as a kind of *diva ex machina*, she may suggest a quality in life that has been ignored in the compulsive distractions we have been witnessing. Dramatically in any conventional way, she may leave much to be desired; but she is perfect for suggesting Fellini's sense of youthful trust that, although beautiful, is presented as ineffectual and so exists somewhat apart. And we may remember in *I Vitelloni* Moraldo's child companion of the railways, with whom he discoursed about life and the stars, who is left to return to the hopelessness of the town, balancing precariously along the rails. Or we might remember the children towards the end of *La Strada* who (as if in gentle rehearsal for the end of 8½) are dancing in a ring round a young tree while their mother (we assume) is hanging out her washing and singing Gelsomina's tune. And of course, there are the young people who appear out of the woods at the end of *Le Notti di Cabiria*: "We have lost our way," one of them says as they begin to circle round her while another barks at her in a way that might remind us of the wild compère in the nightclub towards the beginning of the film. In spite of the hopelessness of her present position, the lack of "solution" to any of her problems, she cannot help but return their smiles and their "*Buona sera.*" And of course in 8½, when the lights dim and the ring of dancers vanish and even the circus performers disappear from the scene, it is the young Guido Anselmi - cum - young - Federico Fellini who is left alone in the spotlight and who moves with it to the side of the ring, leaving the screen in darkness. Although there's never a solution to any of the problems, there's

always the sense of something young and fresh left to carry on.

Yet, if on the one hand there are children, representing the possibility of new forms of life, on the other there is the recurring presence of this dreadful nameless thing, the presence of some form of evil, of some kind of threat.

In all of Fellini's films, there are these disturbing images, moments of disillusion that serve to challenge simple faith. There is the sinister homosexual who so disappoints Leopoldo in *I Vitelloni*, as there had been the more-than-disappointing flesh-and-blood reality of the White Sheik before. But in *I Vitelloni* more powerfully and more like Osvaldo is the woman in the cinema who so easily tempts Fausto and who is again encountered one day on the beach. Within the subterranean depths of Fellini's imagination, she serves as a link between Osvaldo and La Saraghina and simply appears at odd moments as a threat to the flesh. Also in *I Vitelloni* there is the married man in the dark glasses who tempts Olga away. He too is first encountered on the beach; but most ominous of all is the shot of his dark car just before they drive away: it is almost hidden by the early morning shadows in the street while the light glares out above it threateningly, like a scar. And if in *Cabiria* there is of course the deceitful Oscar, more in keeping with the irrationality of these images of threat is the devil-dressed magician who through hypnosis turns innocence towards evil ends.

Excluding for the moment La Saraghina, who is a more complex incarnation of this kind of nameless threat, simultaneously described as "evil" yet *felt* to be beautiful, in *La Dolce Vita* we have a summary of this sort of effect in that strange blob of a fish that pollutes the stretch of beach at the end of the film and forms the imaginative counterpole to the young Paola waving to Marcello across the protective inlet of the sea. It is as if something deep in Fellini recognizes that in childhood and childlike responses to existence, there is beauty and affirmation of a frequently troubling kind, troubling because unconscious of the terrible threats and temptations that can lurk in the unknowable depths of adult life; and in the way that so frequently these polar elements seem more an accompaniment to the main theme than a formally intrinsic part of his films, it is as if at this stage of his development, Fellini cannot consciously work out the exact relationship between these two extremes or even to find a settled place for them within the narrative structure of his films. Constantly he creates situations for which he can find no earthly solution and his characters encounter difficulties beyond their means to control. So for the end of *La Dolce Vita*, it is as if the gods themselves must be evoked to bring about the closing affirmation. Failing to communicate anything helpful to Marcello, the little Umbrian angel looks straight at the camera, and at us. What do we make of it all? What do we feel about innocence by the end?

I make movies in the same way that I talk to people—whether it's a friend, a girl, a priest, or anyone: to seek some clarification. That is what neo-realism means to me, in the original, pure sense. A search into oneself, and into others. In any direction, any direction where there is life. All the formal philosophy you could possibly apply to my work is that there is no formal philosophy. . . . A man's film is like a naked man—nothing can be hidden. I must be truthful in my films.[8]

Among many film enthusiasts, especially in Great Britain, Fellini has been undervalued and, I think, misunderstood. Before the appearance of *8½*, *I Vitelloni* has often been regarded as his most successful film. And so it is—on the social realist level. Along with *Il Bidone* in its

The strange fish from La Dolce Vita.

somewhat grimmer way, *I Vitelloni* is the only Fellini film that truly works on the level of social observation. It is balanced in its narrative, minutely observant, beautifully paced, and very funny. Yet from a slightly deeper level, it can also make a more personal appeal. When looked at sympathetically, it is not *essentially* that different from Fellini's other films. Beneath its realist exterior, it too can make its more subliminal appeal.

One of the difficulties that Fellini's films pose for more rational minds – indeed, we could even say, one of the limitations of Fellini's particular kind of cinematic art–is that he has too often been too careless about the surface credibility of his films, confusing and alienating all but the most sympathetic of his viewers as the conventions of his films have seemed so strange. Yet at their best–excluding the colorful excesses of *Boccaccio 70* and *Giulietta degli spiriti*–they are strange only to the expectations of literary narrative and of psychological realism. Fellini's conventions are not at all strange to the language of painting which, beneath the narrative surface of his films, is the language that he most frequently employs.

For there is in all real films–in all films that have the lasting interest that characterizes a work of art–what I find it convenient to call a subliminal level, a level largely of images plus the complex associations of scarcely perceived sounds. Although we are often not really conscious of these vital ingredients, especially on a first viewing, we can nevertheless be immensely moved by their power to affect us. Indeed, it is generally these elements that give a film its atmosphere or mood.

If there are in Fellini certain constantly recurring themes or motifs, there are also certain constantly recurring images and effects that, when responded to, can make an extraordinary impression upon us and which are then cumulative in their power. For these images to be discussed at all, criticism has to lean away from the comfortably confident tone of literary-cum-film analysis and draw upon the tentativeness of art appreciation. For the central fact about art criticism is the elusiveness of the total power of the image when talked about in words and of the apparently greater subjectivity of the way paintings speak to us, moving towards music which is the most subjectively elusive of all. Images and sounds cannot be argued with. They either affect us or they don't. When talking about a painting, there is always so much that we cannot *know*. The discursive element in painting is automatically much less than it can be in literature and the speculative element in interpretation correspondingly that much more. Once again, we might think of that moment between Osvaldo and Gelsomina, the inscrutability of which I've taken some pains to describe; but in Fellini's films, there are images of greater tentativeness than this.

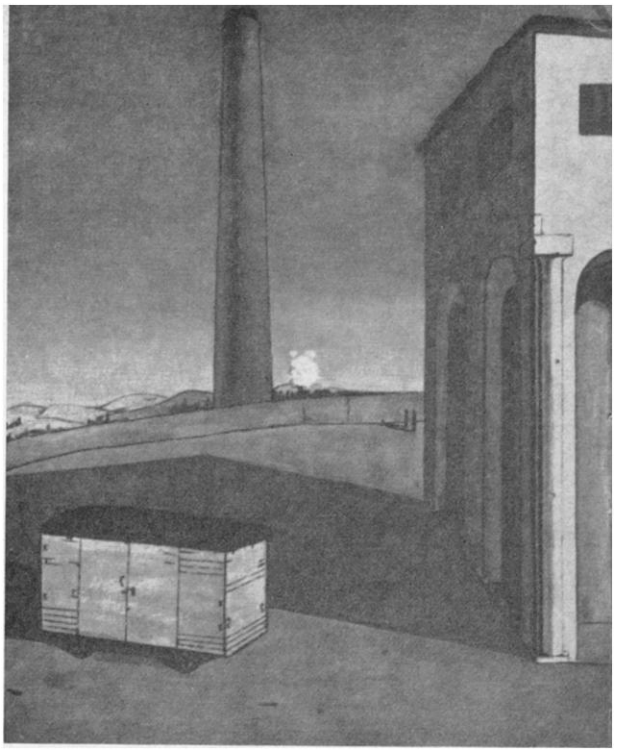
If we look at a painting by Jean Carzou, for example "The Bay of Dreams," there are many things that we might want to say about it, about the gentle flowing lines of the figure in the foreground moving through a variety of shapes and objects in extended perspective to the sharply jagged quality of the mountains in the rear. But one of the most striking formal elements in the picture and part of what is for me the forlornness of its mood is the lateral shadow that cuts across its middle, intensifying its sense of space and further distancing these two contrasting worlds. If we next look at an image from *I Vitelloni*, just after the departure of Moraldo's pregnant sister on her shotgun honeymoon, if we are responding to the impact of the images in the film and not just waiting for the next point of characterization or development of plot to emerge, we might be affected in much the same way. Similarly, if we contemplate the effect of

The forlorn shadow in I VITELLONI.

the foreground shadow in Giorgio de Chirico's "The Rose Tower"[9] and remember that the entire proposal scene between Oscar and Cabiria is similarly played in shadow with the landscape and buildings luminous behind, we might feel that by the very light itself, both de Chirico and Fellini, working independently in their quite different ways, have employed these foreground shadows to lend a worried aspect to the scene and yet to suggest that there is something worthwhile in the distance, something worth achieving beyond.

In fact, de Chirico, perhaps because as an Italian he too has been particularly sensitive to Italian space and Italian light, can be used again and again to illuminate by analogy the images in Fellini. Along with images of the sea and of isolated trees,[10] the Italian town square with its fountain in the middle is a recurrent image in Fellini. It is generally seen at night or in the early morning, generally presented as a place of reckoning and is divorced from its more sociable associations of being a place where people meet. In Fellini, the town square is never felt to be the social center of a community. De Chirico too seemed to be sensitive to the empty feeling of such places at unused times of day—indeed, to the very irrelevance of such vast structures to the little intimacies of human life. And so in de Chirico, we find a number of such paintings that depict huge buildings and exaggerated shadows, where the tiny figures serve both to emphasize the hugeness of the structures (as do the miniature trains that we frequently see puffing away on the horizon) and to give a feeling that the little human things don't really belong in such a space. Sometimes this feeling is further emphasized by the presence of some stray object in the foreground, some object made bizarre by being torn from the context of its function—like that light-bulb in *La Strada* or the railway carriage that we see in "Anguish of Departure" in the middle of the square.

So with Fellini, in the much-admired beach sequence in *I Vitelloni*, (admired for its sensitive observation of these five men imprisoned in their own apathy and defeated by the feeling



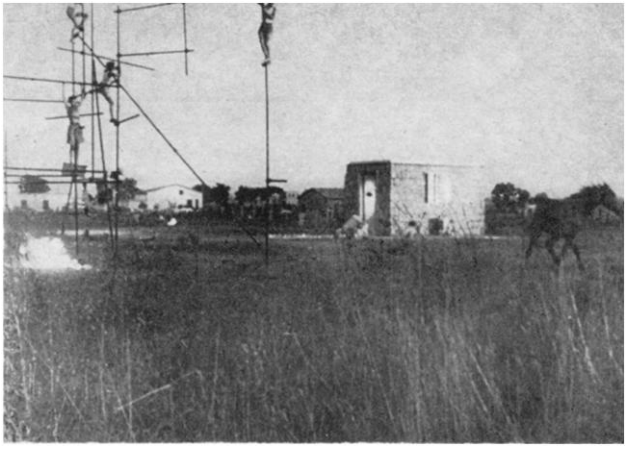
de Chirico's "Anguish of Departure."

that there is nothing they can do) Fellini emphasizes their own feeling of irrelevance and functionlessness by the many apparently useless structures that we see sticking up out of the sand. Skeletons of summer changing-huts and odd inexplicable bits of wire frequently dominate the scene and create the feeling of something strange with an almost surrealist intensity. Everywhere throughout the film as throughout every Fellini film there is the recurring presence of the bizarre.

Ominous foreground shadows: LE NOTTI DI CABIRIA.

In fact, this recognition of the bizarre is at the center of Fellini's world, the physical parallel of his response to the irrational, the source both of his humor and of his sense of dread. For if humor is uppermost in most films by Fellini, beneath the comic observation of the discrepancies of human life there is always this feeling of something beyond our control, something not fully known to our rational selves—like that grotesque fish at the end of *La Dolce Vita* or like Osvaldo in that guarded-over room.

The first image we see in the first film directed by Fellini himself is an image of a structure sticking up out of the sand with a piece of cloth blowing in the wind. In front of this structure with his robes also blowing sits the White Sheik on his horse in all his phony splendor—an opening image of immense absurdity as indeed are so many of the images in this extraordinarily funny film. But it is really in *Cabiria* that this purely visual absurdity acquires its most consistently surrealist force. Constantly surrounding Cabiria's box-like house is a litter of people and objects apparently devoid of function and deprived of any context of psychological plausibility. At one moment as we track along we see a post with a for-sale sign on top and a bicycle leaning against it, a baby in a stroller a little beyond, and a woman squatting in the field further beyond that. At another moment as we see Cabiria stomping back from her unfortunate dunking in the river, wearing her characteristic vertical stripes, we see the bulbous Wanda in the background, beside her some washing, a stray horse, and behind her quite inexplicably a little black creature with an umbrella in the field, and behind all that, above yet another box of a house, there is a kite sailing aimlessly in the sky. But most absurd of all and most characteristically Fellinian is the strangely functionless structure that exists outside Cabiria's house. How did it come to be there and what purpose does it serve? Questions like that can have no answer on any rational plane, but the presence of this structure dominates a number of scenes in the film; and of course it is related both to the beach structures that we've seen more naturalistically in *The White Sheik* and *I Vitelloni* and that structure to end all structures that looms over *8½*! And as in *8½* where throngs of people are always walking up and down this unnecessary construction, so in *Cabiria* little boys are constantly clambering about these poles that exist outside her home. Like the circus itself so important in Fellini, like the apparently gratuitous accomplishments of the clown or aerialist, it is as if this kind of purposeless activity that nevertheless can give pleasure and even a kind of physical meaning to the absurdity of life should exist as an emblem of Fellini's view of the world—movement without direction, life essentially without a goal.



The bizarre structure in CABIRIA.

Visually, I've often made use of the theme of circus life which is a mixture of spectacle, risk, and reality. My characters are often a bit bizarre. I'm always talking to people in the street who seem rather unusual or out of place or who have some physical or mental affliction. Also, there is naturally the theme of beaches that recurs in all my films, but that has been talked about so much that I don't want to go into it! Since all these elements form a part of me, I don't see why I shouldn't introduce them into my films.[11]

So far in this account of Fellini, I have been concerned only with the thematic consistency of his work and with the peculiar force of his imagery. Taken all together, Fellini's films create a world that is uniquely and personally his own. They manage to enact his vision of the universe. But all this, although true, tends to

ignore the great differences between Fellini's individual films, differences of surface characteristics but also finally of quality as well. For much as I respond with enormous pleasure to nearly everything that he has produced—even to much of *Giulietta degli spiriti*—I recognize that if Fellini is a man of immense inventiveness, he is also a director of uncertain control over the many elements that his mind, with apparently so little effort, can with such energy invent. Also, if Fellini is a man who has created for us an immensely personal view of life on the screen, I recognize that it is just that—an *immensely personal view of life* which is frequently egotistic, self-indulgent, sentimental, and above all wilfully irrational, courting mystery at every corner and asking from us as much compassion for all these difficulties as he has bestowed upon them himself.[12]

So the critics who have preferred *I Vitelloni* to anything that Fellini has subsequently done —at least until 8½—have probably done so because of all his films, *I Vitelloni* least imprisons us in Fellini's private world. There is in the film such a wealth of surface detail that we can get a good deal from it without being too closely attuned to its more subjective elements. Whereas *La Strada* presents Fellini's private world with a minimum of props.

In *La Strada*, unless we are sensitive to the subliminal level on which the film is really operating and are sympathetic to Fellini's concern through his images to unite Gelsomina with Il Matto and the two of them with the sea while at the same time he is enmeshing Zampano in his own chains of earth and fire and brute insensitivity, unless we are sensitive to the suggestive power of the imagery, the film will either make very little sense to us or it will seem terribly naive. If by way of "meaning" we carry away from *La Strada* only Il Matto's disquisition on the usefulness of pebbles, then we will come away with what we could rightly call a sentimental experience. But if we have been moved by the little children dancing round that tree and are aware that it is Gelsomina's beloved sea —both her natural home and her constant friend—that is washing up on the beach during that final image where Zampano lies crushed by a kind of dumb and brutal grief, then the intellectually self-indulgent and sentimental elements will be buoyed up by some sort of aesthetic charge as well, by the sense of some depth of feeling and perception being communicated to us beyond what our merely rational selves can readily receive.

For if it is true that there is nothing in Fellini's films that we can properly call thought, there is nevertheless evidence of an intelligence of a totally different kind. Everywhere in his films there is the presence of a mind that responds to life itself on a subliminal level, that is acutely conscious of the natural metaphors to be found in the trappings of day-to-day life and which struggles to find a structure both flexible and persuasive enough to contain them within his films. Even in a film as distended and episodic as *La Dolce Vita*, there is an intricate interweaving of sounds and images that help to bind together this elongated experience. When the lifeless statue of Christ is being flown to St. Peter's at the opening of the film, only a handful of *ragazzi* follow its shadow through the streets of Rome; while at the injunction of the pneumatic Sylvia to "Follow me everybody," this laughing, living goddess, this beatific creature who is more at home with little kittens than with the temptations of the flesh, gains an active and excited response as people follow her dance about the nightclub floor. I've already mentioned the ironic repetition of the "Patricia" tune which should help to give a slightly more settled place to the presence of Paola—if we're fully attentive to the soundtrack of the film, we should be remembering Paola while we're watching Nadia strip — but also at Steiner's party certain things occur that acquire a formal relevance by the end.

In fact, the portrait of Steiner offers a convenient example of how Fellini's compressed characterization works in this sprawling fresco of his own uneasy mind.[13] As his German name might suggest (and he is played by a French actor!), Steiner is the modern *déraciné* eclectic, a man with only intellectual allegiances. For him, all experience is filtered through the mind.

He is a *dilettante*, as he himself says, "too serious to be an amateur and not serious enough to be a professional." He remains outside experience, unattached, and strives to bring to life the order and clarity of a work of art. In his self-created isolation, he draws what sustenance he can from the culture of all nations and epochs. When we first see him, he is carrying a Sanskrit grammar in a modern church and, after a few tentative chords of jazz, we hear him playing a Bach toccata on the organ.

For Steiner, life has meaning only if he can contemplate it as he can a work of art. Even natural sounds, the roar of the wind and the sea, are recorded on tape and listened to like music; and his delight in his daughter is largely the delight he takes in her fondness for words, in her own instinctive gifts as a poet. For Steiner, real life is apparently too much and he tries, through art, to find an escape. Of course, he fails; and through his failure Fellini would seem to be, too schematically, insisting that there can be no path into the future through intellectual activity or through art. Yet, by the end of the film when we're confronted with the final beach scene and by our necessary Paola,[14] we should recognize that those very same sounds of the wind and the sea that Steiner had listened to as music are part of the disturbance that, along with the intrusive inlet of the sea, keeps Paola from communicating with Marcello. They are part of her "natural" protection from his jaded world. And although I shouldn't want to make great claims for the power of such effects to hold together this too insistent film, nevertheless they do reveal the presence of an artistic intelligence of a rare intuitive kind.

I don't like the idea of "understanding" a film. I don't believe that rational understanding is an essential element in the reception of any work of art. Either a film has something to say to you or it hasn't. If you are moved by it, you don't need to have it explained to you. If not, no explanation can make you moved by it. That's why I don't think my films are misunderstood when they are accepted for different reasons. Every person has his own fund of experiences and emotions which he brings to bear on every new experience—whether it is to his view of a film or to a love affair; and it is simply the combination of the film with the reality already existing in each person which creates the final impression of unity. As I was saying, this is the way the spectator participates in the process of creation. This diversity of reaction doesn't mean that the objective reality of the film has been misunderstood. Anyway, there is no objective reality in my films, any more than there is in life.[15]

If *8½* is incomparably the finest film that Fellini has created so far, and certainly the most satisfying intellectually, it is largely because, along with all this sensitivity to sounds and images, the film contains within it a subtle dialectic. Beneath the astonishing technical virtuosity of the film and the sophisticated contributions of Gianni di Venanzo and Piero Gherardi (to mention only the most considerable), there is an inner argument at its center that has a surprising toughness about it, that shows itself as being very critical of the attitudes adopted by Guido Anselmi who we have a right to imagine bears a strong resemblance to Fellini himself; except that—as Fellini has been quick to point out[16]—Guido was unable to make his film while Fellini achieved *8½*.

All the old ingredients are there in this film: the acutely accurate observation of surface behavior which characterized *I Vitelloni* plus the response to both the semimystical and the bizarre that was so evident in *La Strada*. We still have the same sense of life as a quest, as endless movement of uncertain direction, as we still have the twin polarities in this film, principally of Claudia and La Saraghina, here seeming to imply a split between the subtler imaginations of the spirit and the coarser attractions of the flesh. Although by now things aren't quite that simple. Both figures in their different ways are presented as somewhat motherly and it is only the church that keeps insisting that La Saraghina is evil. Innocence and evil are no longer separate categories locked away on opposite sides in the wings of the film. But along with these familiar themes and effects, the film

puts forward a structure of argument and self-criticism that recasts all these elements in a decidedly clearer light.

This structure can conveniently be examined by looking closely at the final reels. Anselmi is reaching the point of no return during the auditions while he watches with extreme discomfort the various imperfect approximations to the creatures who have meant so much to him in his private life. Daumier, his intellectual friend, scriptwriter, and advisor is being particularly tiresome and unhelpful; so in his imagination, Guido simply has him hanged. Luisa is growing increasingly impatient at the way that she, as his wife, is being made use of in this projected film and she stalks out of the theater-studio. Then Claudia arrives. We have seen her as part of Guido's fantasies several times before in the film—sometimes as nurse or mother, bringing him his elixir at the spa or turning down his bed, sometimes as the incarnation of his ideal mistress figure, freed from the physical vulgarities of his actual mistress, Carla. As his ideal mistress, Claudia has her black hair loose about her shoulders while she lies in bed stroking herself, smiling lovingly and talking about her desire to look after him and to create order—really less like a mistress than an ideal wife. But this is the first time in the film, twenty minutes before the end, that she actually appears on the level of present time as the possible star of this impossible film. They go off for a drive together, she at the wheel although she explains that she doesn't know the way. He muses about his incapacities as a man and artist, about his inability to stick to any one thing, to select anything, to reject, to choose. And even here the structure is nicely balanced if we look at it closely. "Could you choose one thing and be faithful to it?" he asks in some despair as the light in the darkened car narrows around him revealing only his eyes. While she simply smiles as if reassuringly and with a Fellini-like evasiveness replies: "I don't know the road."

They turn off into what looks like a deserted village square, the most Chirico-like image that Fellini has ever created, yet actually one of the few natural sets in the film, close by some springs.[17] (We never see the water although we hear it on the sound-track.) There, in sudden silence, we now see the imagined Claudia as nurse-and-mother in an upstairs window, luminous in her white frock, at first holding a lamp in her hand and then descending downstairs to lay a table in this deserted village square. Then natural sound again as Claudia asks: "What happens next?" Fellini-Anselmi is talking about the role of the woman-goddess in his film who must be both child and woman (as Sylvia was seen to be by Marcello in *La Dolce Vita*). They get out of the car, she expressing displeasure at the cold bareness of the place, he replying that he likes it enormously. Then he tries to explain that there will in fact be no role for her in the film because "no woman can save a man" and because "I don't want to film another lie." Meanwhile she keeps intercutting her own interpretation of his difficulty. Three times she says "because you don't know how to love . . . because you don't know how to love . . . because you don't know how to love." But at his further announcement that there will also be no film, two cars tear into the square announcing a new idea to launch the film, and the swirling chaos of the press conference begins.

Partly here but even more in the following episode, Fellini depicts the helpless quandary to which all his contradictory impulses have seemed to lead him. Everyone makes demands upon him and asks for explanations which he cannot give, while a harsh American face looms up into the screen taking obvious delight in the apparent fact that "He has nothing to say." Fleeting images of both Claudia and Luisa in her bridal gown appear, distracting him momentarily from the troubles around him; but when Daumier slips a revolver in his pocket, he climbs under the table and in a fashion that recalls the young Guido running away from the prospect of a bath, he crawls along the ground and shoots himself. "What an incurable romantic!" he exclaims before the end. Then a glimpse of his mother standing by the sea; then the shot; and then silence except for the wind.

Here the epilogue to the film begins, the recapitulation of its argument which is in essence

a recapitulation of the complete works of Fellini. The huge rocket-launching apparatus is being dismantled, that useless structure which is the culmination of all the structures that we have seen throughout his films. It is apparently of no use. Daumier is talking incessantly about the wisdom of abandoning the picture: ". . . the world abounds in superfluity . . . it's better to destroy than to create what's inessential . . ." Throughout the film, it is as if Daumier stands for Fellini's more rational self, the self that has taken cognizance of all the critical attacks that have been made on his self-indulgent and irrational universe but which, like Steiner, Fellini feels to be destructive. At the same time, he recognizes that this rational analytical voice is not the only one in his life. At the very moment that Daumier is discoursing on the futility of unnecessary creation, the ring-master appears—that androgynous clown-like figure that has played such an important part in all of Fellini's work and seems to stand for something like creation for its own sake, for pure activity without thought or purpose. "*Aspetti*," he smiles; "wait a minute! We're ready to begin . . . All my best wishes . . ." It is as if Fellini cannot free himself from the conviction that in spite of all the reasonable cricitisms that can justifiably be brought against him as against life itself, there is something deep within him that remains more affirmative and that exists beyond thought, that *must* go on creating simply for the sake of creation, as a clown or aerialist must continue to perform their intricate though meaningless routines.

Then another vision: fiirst Claudia, then La Saraghina, then his parents appear before him —all dressed in white and all floating along noiselessly by the side of the sea accompanied only by the wind. And then most importantly, Luisa appears, her eyes slightly lowered as if in embarrassment or shame. If the critical voice of Daumier represents part of the toughness of the structure of this film, then the resentful, mistrustful, yet possibly forgiving presence of Luisa represents the other part that tugs against Fellini's natural tendency to make things a little too easy for himself. Guido is here experiencing a vision of love for all the creatures he has ever known and is trying to communicate the beauty and simplicity of this feeling to Luisa, even while recognizing his own unworthiness: "Luisa, I do not know, I seek, I have not found . . . Only with this in mind can I look at you without shame . . . Accept me as I am." And Luisa, while seeming to recognize the possible self-deception and self-dramatization of these remarks, nevertheless out of female kindness strives to accept him all the same: "I don't know if that's true, but I can try." So once again in Fellini, though in a far subtler form, we have salvation by grace. Man although unworthy, can still be saved.

From this confession and acceptance, this exchange of imperfect terrestial love, the characteristic Fellini miracle follows, the miracle of self-renewal that enables life to go on. Like the three circus musicians that appear at the comparable moment in *La Strada*, here a similar little troop comes into view. With the characteristic horizontal stripes again very much in evidence, they march into the circus ring to receive instructions from Anselmi, the megaphone of authority having been thrust into his hands by the always smiling, always helpful magician-ring-master, this embodiment of the impulse towards life without demanding why. Then, from the top of this vast structure, itself miraculouslv reassembled, down the equally vast stair case—like the White Sheik from the sky—all the people we have seen in this film parade into the ring and join hands and dance in a circle about its rim. Special attention is given to his mother and father and to the Cardinal and even to Carla, who gives us an overt clue (if we need one) for the interpretation of this scene: "You're trying to say you can't do without us"; but he rushes her away with the rest of them into the magic circle of the dance around the ring as he prepares to receive his wife. Luisa, still a disturbing element in this final sequence, still with her eyes lowered as if not really wanting to be imprisoned in her husband's imaginative vision in this way, nevertheless allows herself to be led by his hand and with him to join the others as they dance around the ring. So we have this

final image of the circus ring with the little band still playing at its center, the circus that has meant so much to Fellini all his life and has played such a large part in his films. And so too we have the mystic circle of eternity, ancient symbol of the Christian church incorporated by Dante. And so too we have the final consummate image of movement without direction, dancing round and round for ever in an infinity of shared acceptance.

Night falls, the dancers disappear, and the little band is left. Then even they disappear, leaving young Guido with his flute and his white cloak alone at the end to take the final bow and to lead us off into darkness and to the end of the film. But even the final title tells us a little bit more: "Fellini 8½. Created and directed by Federico Fellini." The old ham must have realized that it is a pretty astonishing movie!

Although the film lends itself to esoteric, occult, psychoanalytical interpretations, I would like it to be seen in a simpler light: humane and imaginative.[18]

Throughout this account of certain aspects of Fellini, I have really been trying to do only one thing: I have been anxious to explain the *form* of his films in terms of the *view of life* that has necessitated it. I have naturally, therefore, concentrated on the films where I have felt that Fellini has been most successful in resolving his artistic problems: most accessibly in *I Vitelloni*, most intimately in *La Strada*, and most inescapably in *8½*. That is to say, I have not been particularly "critical," either of the films where he has been less successful or of his particular view of life. Indeed, appraising his view of life has not been part of my business in this particular article. Obviously, in many ways, it is the view of a child, of a simple creature of nature, a kind of self-regarding mystic. Similarly when we think of art in more social terms, Fellini's self-obsessions can be worrying. And yet, surely society is still robust enough to be enriched by the products of its artistic egotists—Federico Fellini, Hector Berlioz, Benvenuto Cellini, a distinguished genealogy of men who have created in extravagantly personal ways. And these men, with their insistence on the inner life of man, have made their own contribution to our increased self-understanding. At their best, they have pursued their self-bound concerns with such energy and completeness that their explorations of their purely private problems have managed to illuminate the problems of us all.

Nevertheless, on a more mundane and technical level, if we look closely at *Le Notti di Cabiria*, there are obvious formal difficulties. In spite of the surrealist effects that surround Cabiria in her box-like home and in her dealings with Oscar, the street sequences seem to be in a rather different style, as if from another film. Perhaps the substantial credit given to Pasolini in the making of this film has something to do with this disunity; and if we were concerned to offer an extensive critique of all Fellini's films, detail by detail, there would be a number of such discrepancies that we'd have to notice. Yet if we value him at all, a man like Fellini must be allowed to stumble. In the intuitive way that he approaches the screen, he is almost bound to run into difficulties and at times to fail to find the form adequate to his needs. What we ask for always is that he should be true to himself and that the film as a whole should be strong enough to sustain the difficulties. Or at least, we can see in certain features valuable preparation for finer things to come.

Thus, while I can find little to admire in his sketch for *Boccaccio 70*; I can see in much of the poster-raising sequence, hilarious in its way and absurd in its chaos, a kind of rehearsal for the press conference in *8½* where both the hilarity and the chaos have a tougher context to contain them. But it is the essential tastelessness of the central conception of the *Boccaccio* episode that has always made me doubt that particular piece of film and wonder what it might presage. In the image of the little puritan who has such grotesque fantasies, there is possibly something funny (though not to my taste) but there is also a contradiction between Fellini's most undeniable gift and his intentions in this film. Whether we like him or not, at his best Fellini has certainly succeeded in creating for us images that

convey the innermost recesses of his own teeming mind. But what about the mind of another kind of person essentially different from himself: could he explore that with the same kind of intimacy? I should never have thought so; and yet, this is what he was offering to do in this film. He would appear to be trying to convey to us how another person thinks and feels, which is perhaps what makes the film so unsubtle in the effects that it achieves, so lacking in compassion, finally so lacking in taste.

It was because of this uneasy spectacle of *Boccaccio* in my mind that I had misgivings about the prospects of *Giulietta degli Spiriti*. When reading about the film as it was in progress and hearing about the difficulties Fellini was having in reconciling his need for movement with the problems of color, three things troubled me. First of all, might color be somehow *wrong* for Fellini? Might color tend to bring his images too close to real life, to leave them lacking in suggestiveness and shadow? Might it tend simply to make certain effects vulgar that would seem magical when distanced from our experience by the formality of black-and-white? Secondly, when Fellini's Giulietta was his Gelsomina, when in *La Strada* she combined with the other characters to become a part of his own mind, the effect was compelling; but could Fellini actually enter into the mind of another person, even of his own wife? Would he be able to create a new kind of 8½ but now from a woman's point of view? Already there had been formal troubles with *Cabiria*, and the memory of *Boccaccio* increased my doubts. Finally (as I kept saying to myself), after 8½, how could he go on at all without falling back? What could he possibly do that could equal that success? So it was with a very real concern that I approached this new picture—first through the published script and now at last through the film.

From the script (which bears only the most casual relation to the finished product), we can see what is intended. We get the impression of a little *bourgeoise* of exquisite sensitivity, forced into a world of fearful fantasies and tender schoolgirl memories by her inability to find an

The garish eroticism of GIULIETTA.

outlet for this sensitivity in the blatantly erotic world that happens to surround her. Nor can she make herself "whorish" enough to resuscitate the sensual awareness of her husband, any more than she can put on the garish wigs that we see her toying with at the opening of the film. But the impression of the film is often rather different from the impression of the script. Strange to say, it seems less delicate in many of its implications. If in the film the fantasies are supposed to come from Giulietta, the majority of the images seem more to belong to Fellini. Throughout the film, there appears to be a discrepancy between the tentativeness and introspection of the central character and the wild turbulent world that generally surrounds her. She is so gentle in all her expressions, but Fellini has embedded her in a harsh and garish world that only he could have created. Of course, to an extent, that is the point, the substance of her problem. Yet from the first scene to the next to the last, up to the moment when she finally succeeds in exorcizing all these fantastic

creatures and is finally left alone, throughout most of the film there seems to be something wrong.

To begin with, except for some of the garden sequences and the childhood scenes, its pace is so insistent, the harsh clash of its primary colors so dazzling, its editing generally so restless that the overall style of the film would seem for the most part to be working against the feeling of inwardness necessary if we are actually to *feel* very strongly for this heroine. Even when she is at home, away from the mad world that surrounds her, Nino Rota's music often keeps up its nervous bounce, appropriate enough for the excited dance from scene to scene in *La Dolce Vita* or for the world of film production which provided the backdrop to *8½*, but often irritatingly out of place here. As with so much of the extravagance of the decor and costumes, the music seems to belong more to some crazy world of Fellini's rather than to Giulietta. Yet it is she whom we are watching on the screen.

In *La Strada*, the extreme simplicity of the story itself combined with the technical simplicity of execution to convey to us the mystical simplicity of Gelsomina; whereas in *Giulietta degli Spiriti*, it would seem that the very virtuosity of effect that is now inescapably at Fellini's fingertips has somewhat destroyed the delicacy of implication necessary fully to convey to us Giulietta's inner world. With the exception of the childhood scenes, all filtered through white gauze and softly evoked in gently diffused light, the style of so much of the film seems so unvaried that we are exhausted by the time of the final party near the end. I kept feeling that so few of the shots were held long enough for us to admire and be moved by them. Extraordinary images often of great beauty are thrust before us and then whisked away again. And when in so many of the shots there is such a suggestion of a nudity that we are not quite allowed to see, there is almost something prurient in the final impression of these erotic scenes.

There is too slight a sense of norm within the film, which might have provided a point of rest to which we could return. The barbaric Turks emerging from the depths of the sea might have been magnificent had they been placed within a more natural situation that could have represented the regular rhythms of Giulietta's day-to-day life—like the prolonged *ennui* of the Vitelloni that contained the momentary frenzy of the Mardi Gras. But in *Giulietta*, her friends that come to visit trussed up in Piero Gherardi's costumes are as fantastic as her fantasies; and the erotic Susy's mansion is even more fantastic still. Her childhood memories and some of the garden moments that help to create for us the serenity which is the central longing of Giulietta's mind seem too slightly dwelt upon to counterbalance the overwhelming sense of the bizarre in the film. And at the end of the film, where we can recognize that at last she is no longer afraid and so has been set free, it is still difficult to relate this final feeling of release to her memories of childhood martyrdom when this martyrdom sequence is one of the most delicately achieved scenes in the film. Our minds have been distracted by so many other things.

If *Giulietta* seems somewhat of a failure, then —if finally in relation to Fellini's other films this is what we might want to say about it—its failure lies in Fellini's inability to discover a form that would hold before us convincingly the intimacy of Giulietta's mind. So much like *8½* in so many of its effects, it is very unlike it in this: in *Giulietta*, there is no inner structure of argument, no dialectical placing of effect within effect. And there is none of the self-criticism that distinguished *8½* and which troubled and humanized the close. In *Giulietta*, although the Fellini-Giorgio character is certainly criticized —sleeping as he does with his ear-plugs and eye-shade, his senses blocked off against his wife – yet finally, as Guido had done with Luisa, Fellini seems to have imprisoned his wife within the inescapable fantasies of his own imagination. And this time, there is no room for apology nor can she be allowed a look of protest or of shame. As with *Boccaccio*, he has somewhat failed to make a film of any sustained sympathy about another person's life. If *Giulietta* is concerned with the infidelity of husband to wife, then by a grim kind of irony, this film would seem to represent an infidelity indeed.

In *8½*, when Guido is first taken through the woods to meet the Cardinal sitting strangely on

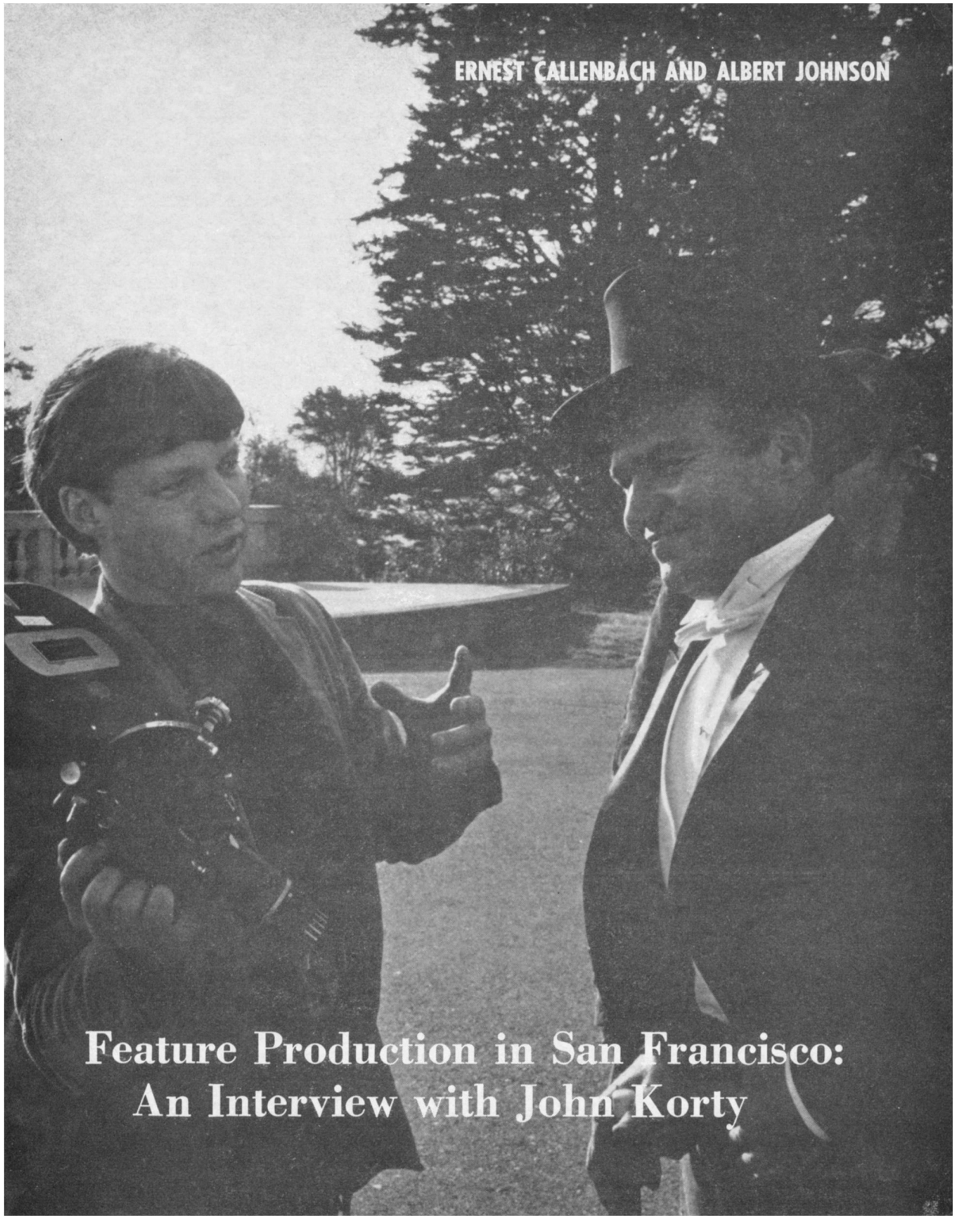
a platform at the end, they exchange a few irrelevancies about Guido's age and marriage and then Guido puts the problem to him, about his uncertainties concerning the making of his film. At that moment, we hear a bird call, a strange kind of owl, and the Cardinal responds to Guido's uneasiness with a story about Diomedes and about how legend has it that the same bird sang when Diomedes died. It is a strange and beautiful moment in the film, and in a subtle way is emblematic of the film as a whole and of Fellini's entire moral universe: we experience a problem to which there seems no rational resolution; then we are given an image that transports our imaginations into another sphere. It is, as I have increasingly argued, a kind of magic, a fresh kind of grace, a salvation through the purification of the feelings. And even if we want to resist such effects for temperamental or philosophical reasons, what finally justifies them in terms of Fellini's world is their feeling of necessity. They have recurred again and again.

In *Giulietta degli Spiriti*, on the other hand, when Giulietta first explores Susy's lascivious home, we hear the same bird call several times while she's on the stairs. We hear it again at other points in the film, apparently whenever it is convenient to create a strange effect. Like the extravagant costumes that litter the film, like the rag-bag of magical effects that are simply played with from beginning to end, even like so much of the nudity and eroticism that dominate the film, all these elements seem to have been created largely for their own sake. Who is imagining all those bare breasts at the end? Giulietta? Are these the images of her eroticism? The threat of the ineluctable Susy? Although it pains me to say so, there would scarcely seem to be a subliminal level at all in this film. It seems more an entertainment, an extraordinary spectacle, an unimaginable feat of legerdemain; but it neither sustains the intimacy nor has the feeling of personal necessity that characterize a work of art. Finally, so much of it seems like a recapitulation of past effects gathered up from former films and transplanted into color.

At this point, criticism is tempted to turn into prophecy, but I shall desist. *Giulietta degli Spiriti* is an important film by a great director which may lead we don't know where. And if through the reconciliation and balance of *8½*, Fellini has temporarily achieved a truce with his troubled spirit and so has no fresh self-explorations to offer us, perhaps we'll have to sit back and let him entertain us for a while. Sooner or later, he will probably find something urgent, no doubt about himself again, that he will want to convey to us, and then the real films will once more begin.

NOTES

1. *Federico Fellini*, by Gilbert Salachas (Éditions Seghers, 1963); p. 103. Translations from the French have been done with the help of Sue Bennett.
2. *Journal d'un Bidoniste*, by Delouche Dominique (bound with *Les Chemins de Fellini*, by Geneviève Agel, Les Éditions du cerf, 1956), p. 129.
3. Geneviève Agel (op. cit.), in the course of an immensely sensitive but predominantly Christian interpretation of Fellini's work, sees Osvaldo as marking one of the four stages in Gelsomina's development. See p. 5 ff.
4. Although recently Fellini has related how just such a little band did one day improbably appear.
5. *Journal d'un Bidoniste*, p. 129.
6. From an interview with Gideon Bachmann in *Film: Book 1* (ed. Robert Hughes, Grove Press, 1959), p. 101.
7. See for example Eric Rhode in *Sight & Sound*, Winter '60–'61, p. 34.
8. *Film: Book 1*, p. 105.
9. For a better understanding of the painting of de Chirico, I am indebted to Peter Greenaway, painter and film-maker and himself a perceptive student of Fellini.
10. For a more detailed account of Fellini's recurrent imagery, see *Les Chemins de Fellini* (op. cit) or following that, the excellent chapter on Fellini in John Russell Taylor's *Cinema Eye, Cinema Ear* (Methuen, 1964).
11. From another interview with Gideon Bachmann in *Cinéma 65* (Numéro 99, Sept.–Octobre).
12. Again, see John Russell Taylor's account for the "womb-like" quality of Fellini's affection.
13. This description of Steiner is adapted from an account of *La Dolce Vita* I wrote for the *Twentieth Century*, Jan. 1961, p. 81 ff.
14. Gilbert Salachas, with nice perception, sees Paola as the guest of honor—*"l'hotesse d'honneur"*—in *La Dolce Vita*. Op. cit., p. 2.
15. From *Cinéma 65* (op. cit.), p. 85.
16. See *The 200 Days of 8½*, by Deena Boyer (Macmillan, 1964): "This film is not so autobiographical as it would seem." (p. 208)
17. *Ibid.*
18. From an interview with Tullio Kezich in *Juliet of the Spirits* (Orion Press, 1965), p. 44.



ERNEST CALLENBACH AND ALBERT JOHNSON

Feature Production in San Francisco: An Interview with John Korty

Korty has been known previously for the widely shown documentary* LANGUAGE OF FACES, *animated films done with a subtle translucent-paper technique (such as* THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT), *and a delightfully harrowing anti-smoking tract called* BREAKING THE HABIT. *Recently he has completed a live-action feature,* THE CRAZY QUILT, *based on a story by San Francisco psychoanalyst Allen Wheelis, and shot on a low budget in the San Francisco Bay Area, where Korty moved, in 1962, from New York. The film stars Tom Rosqui and Ina Mela, and is told by Burgess Meredith. It met an enthusiastic reception at the recent San Francisco Festival, and is expected to go into distribution shortly. The interview below has been condensed for publication.

Maybe you could begin by telling us how Crazy Quilt *got started? How did you find out about Wheelis's story?*

Well, it's interesting: now we're starting on a second feature, and this is going to be the idea I had four years ago, when I came from New York to California. (It's going to be called *The Act.*) I think that for somebody who has done shorts, who has come up that direction, it's hard enough to go into features—if you've worked in documentaries you're not sure you can work with actors, and when you've been doing films for like two and three thousand dollars it scares you to death to think of doing one for a hundred thousand, and the whole thing is such a jump —it's so much bigger than what people in Europe go through. I found myself, for a whole year, wrestling with this idea, which was going to be a semi-fable, about a man and woman who were somewhat opposite types. And I kept trying to write a screenplay, and it wasn't working —I'd work on and off, and write notes here, and 3x5 cards there. It was very hard for me to start at the beginning and write straight through —I'm not enough of a writer. And I think that I would have never done a feature, would never have got that off the ground by myself. What happened was that through some mutual friends I met Allen Wheelis, I read one of his novels, and then someone said have you read his new short story in *Commentary?* So I went out and got it, and reading it gave me this *déja vu* feeling—it was not really the same as my first idea, but it was close, and there it was, all in one piece, 12 pages, from beginning to end, with an artistic unity about it, which was what I needed.

Do you remember what impressed you about it especially, at that first stage?

Well, it seemed *open* to me. Again, I think somebody who has done only shorts would find it hard to read a full-length novel and say, "Great, I'll make a film out of that." But this was a short piece, and had a very neat beginning and ending (some people, I guess, thought it was too neat). But I liked mainly the variety of the story: the fact that within a simple structure there was room for a lot of locations and characters, though only two main roles. And the other thing that was obvious from the story was the possibility of a very cinematic kind of montage, that was already there. When Lorabelle becomes more and more illusionary — and Wheelis has a way of writing that is somewhat cinematic: he'd say that from there she went to yoga, Zen Buddhism, technocracy, Tom, Dick, Harry—he just rammed all those words into a paragraph, and you knew that could be put into filmic language. But I think the large part of the inspiration of using the film was that here was something that was already written, but not so far written that I had to take it word for word: it was close to an outline, and yet it had the finished quality of fiction.

Actually some of the best things in *Crazy Quilt* were improvised, in the sense that the actors had read the scene once, but had not memorized the lines and didn't have the paper

with them when we shot the scene, so it was really their improvisation, based on their memory.

Are there things in the film that aren't in the story?

Yes, for instance the whole termite-cake dialogue, which goes over very well with an audience—in fact, at the Festival this was one of the places where people got laughing fits, which was very unexpected. We thought the humor would mostly be a mild, tongue-in-cheek sort of thing, and here we're getting these immense belly-laughs out of big audiences.

You set it up very well with the little house of toast, and then you cap it with something even more outrageous—it takes you by surprise.

I think the secret of a lot of that is not only under-acting, but under-directing. In fact (I made the toast house, you know—that's one thing I want to take credit for!) we would make these things here, and the whole shooting schedule was so chaotic, because Tom Rosqui's rehearsal schedule at the Actor's Workshop was so erratic—sometimes he'd have to get out here to Stinson Beach at eight-thirty in the morning, and then get back to the Workshop at one. So scenes like that, he might not even know what was going to happen, you know: it was just a matter of putting the toast house in front of him, and of course there's no dialogue there.

How about the toilet shot? That must go by in about three seconds, but it's beautifully structured and works perfectly.

That's a sort of delayed-action belly-laugh: people don't know if they're supposed to laugh, or . . . That was Tom's idea. And that's one of the advantages of shooting this way: we're over there in that house and kind of wandering around, shooting in the bedroom or kitchen or something; and Tom had pajamas on for that toast scene. And with his particular sense of humor Tom sat down on the toilet seat and said "Hey John, how about this for a shot?" And so I just turned around, and in, you know, four minutes the whole thing was done. It's also one of those things that's very delicate, as to the exact point at which to cut it; David Schickele and I had an argument about that. There were six points at which you could have cut that scene. But I thought we had to stop as soon as he pulls out the toilet paper across the shot so you know where he is. A lot of the film is cut very tightly, like that.

Another thing that's surprising is how much of what went into the final edit is the first take. And this again, I think, is because they didn't over-do anything. From what Irvin Kershner tells me, the problem in Hollywood is usually doing the scene over and over again until you get it played down enough—take out the sentimental stuff, the broad comedy—and it may take six or seven takes to slow it down, or get it to the most subtle stage. Whereas we were working the other way around, since the actors didn't know exactly what I wanted at times, and I wanted to see what they would do—and often what they did was right, even if they didn't feel it was right.

Had you ever worked with actors before?

No—well, I directed a one-act play at Antioch, with two characters. That's why I *was* worried. And this is especially hard when the director is also the photographer. To me it's very important to be that, because it means that when I watch the scene I'm watching it *through the lens*, and seeing exactly what's going to go on the film—and to me that's a world of difference from being three feet away in a char. (One of the reasons I like being in this part of California is the tradition of fine-arts photography, of Edward Weston and Imogen Cunningham —these people are really more of an influence on me than anyone in Hollywood.) What the actors didn't realize was that sometimes, to act a scene, all they had to do was sit in a chair a certain way, or walk across the room a certain way. The hardest thing, for them, coming from stage experience, was having none of that build-up of emotion: they didn't have time to get into the role and stay in it, except for some of the dialogue scenes where we'd shoot straight through.

By the way, there was an interesting shooting change that we evolved in the course of the film. The first few dialogue scenes we shot, when I was trying to find my range with the

actors – I was breaking them down into individual shots, so I had it figured out that I would shoot the first three lines of dialogue from here, then we'd stop and I'd get over there, and shoot the next three lines, then we'd stop again, and so on. And after two or three scenes like this, it was for stage actors so hard—all this on-and-off business—that we gradually got to the point, by the end of the film, that every dialogue scene was done straight through in one take. And because I was working with a hand-held camera most of the time, I would make movements during that take which I knew I was going to have to cut out later. I might start, say in a scene that was as long as 20 lines, and Ina would come in and talk to Tom, and when things got to be uninteresting from that camera position, without stopping the camera I'd walk around and get the rest of that. This gave them the continuity even though I knew I'd be putting in another shot instead of that walking. And this worked pretty well. The important thing is not to have your points of movement at the same line in each take.

What was your general working method? You had a very small group—you and Dave, who assisted you in a general way, and . . .

The crew ranged between two and four! The most lights we ever used were two sun-guns, to bounce off the ceilings in interiors. Dave Schickele did the sound also—we recorded a guide track all the way through, and then we dubbed all the dialogue and all the sound effects; we dubbed the sound effects in this room, using the Siemens projector—we had a 16mm workprint, and a 16mm track, though the photography was done on 35mm.

I would love to shoot the next one with sync sound, but there is no light 35mm camera that works well—evidently even the plastic blimps won't silence it completely. And even if you could silence the camera, a lot of the sound you get is just not good enough. So I'm beginning to think I'll be right back where I was before. With dubbing, the dialogue is perfect in sound quality (often too perfect—but you can have imperfections by choice, not involuntarily) and you can orchestrate all the sound effects; we got

THE CRAZY QUILT: *based on Allen Wheelis story, "The Illusionless Man and the Visionary Maid."*

quite excited about the possibilities of this. The effects you get on location may louse up the scene, as often as they help it. In dubbing, you place them for best impact.

Unfortunately we can't do 35mm dubbing here in San Francisco, and that could be a costly problem, going to Los Angeles with a large cast. It's really astounding that the technology is still just dragging along—it was over four years ago that Godard came to New York to see about a self-blimped 35mm camera, and who's done anything about it?

Was this film set up the same way as Shirley Clarke's have been, in New York?

Not quite, because those were limited partnerships, whereas this is a corporation. A lot of our difficulties in getting the financing were because in effect it had to be considered a public offering—almost to the same extent that General Motors is—so we went through a lot of red tape. We're just finding out now that it's mostly a numbers game: if you keep the number of investors low enough, you can avoid a lot of problems. In a corporation it seems to be about ten, but we think now that in a limited partnership it can be twenty, and so the next film is likely to be a combination of the two. It takes a lawyer with a lot of experience to figure this out.

Did you have the actors on a salary, or some kind of deferred percentage?

There was no deferral, we paid them the full Screen Actors Guild scale.

How did you cast the smaller roles—I was curious for instance about how you got Calvin

Kentfield to do the fisherman bit.

Well, you know, a lot of the stuff he's written is about the sea, and he's been a sailor. That was exciting, because there was never a blanket decision on all those people at once; as we came to a sequence we'd think about it for a day or so, and think now who could do this? It was very illuminating to realize how easy that kind of directing was – using nonprofessionals, but I guess the main thing was that they didn't have speaking roles.

Do you get tempted to go to Los Angeles to work?

No—not at all. Every time I go there . . .

Well, but if Crazy Quilt *is a success you may be offered the chance to do what you want to do . . .*

You mean in Hollywood? I don't think there's anything in Hollywood I want to do!

I mean your own script, you know—

No, I'm not trying to be stubborn or anything, but I know enough about what the situation is down there to know that I couldn't work there. I mean, one of the first things is that I want to do my own camerawork, and I don't want forty people standing around watching me. I don't mind having people around who are necessary to me to do the job—the next film may have a crew of five or six people. And even from a purely selfish, almost commercial standpoint I have a better chance of doing what I want in San Francisco, than in either New York or Hollywood. And the whole market is opening up; a successful picture on this kind of budget *can* make money; and what we're interested in doing is setting up our own studio here, possibly with some connection with a theater, for screening facilities and so on.

Will you do the next one in the same way as Crazy Quilt*—shooting on 35mm, then editing in 16?*

I'd like to do everything on 35. Of course you need a bigger budget not only for film stock but for the equipment. That's one of the reasons we're trying to set up the studio, which would have all the equipment, and which would keep going for a long period; then off of that would be formed companies to produce each feature. All we basically need is the camera and 35mm magnetic recorder, so that we can do our own transfers and our own dubbing, and have interlock showings. And this amounts to like $20,000 to start with—and think of how many dentists go into business every year in San Francisco, capitalized at $40-50,000! I think San Francisco needs at least one new film-maker for all the new dentists . . .

But I would much rather bring Hollywood equipment here than for me to go to Hollywood. I don't think that anybody, in a way, has survived artistically in Hollywood. They all keep telling you how they're *going* to survive, eventually—that they're going to make a couple more mediocre pictures and then suddenly they'll make a great one. And I just don't—I think it's the wrong place to try, there are too many things set about the atmosphere.

Is it your intention to go on making short films also?

I would like, somehow, for everything I did to end up in the form of a feature—I think eventually I'd like to do a documentary feature, something which does not involve actors, or I might want to do a feature which was made up of three short stories, or like this next one will have some animated cartoon stuff in it. Because frankly in terms of your time and money it's just not worth it: the only shorts that you make anything on are the sponsored ones, and they're seldom the things that you feel artistically free with; and features in a way are the most free; the only criterion that interests investors is whether it's going to make money, and there are a lot of ways of doing that.

In your new film will you have the same fable quality that you used in Crazy Quilt?

Well, it should be both more comic and more serious; it's about an actor who is so facile and not only talented but affable and charming at being anybody he wants to be, or anybody somebody else wants him to be, that after a while he doesn't know who he is. The whole thing is really about self-consciousness: about a guy who is always listening to himself as he talks, is always aware of how he's looking—but it's not about an artificial guy; no one is bothered by this except

him. And as the film goes on, the problem is where does the actor in him begin and the real person leave off? How does he establish some integrity? But the comic parts of it will be from the fact that he's a genuinely funny guy.

It'll be a San Francisco story. Last time, we had to kind of hide the fact that this was shot in San Francisco, because it was a fable and the setting had to be universal. The next one should be very obviously San Francisco; the guy had been in New York and he's sick of it, and this is the end of the road: he got on a bus and this is where he ended up. It's a funny thing, because with *Crazy Quilt* one of the local critics said he thought *Crazy Quilt* was quite a European film, and compared it to Truffant and so on, but other people came up to me and said this is the first really American film I've seen for a long time.

HARRIET R. POLT

Notes on the New Stylization

To anyone who follows film trends, it is obvious that the films of the sixties are radically different from those produced and praised in the forties and fifties. Italian neorealism, the British social-awareness school represented by *Room at the Top*, not to mention such postwar American "realist" pictures as *Marty* or *The Goddess*, have already been relegated to the film societies, where they are viewed in awe as the incunabula of another era. The entire aesthetics of "realism," exemplified in its extreme by Siegfried Kracauer's *Theory of Film*, seems oddly dated today.

The films of the sixties are characterized by something quite different from yesterday's realism. To call it "neo-unrealism" is too flippant. Let us, for now, use the term *stylization*. A precise definition must await its anti-Kracauer. Rather than giving one, let me give some examples which may help to clarify what's needed.

Among the "new" stylistic devices of the sixties, one notices an entire group of silent-comedy techniques. The trick shot, speeded-up action, and of course the chase are devices that modern films as diverse as *Help*, *Tom Jones*, *The Great Race*, and *Shoot the Piano Player* have in common with the silent comedies of the teens and twenties. Other techniques are more original to today's films. Among these I would place quick cutting, which, though of course not new, has not been used with such frequency since Eisenstein and Pudovkin, nor was it used by them to a comic purpose. New also are stop-motion (*Tom Jones*, Richard Lester' films, *Last Year at Marienbad*, many of the Eastern Euro-

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pean films such as Jan Nemec's *Diamonds of the Night*, and, before all those, Truffaut's *The Four Hundred Blows*); the use of spliced-in documentary material; and the by-now almost ubiquitous allusions to past films (Clive Donner's *What's New Pussycat?* and many of the Nouvelle Vague films, notably *Breathless*). Finally there is out-and-out fantasy.* Not that fantasy is new; just that it has not been much used since the thirties or early forties. A few serious films today (for instance, *Alphaville* and Fellini's *8½* and *Giulietta*) use fantasy as their actual medium; more make use of it to create certain effects—e. g., the dropping dead of the mother in *Shoot the Piano Player*, or almost all of Louis Malle's *Zazie*, or the gliding motion of the lovers in an early scene of *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, of which more later.

To explore the causes, aesthetic and sociological, behind the groundswell changes of film style, from the earliest realistic newsreels of the 1890's, to the stylization of many films all the way from Méliès through the musicals of the forties, back again to realism in the forties and fifties, and now through the "cool" widescreen style again to stylization, would require a full-scale historical investigation. I would note here only that, with respect to current developments, the tendency to an in-turned, excessive borrowing from past works, as exemplified in the in-group allusions referred to above, is called *decadence* in the terminology of art historians. Aesthetic (and moral) prophets of doom, take note!

What seems remarkable is not that these devices, and the attitude toward plot and character which go with them, have come into use: makers of experimental or "art" films have always toyed with the nonrealistic. What *is* remarkable is to what extent a high stylization has become an accepted mode of the day. Audiences who in 1959 found *Breathless* astonishing for its quick cutting and unexplained scene changes, who goggled at *Hiroshima mon Amour*'s juxtapositions (flashbacks with dialogue taking place at the present) and its use of documentary material—far more, audiences who would never go near a theater playing such films, now accept the wild cuts and tricks of the Beatle films or the irrationalities and camp decor of *What's New Pussycat?* without batting the proverbial eye. *Tom Jones* appears to be the film that popularized (in the United States and Britain at any rate) what was already common practice among continental and experimental film-makers. It is not often that a film wins both the critical acclaim and the enormous popularity that *Tom Jones* did; and it was that popularity (I last saw the film on a plane between New York to San Francisco) that won the public's unquestioning acceptance of a highly stylized narrative technique.

As I indicated above, stylization was, though with different particular devices, characteristic of certain film genres of the past—as, of course, of genres of drama and literature as well. The musical is one such film genre. When the hero and heroine of a musical comedy break into song on the stage of a deserted theater to be joined suddenly by a full orchestra (as in *Singin' in the Rain*, perhaps the last great original Hollywood musical), nobody winces at the "unbelievability" of the scene—at least not after the first time, when the conventions of the form have been established. When the conventions are *not* firmly established, the breaking into song can be pretty jarring—as in Val Guest's *Expresso Bongo*; but perhaps that effect was intentionally ludicrous. Likewise in farce, we are not offended to find the characters—the Marx Brothers, for example—falling into stereotyped or stylized characterizations. We *expect* them to be what E. M. Forster calls "flat" characters (" . . . in their purest form, they are constructed round a single idea or quality . . . ") rather than "round" ones (who ". . . cannot be summed up in a single phrase").

Now, while today's stylized films fall partly into one or another of these genres (*Pussycat* and the Beatle films are farce, *Umbrellas* is a musical—and isn't it strange that the only good musical in over ten years should have been made not in Hollywood, but in France!), others

*For Kracauer's view on the uses and abuses of fantasy, see pp. 82–92 (Galaxy Books edition, 1965).

form a new genre of their own. How can you classify *Last Year at Marienbad*, for example, or even *The Knack*, which is not quite farce, not quite romantic comedy?

But the purpose of classifying films (or anything else, for that matter) is ultimately to aid one in forming judgments about them or in understanding them better. What, then, does the concept of stylization do for us? I hope to show that the devices of stylization may be a positive or a negative contribution to the film art, depending on how and to what end they are used; and to evaluate much of current cinema intelligently we are going to need a new understanding of these devices.

First of all, when used as an end in itself, stylization tends rapidly to become trivial and fatiguing. It cannot be denied that *Marienbad*, for example, is a totally original and thus in some senses intriguing film. Yet for the purposes of style—its very *own* style, admittedly—the film sacrifices almost all of the other qualities which normally contribute to making a film interesting—a plausible (not to mention intelligible) story line, characters readily identifiable with some sort of humanity, whose actions are believably motivated, a significant insight into life or personality, and so on. *Marienbad* is *styled* rather than stylized—in the sense that hair is styled; and like hair that has been styled, it bears little resemblance to the real, lifelike product. Style *per se*, like camp aesthetics, is momentarily amusing, but finally a dead end. Perhaps this is true decadence.

As for the films which fit more or less easily into the standard genres of farce or musical, these must obey certain ground rules of the genres. Perhaps all that this means is that they must make us willingly suspend our disbelief and accept their basic conventions of plot and character. To this end, the plot must have its own internal logic, and the plot incidents must show us something about the characters involved in them. As an example of the latter, when the policeman approaches Harpo propped against a building (I believe this occurs in *A Night in Casablanca*) and says, "What do you think you're doing? Holding up the building?" and the building collapses as Harpo moves away, the episode shows us not Harpo's stupidity, but the deeper stupidity of the rest of the world. In one of the new stylized films, *Help*, internal logic, or willing suspension of disbelief in illogic, is exemplified by the fact that we are able to accept the premise that if Ringo is caught with the fatal ring on, he will be painted red and sacrificed.

The "group therapy session" in WHAT'S NEW PUSSYCAT?

Failure to abide by these virtues—subterranean logic and relevance—results in a film like *What's New Pussycat?* Whereas *Marienbad* is stylization personified, *Pussycat* simply has the effects added on, like gingerbread detailing on a house. Visually, the picture has a lot to offer: the *art nouveau* interiors and exteriors, the *avant-garde* clothes, and the general bizarrerie, not mention the excellent animated titles. Yet all the stylization—the "visuals," as well as the editing, the chase, the allusions to various far-flung films—all of this is cheaply come by and irrelevant to the action of the film, which is anyhow too flimsy to hold together.*

An example of the other extreme, a film which makes use of stylization to its advantage

*For Clive Donner's comments on the style and setting, as well as his answers to some pertinent questions, see the interview with him in *Movie*, Autumn, 1965. Among other things, Donner claims that *Pussycat* is "highly moral" and that Seller's wife, the Walkyrie, is "not unreal looking." Is he putting us on?

rather than to its ultimate detriment, is Jacques Demy's *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*. The most striking features of *Umbrellas* are the music (by Michel Legrand) and the color. As in opera, *all* the dialogue is sung. In the movies this is such a novelty that on the night I went, the audience broke into laughter at such lines as, "Can you work overtime tonight?" This laughter, embarrassed and somewhat resentful at first, turned, it seemed to me, into delighted laughter at the film's illogicalities towards the end. As for color: the sets and backgrounds (even the vivid green, spotted and peeling exterior of Guy's house) are handsome and startling. The clothes are calculated to match the wallpapers: most striking is the turquoise and pink flowered paper of Genevieve's room. In one series of scenes she appears in an almost-matching print maternity dress, first in the room, then walking with Roland in one of the few sunny outdoor scenes, then selecting a wedding veil among a forest of white-clad store dummies. The obvious elegance of Genevieve's mother's shop and apartment belie her claims of straitened circumstances, especially at the point when she tells Roland that a young girl like Genevieve must become bored in "this dreary shop." All of this visual beauty is obviously better-than-real and meant to be so.

Other examples of stylization abound. The background of the credits is a bird's-eye shot of people carrying umbrellas hurrying about in the rain: only, the "rain" is obviously poured in streams from three or four sources. And when Guy tells Geneviève of his draft notice, the two lovers are seen gliding, as on skateboards, down the street.

UMBRELLAS OF CHERBOURG

While these devices of stylization fit into the genre of the musical, others appear to be derived from opera (as is, of course, the sung dialogue) or even from plays or books. Like a book, the film is divided into "sections" with titles, and these sections themselves are divided into subsections with dates. Between sections and subsections Demy has left noticeable black intervals which emphasize the divisions. (Godard has made use of this practice in several films, though in his case the device is chiefly to set off blocs of action each one of which is, internally, more or less realistic; the resulting tension is perhaps the chief hallmark of Godard's style.)

As in farce or musical comedy—or fairy tale—the characters too are stylized. While the characterization does not entirely sacrifice realism — the relationship between mother and daughter is believably and nicely drawn, as is Geneviève's alternating disgust and pleasure at her burgeoning figure—it contains unrecognizable *types*: the faithful and faithless lovers, the "sensible" mother, the patient invalid. Stylization extends also to the physical beauty of all the major and minor characters.

In fact, *Umbrellas* is not so much a musical, nor even an opera, as it is a fairy tale. Haven't we seen all of these in countless fairy tales: the widowed mother earning her living in the little shop, the hero brought up by the selfless godmother, the unexplained hardship, the Prince Charming who suddenly comes to save the widow and her daughter and falls in love with the daughter literally at first sight? Nor can one neglect the pervasive, romantic music itself, and the wintry, isolated atmosphere; only two scenes take place in sunshine. Of course there has to be rain in order for there to be umbrellas; but why umbrellas anyway? Isn't is because the shut-in feeling of winter and rain is conducive to the fairy-tale mood? Snow is falling as the film ends. Like a fairy princess Geneviève reappears, her hair elegantly done up, and disappears again in her beautiful car (chariot?).

Admittedly the plot of *Umbrellas* is sentimental; what saves it from corniness is precisely its stylization. It is this that lifts the situation of love - pregnancy - separation - happy-end from

banality to something else. Whatever this "some thing else" is, it is within an area in which one doesn't expect the conventions of "real" life. The film's own conventions aren't too difficult to accept: once one gets over laughing at the musical setting of "Did you check the transmission in the Mercedes?" one soon accepts this manner of "speaking" as normal. And beyond that: one responds not only aesthetically, but also emotionally, because the situation presented in the film, however sentimental, but lifted out of banality, still contains something truer to our own dream fantasies than the hyped-up eroticism of *What's New Pussycat?*

All of this is not to say that stylization can be used only in the creation of a genre, new or old, or as a means of stimulating the dream fantasies of certain of us (after all, *Marienbad* did *that*, for some others of us). What I wish to point out is that stylization, if it is to have a meaningful application, has to become style: an inseparable and integral contribution to the film. Otherwise it will become—if it hasn't already—simply a fashionable fillip to be given to every new, "mod," or "camp" picture for the next few years; and then it will peter out unlamented.

JACKSON BURGESS

Student Film-Making: First Report

The volume of student film-making at American universities has become, in the past two or three years, so large that nobody can keep up with it, not even the professors. Since the following was written, at least fifty new pictures have been completed at UCLA alone. However, certain trends persist among student films, and the article below is intended to bring these into focus.

I saw my first student movies last spring at the University of California Student Art Festival in Santa Barbara. UCLA had sent ten short films and four or five student directors as part of their contribution to the festival, and their screening was easily the hit of the festival—partly, I suspect, because the student artists making up the audience are better at film-watching (having practiced it since, say, five) than at play-going, poetry-listening, or dance recital-watching.

I talked with some of the student directors and with Edgar Brokaw, then head of the Motion Picture Division of UCLA's Theater Arts Department, and found out a little about the conditions under which the films were made, but the films brought to Santa Barbara were selected for the festival theme of "The Comic Spirit in the Arts" and I suspected they weren't representative of UCLA student films. Brokaw agreed that I would have to see a good many more pictures to get any idea of what the student film-makers were really doing, so when the chance presented itself I went to Los Angeles and spent eight hours in a screening room on the UCLA campus, viewing student films. I've now seen thirty-one UCLA movies. They're made by students, some of them quite young, under very special conditions, and it would be silly to subject them to ponderous critical scrutiny. Nonetheless, they deserve to be taken seriously.

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THE STILL MAN

mental film the students make. They seem uninterested in the pot, perversion, and race complex of the New York experimentalists, or in the San Francisco-Berkeley cool style. The animators are a little more venturesome than the rest (although even they don't venture very far off the path blazed by Norman McLaren) and I saw one film, *Lately*, directed by Charles Wurst, which was referred to by other students as " 'way out" but which was, in fact, modern dance photographed in high contrast with some negative images. The closest thing to the underground, *i.e.*, homosexual, cinema that I saw was a film called *Catullus Silent*, directed by Ralph Sargent, in which a very funny Bohemian party is depicted chronologically, intercut with a series of very unfunny conversations between pairs of young homosexuals (three sets, as I made it out, in various combinations). *Catullus Silent*, however, has none of that stylish sadistic menace toward the audience; it is rather sad than angry.

I was further surprised that the great majority of the student films at UCLA are fiction films. Out of the 31 I saw, only four were documentaries. This, I'm told, is partly because of the problems of time or money. The director of a "beginning workshop" film is allotted 300 feet of stock (processing included) and normally shoots his picture in one or two days, while in the advanced workshop he gets 1,200 feet and is expected to shoot in three or four days. Almost all students wind up putting some of their own money into their films, ($20 to $200 for the beginners, $100 to $500 for the advanced) usually for more footage but sometimes for extra lab costs. The result is that few can pile up the yards and yards of footage that the documentarist works with, or have the time to spend day after day at the moviola. Also, of course, the documentary film-maker is essentially an editor, and the Motion Picture Division appears to discourage early specialization. Not many students have the temperament for that kind of work anyway. I was told by some of the older students that documentary is much more in vogue among the newer crop; one of them attributed this to the social consciousness which is sweeping the college-age population. Maybe.

The most impressive documentary I saw was *Goldwater à Go Go*, made by Michael Ahnemann and Gary Schlosser—a sardonic study of a teen-age Goldwater fan club in battle and defeat. Ahnemann and Schlosser made this as advanced students, but one excellent short documentary came out of a beginning class, done by a girl named June Steel. It's called *Retirement*, and is a clean, noncommittal study of a Jewish center for the aged in Los Angeles. A more ambitious job, Arnold Federbush's *111th Street*, done as a master's thesis, portrayed the attempts of a New York social worker to ingratiate himself with a street gang. It had nice details, but suffered from ill-advised attempts to give the material a dramatic structure which simply wasn't there. The other documentary was another beginning workshop production, a modest lyric by Phyllis Tanaka, called *Moving Day*; again, the director tried to make more out of the material than the footage would support; this time it was not drama but mood that was strained.

One of the most inventive of the present group of student directors is Robert Swarthe, who works mostly in animation. I've seen five of his short films. Beginning very much under the spell of McLaren, he has become more independent, but he seems to me rather a gifted and very witty editor than a director or animator. His best film is a sort of pop-art jape in which a very bombastic Hollywood musical score is roundly mocked by the images.

The humorous films, incidentally, almost all try to look like satire, but what they satirize is Hollywood and movies. It's in this "satire" that

you can see the extent of the students' Hollywood self-consciousness—the "satire" is really parody of movie conventions and clichés.

The fiction films suffer, by and large, from the expected youthful sins: prolixity and vagueness. Almost all are a bit too long—usually at the end, but some throughout. It is interesting, incidentally, to compare the beginning with the advanced work in this respect; one thing the students definitely learn is how to edit. The vagueness results, I think, largely from weak scripts and a tendency to edit rather for emotional tone than for narrative direction. A fiction film of 20 to 30 minutes, however, is in certain respects harder to handle than a feature-length film. You don't have such problems of tempo and dramatic structure in the shorter film, but on the other hand you don't have time to develop a character (or else you don't have time to do anything else). Thus it isn't surprising that these films rely almost entirely upon type-characters. That means that story becomes everything, and all too often the stories just aren't good enough.

The two best fiction films I saw were both quite conventional and straightforward. Interestingly enough, the director of one was the photographer of the other, and vice versa, and the two of them co-directed the *Goldwater* film. *The Still Man*, directed by Gary Schlosser and photographed by Michael Ahnemann, is a story about a professional photographer who, in a black mood brought on by a quarrel with his girl, allows himself to be seduced by a friend's teen-aged daughter. Her parents return unexpectedly, there is an awkward confrontation, and the photographer goes home and, as his telephone rings, puts the pillow over his head. *Rachel, Rachel*, directed by Ahnemann and photographed by Schlosser, is a portrait of a savage little Hollywood ball-crusher — a cosmetics-commercial actress who kicks one casual lover out of her bed, picks up a brash and lumpish hardware salesman, reduces him to jelly and boots *him* out, and is last seen tooling into the sunset in a sports car driven by a bearded *Playboy* type whom she is coolly setting up for the castration.

RACHEL, RACHEL

The two pictures differ sharply. Schlosser's film has the Hollywood virtues: sharp cutting, excellent pace, and terse, nervous energy. It is absolutely completely visual. The Ahnemann picture is equally visual, but shows a strong French influence—specifically, Truffaut's. It is oblique and understated and the photography (mostly hand-held camera) is almost languid. The energy of the Schlosser picture comes largely from cutting, and is narrative energy; the tension of Ahnemann's picture proceeds rather from the single images themselves.

Both pictures have their shortcomings. The acting is distinctly uneven and you get the feeling that the young directors are happier with their cameras and their editing machines and their labs than with actors. (This may be unfair, since they work with student actors.) The brevity of the films limits character development. Both directors tend to dramatize anguish to the point of celebrating pain, but *Weltschmerz* is, after all, the province of youth. Ahnemann tends sometimes to be a little over-tricky with his camera, and Schlosser a little jazzy.

They also have virtues, which are more interesting (and, one hopes, more important) than the virtues of their models. Each of the films conveys very powerfully a sense of the re-

lations of people to gritty, material actuality. The characters exist in a world of objects. In *Rachel, Rachel* the first lover is seen putting on his socks after Rachel has given him the heave-ho, and the camera takes time to watch him put on those socks. That brief attention to his pathetic and necessary involvement with things makes one of the sharpest moments in the picture. Both are painstaking in this sort of observation of minutiae, and neither one ever indulges in "dramatic" scenes developed for their own sakes.

The tendency to *Weltschmerz*, gloom, and deep breathing was underscored for me by the sudden appearance of one really stunningly charming film—*Hot Dogger*, directed by Dave Burrington. It's a simple vignette of an hour's amusement by a nine-year-old skateboard virtuoso. To a driving rock-and-roll score we watch the boy zoom down a long Southern California hill toward the sea. Through one of those dreary, graceless, characterless Los Angeles suburbs he passes like a god: graceful and self-sufficient. Charm is largely the capacity to take joy, and in this film the camera simply rejoices in the beauty and grace of the child. The content is in no wise questioned by the form: the intent is rather to extract the utmost in beauty from photographing a beautiful thing. We see the boy come to the beach, where he watches the surfers and shortly pinches a board (its owner is necking on the sand, but the camera is interested only in the boy swiping the board, not in what the necking means to him). He drags the board into the water and after some joyous splashing about he manages a short, triumphal passage on a run-out wave. He returns the board, retrieves his skateboard, and passes on down the sand.

Most of the student directors that I talked to asked me sooner or later if I had seen *Hot Dogger* and what I thought about it. Most were noncommittal when I told them I'd liked it immensely, and I sensed that they were embarrassed about it. They would agree that it was a finely made film, but almost all added, nervously: "Of course, it's awfully slick." An artist must be suspicious of facile charm, but to despise all charm on principle is inhuman; you wind up despising your own capacity to enjoy. The dangers of this sort of thing are illustrated by another student film to which it bears minor but interesting similarities: Carroll Ballard's *Waiting for May*. Here an old woman's lonely, noisy, unpleasant afternoon in a downtown Los Angeles park is intercut with an idyllic afternoon when she was young and beautiful and lived in a gingerbread house in a sumptuous garden and had, inevitably, a joyous, tender, derby-hatted lover. The disjuncture between the authentic old lady (photographed *cinéma verité*) and the fake beauty (photographed *cinéma coutourier*) is as jarring as those cuts in a cheap western from real rocks to studio rocks. There is no evidence in the real old lady that she was ever a beauty, ever beloved, or is, indeed, any particular human being; the intercuts attempt a comment upon the vulgarity of a Los Angeles downtown street scene, but the comment is actuated, so far as one can see from the images, purely by piety. It is a refusal to take the thing seen as sufficient in itself: precisely what *Hot Dogger* is willing to do. Of course, it's a hell of a lot easier to accept and enjoy youthful grace discovered in a setting of vulgarity than to accept and understand aged ugliness and indignity in the same setting, particularly for a young man who cares about the quality of his world.

(They care enormously, by the way. In film after film the directors and cameramen betray an anguished, and often irrelevant, awareness of the hideousness of Los Angeles.)

I suspect that many of the young directors would say that Burrington's film was the "better" technically, but with a sneaking suspicion that Ballard's approach is the more worthy. It makes me uneasy. An image-art needs to keep up its sense of beauty, and the hokey irony of supplying a real old lady with a fake young beauty is just as facile as any abandonment to mere charm, while perfecting your power to spot ugliness won't necessarily perfect your power to enjoy beauty. Also, while it may appear easier to wince at ugliness or pain than to enjoy beauty and grace (and may, in a sense, *be*

dangerously easier), it is really much more difficult. To do justice to the boy on the skateboard requires respect and love and sensual ease; but justice to the pathetic old woman in the dingy park in the ugly city requires respect and understanding, and maybe even love, for woman, park, and city, not in general, but in particular.

I talked with Schlosser and Ahnemann in Los Angeles about what kind of films they want to make. Both declared that they want to make commercial fiction films and they want, reasonably enough, to make them successfully. We talked about what help their UCLA degrees would be in The Industry. I had already been told by another student that he intended to conceal his university background when he went looking for a Hollywood job. Neither Schlosser nor Ahnemann went that far, but they agreed that their work at UCLA would not open any doors for them. Between them, they had heard of five or perhaps six students who, over fifteen years, had gone directly from the UCLA Motion Picture Division into Hollywood. They professed themselves satisfied with this; they felt that what they had learned at UCLA would give them a practical advantage, but they said they had never expected it would represent, to the studios, an apprenticeship. They did, at my questioning, admit that many of the foreign students returned to their native sound stages and were accepted, on the basis of their UCLA degrees, as trained film-makers, but they refused to find anything unfair in Hollywood's continuing snub of academic film training. "Those guys want to see you in action. You can't blame them."

"You can't blame them," of course, because academic training *doesn't* guarantee a young film-maker's competence. What, then, does it accomplish? Well, the student directors certainly come to respect the difficulty and complexity of their craft. What can be directly taught, they seem to me to learn very well: editing, elements of cinematography. The student director also has a chance to experiment, and that's something that an apprenticeship within the moving picture industry doesn't offer, and perhaps that is what a university film department can most usefully provide—not only for the sake of its students, but for the sake of the film. A university has many functions, of which the training of professionals is by no means the first. A university *is* a place of experiment, just as it is a place of cultural conservation, and in both ways it tries to keep the culture flexible by providing a sense of alternatives and openings, an awareness of options. This is something that doesn't get done unless it's done by universities or very similar institutions, and in the films, intensely competitive and horrendously expensive, the awareness of possibilities wider than those commercially feasible, or fashionable, is especially hard to preserve.

I would be happer about student film-making if more of the films I saw had given me the feeling that the students were taking advantage of this chance to experiment. But then, I probably wouldn't have liked the films as well.

POSTSCRIPT: Since Burgess wrote his article, budgets at UCLA for student film-makers have been increased. The first film is now budgeted at $100 (and probably about 800′ minimum is shot), while the second is budgeted at $500 (shooting, probably, 3-4000′). Consolidated Film Industries gives the students a discount, so the money goes a little further than it might seem. Eastman and DuPont, however, have shown no interest in attracting students to their product with similar discounts. Ahnemann and Schlosser's *Goldwater* was shot with a $500 budget and suggests the direction the students can now take. Similar free-wheeling films are now in production—on Synanon and on a wig-party. None of the advanced workshop films in the Fall, 1965 semester was shot in a studio. But these things tend to go in cycles. Louis Clyde Stoumen, a documentarist, is now on the faculty; Robert Hughes and James Blue are teaching in the Spring—but then so are Haskell Wexler and Claude Jutra. When the school moves into its new studios in the Fall of 1966, the new appurtenances will probably keep students off the streets for a while, and then there will be another reaction.—ED.

Film Reviews

TO LOVE

(Att Alska) Written and directed by Jorn Donner. Producer: Rune Waldekranz. Sandrews. Audio.

TWO PEOPLE

Director: Palle Kjaerulff-Schmidt. Script: Klaus Rifberg. Laterna Films.

It is, to be sure, a decadent age. Who could ask artists not to be obsessed with murder, incest, homosexuality, insanity, corruption, depravity, and atomic terror, when these are manifestly chief preoccupations of our time? (But it does get a little *tiresome.*)

Again, the death of the spirit is surely an eternal theme; who are we to gainsay the particular forms in which artists deal with it at the moment? Creeping Rotarianism! (But a concern with death ought to be inextricable from some concern with the value of life.)

Or, it is argued, the old order is decaying, and with it the old art, the old ideas of personality, the old ideas of morality; the times they are a-changing, and who dares talk of anything else when destruction is the order of the day? (But there must be reasons for watching a film rather than walking out—even if only the sentiment with which a great director ends his best film: Once more we have survived.)

Well, our doubts and counter-doubts will lead to no solution; the film-makers must provide that. We can only point, with a sense of irrelevant nostalgia, to the warmth of Renoir; if we look in current production for a related sympathy for man, we find it meeting an embarrassed reception: Truffaut's blundering philanderer, Kurosawa's ill-humored doctor, Buñuel's maddening saint. It is hard for most people to believe these are not some kind of con.

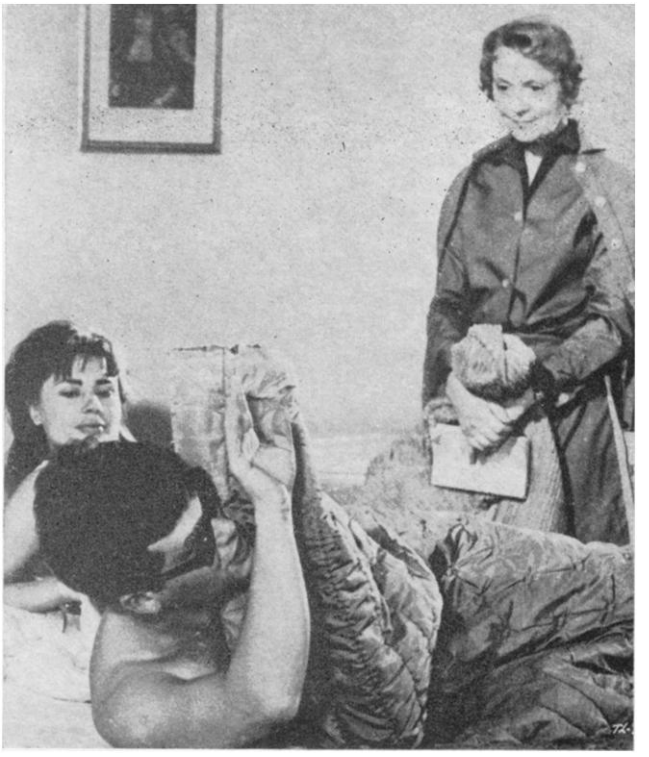
Possibly, of course, the trends we have been witnessing in the past several years are chiefly just a reaction against previous restraints—a massive post-adolescent symptom of release from the paternalism of censorship and the Code and church-centered morality. The impulse to subject Debbie Reynolds to homosexual incestuous rape might almost be considered a healthy one, I suppose; false gods and goddesses deserve especially grimy casting down, and a screen which has provided space for treacle cinema can expect to have unsavory things thrown at it when people get the chance. But to get much out of *épater les bourgeois,* you must have a bourgeoisie genuinely worth shocking, and you must have something truly revolutionary to shock it with. Sex, though it be ever so deviant, is out of the running, and who is interested in politics?

Of films I have seen in recent weeks, *Repulsion* uses insanity and murder in the context of a pseudo-psychiatric thriller; *Prima della Revoluzione* uses incest to illuminate the failure of middleclass revolutionary aspirations; *The Leather Boys* deals with the breakdown of marriage, and with homosexuality; *Inside Daisy Clover* explores Hollywood corruption, and homosexuality; *Le Soldatesse* examines a group of prostitutes; *King Rat* is about prison-camp corruption, and homosexuality; *The Hill* is about military sadism; *The Married Woman* concerns the death of even animal vitality under the onslaught of contemporary habits and artifacts; *The Loved One* hokes it up with death, homosexuality, rocket-mania, etc.; *Darling* is about the divorce of sexuality from emotion; *The Knack* is a would-be spoof of sexuality as consumersmanship. Even the outright comedies are not much different: *What's New Pussycat* tries to be a farce with good intentions, and comes out flabby. *The Great Race* capitalizes gleefully on malice, greed, ambition, pride, and the rest. If you want to watch a well-made film that is not engaged in showing how men are rotten to the core, you have practically no alternative to the Beatles.

But not quite. From Sweden and Denmark have come two small straws to cling to. Their source may be no accident; perhaps it will be the Scandinavians who show the rest of us how to be modern without being morbid. *To Love* is a zippy, wry, clear-headed yet warm picture about two people who like each other quite a lot

and have a good time in bed. The lady (Harriet Andersson) is a new widow; her changed circumstances give her changed ideas; a travel-agent acquaintance (Zbigniew Cybulski) happens to be nearby. Their encounter is narrated with an excellent sense of nuance and small comedy; director Jorn Donner, a Finn living in Sweden who wrote a rather curmudgeonly book about Bergman, manages to be knowing without being nastily reductive. The film has been criticized as merely a series of leaps into bed, and if there were no sequence and development that might be a charge worth discussing; but since in fact the bed scenes are worked out with considerable delicacy and variety I conclude the objection is really some kind of puritanism which dislikes people enjoying themselves on screen at any length. (Not that Donner goes into physical detail.) The film, after all, is *about* bedding: its significance in marriage and out, its degrees of seriousness, its emotional implications, its ramifications into family life (the woman has a child, and her mother is around a lot). I find all this worked out quite fascinatingly. Cybulski is offhand and detached at first; Andersson is uncertain, then increasingly open. A familiar but intriguing reversal occurs as Cybulski, always cool but not quite so diffident, begins to think marriage may not be so bad, while the liberated housewife thinks she prizes her freedom too much. . . . At the end, they face the usual crisis of commitment or break-up, which the film leaves unresolved, on a serious but not maudlin or hoked-up note.

It is an irony of the critic-turned-director phenomenon that Donner, who proved particularly dense about *Smiles of a Summer Night* in his book, has here produced a light and reasonably elegant sexual comedy which is more like that masterful film than any other Bergman. Donner, however, is more brisk and "modern," letting the principals carry the scenes but with abrupt cuts between scenes for wry effects; and of course his film is confined to a binary relaship (what the French call, disparagingly, "the problem of the couple") and has none of the intricacy of pattern of the Bergman.



Harriet Andersson and Zbigniew Cybulski: To Love.

Two People (or simply *Two*) is also about people you might enjoy knowing without any perverse hidden agenda: in this case a young and reasonable Copenhagen girl, and her not-quite-so-young and totally unreasonable boy-friend. He is a genius at making mistakes. It is not exactly that he is imperceptive, for he usually realizes to some extent what he has done; but he nonetheless does everything that will inconvenience, embarrass, displease, and ultimately infuriate her. He is erratic, irresponsible, without funds, shameless in his possessiveness yet entirely unprepared to acknowledge her feelings. She, naturally, is touched and fascinated by him; he is intense in a way her conventional boy-friends cannot approach, and she can never quite break with him. As the film progresses, his irregularity veers toward pathology: he cashes a check on her bank account, then buys her presents—thus clearly going beyond what she will accept; in a church-tower scene there are hints of murderous impulses, and suicidal ones, not very clearly worked out.

Kjaerulff-Schmidt's TWO PEOPLE.

The film is thus "just" an exploration of a relationship, vaguely chronological and with a certain underlying tension, set firmly into its city setting. *Two People* is rare among "youth films" in treating contemporary urban life matter-of-factly rather than trying to transfigure it into some analogue of hell, or transporting the characters to some Romantic site (beach, airport, etc.). He works in a movie theater; they spend a lot of time walking in the streets, or bicycling, or taking the streetcar. It is, I think, a better film than Kjaerulff-Schmidt's previous feature *Weekend,* because far firmer in its handling of the characters. *Weekend* was an account of a halfheartedly decadent seashore weekend among some young Danish married couples, catalyzed ineffectively by a bearded artist; it tended to make everybody look and feel alike, leaving you both confused and bored —yet that was not, you gathered, supposed to be the point. A tendence toward a straightforward reflection of Danish society was clearly at work, but no interesting perspective had developed as yet. Although *Two People* is less complex in plotting, it has a new sharpness of observation—and better acting upon which to exercise it.

I like these films partly because they have pleasant people in them—a factor not enough admitted in criticism—and partly because they seem to me an interesting development toward a calm and unhysterical realism of character—not a Realism pushing toward some great metaphysical or political "truths," or even a Neorealism anguished over the state of the world, but an observational realism such as we also find in Satyajit Ray, which is willing to study its characters without *using* them as pawns in some game or other.

This kind of film-making runs the same risks as *cinéma-verité*: the characters must, then, really be interesting, and this puts demand upon the actors which few, admittedly, can meet. Whereas in a thriller like *Repulsion*, it is not catastrophic that the girl is a total blank as a character; we're not really interested in her, but in a filmic artifact, "her madness," which entails hallucinations, violent acts dissected with special lenses and ultraquick cutting, scary music, and all that. Polanski does a good job of it; but it is still easy work, both technically and because you can thus escape difficult matters of perspective and attitude and understanding. If Polanski presented his mad girl in any depth, he would have had to face the problems of character and the development of character that Bergman and Harriet Andersson struggled with in *Through a Glass Darkly.*

But I think we must ask our film-makers to do this. All talk about the Cinema of Appearances aside, films cannot, any more than the novel, avoid taking stock of character. The shocks that can be worked up out of "depravity" or insanity have already become intolerably petty. It is true that our situation is desperate—but only our unhistorical vanity can make this seem unique. Human beings, luckily, can still be interesting and even engaging creatures. It would be good if more of them got onto the screen.

—ERNEST CALLENBACH

GERTRUD

Director: Carl Theodor Dreyer. Script: Dreyer, from the play by Hjalmar Soderberg. Photography: Henning Bendtsen. Score: Jorgen Jersild. Production: Palladium. Pathé Contemporary.

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difficulty about Dreyer's work and personality does not consist in ideological or aesthetic incomprehensibility, for he is usually clear, if not simple, in his message and its form of expression. It consists rather in his uncompromising search for unpopular artistic and moral truths, and his unrelenting pursuit of his own way of expressing these truths. The extraordinary thing about his work is, perhaps, less their visual beauty and emotional strength, than the effect this beauty and strength has and has had on his contemporaries. He is, and always was, an artist who commands strong sympathies and provokes strong antipathies. He never lets his audience off the hook. He never repeats the obvious, but he always gives you *time* to see it. He makes everything plain, but nothing simple or easy. The strong emotional impact of his films is the one thing that unites them all, in spite of very striking stylistic differences.

All this has been proved true once more with the release of *Gertrud,* which was greeted (both in Paris, where it was first released, and in Copenhagen and Stockholm) with more attention and controversy than could possibly have been foreseen, for it was not just, as expected, among the initiates. The film set off a chain-reaction and made critical mechanisms go clicking at all levels, from that of the professional movie critics, some of whom were extremely hostile, while others were absolutely enchanted, to that of the man in the street who could not care less about aesthetic points. The film has been called everything imaginable, from a sublime elegy in pictures, to the trashy work of a dilettante; from a work utterly dead and antequated in style and in ideas, to a vital work representing the height of modernity in both respects. And its heroine has been admired and loved as unreservedly as she has been despised and hated by people who are otherwise not given to strong expressions of emotion.

As for the epithets "antiquated," "stagnant," "unfashionable," and "reactionary" (a few of the designations used by the hostile critics who, at first, were in an absolute majority) they don't convey anything new in attitudes to Dreyer's works, as these are the exact terms that have

Dreyer's GERTRUD

been used about his works ever since *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1927), and they have been used more particularly about those aspects of his works that in retrospect seem most exciting and anticipatory of important cinematic developments. Nor is it anything new that people walked out scandalized at the première and that hisses and boos drowned out the dialogue. The surprising thing is rather that the tide turned quicker than has usually been the case with Dreyer's films. Within a few weeks after the first avalanche of pans and protestations of horror at the old master's final failure, more thoughtful analyses started to appear in periodicals, and by the end of the year the positive voices were much stronger, if not in a majority. The objections were and are really to what a certain type of critic has always been intensely annoyed at in Dreyer's films: his absolute disregard of what is done or not done in the films of the moment and to critical dogmas of any kind, his stubborn sticking to his own artistic instincts and convictions, which must of necessity be exasperating to the people creating and following the fads of the moments. The recognition, on the other hand, has been a realization of those very traits as highly valuable, and of the fact that his instincts were once more right. Apart from that the subject of the film has aroused extra controversy, although—or because—it is essentially the story Dreyer has always been telling, with the moral he has always pointed: the story of the individual pitched against organized repression, waste, and cruelty, and of the pains and penalties as well as the necessity of heresy.

This controversial effect of the film has to some extent blurred the view of it as a work of art. And it is impossible to treat the film without consideration of this effect for it is part of the unusual character of this film, as well as of Dreyer's works as such. I shall discuss *Gertrud* first, in terms of its treatment of subject, next in terms of Dreyer's intentions, and finally in terms of its timeless meaning. These three aspects are, of course, not separable in actual fact, but they are useful categories when analyzing such an apparently simple, but actually very complex work.

The film is based on a 1907 play by the Swedish writer Hjalmar Søderberg (who based *his* work on true incidents in the lives of real people). It seems to follow the play closely, but it is more important what Dreyer (who as usual has written his own scenario) left out and added than what he left in. The play is a minor, if competent, effort—a domestic drama with ironic overtones, heavily pessimistic, and with distinct undertones of animosity and contempt toward the heroine. It deals with a well-known adulterous situation: Gertrud is a mature career woman (a singer) married to a politically ambitious lawyer. Her marriage has become empty and meaningless, and she seeks love with a young composer, deciding to leave her husband for her lover. Her past emerges with the return of a celebrated poet, with whom she had lived before her marriage. At the end of the play she leaves all three men, none of whom can meet her demand for absolute love.

Out of this material Dreyer has made something much more significant. He has carefully removed all topical and satirical references to minds and manners of the time, and he has made Gertrud the unconditional heroine by removing all traces of contempt for her (or for woman as such) and emphasizing her superiority of intelligence and character. And he has added a fourth man as a stage in Gertrud's development and an epilogue that turns out to be a key-scene, making it plain that Gertrud's "choice of herself" was right for her, but that it was costly. All this has been translated into a film of the usual majestic Dreyer slowness of speech and movement, and the usual Dreyer "purified realism" of milieu and carefully composed frames of great beauty. But it is a new departure in the handling of dialogue, which is more prominent than in Dreyer's earlier films, and in the extensive use of travelling camera and of semi-close-ups, rather than the *close* close-ups for which Dreyer is famous. The shots are very long, practically corresponding to entire scenes. The acting is stylized, but dictated by the cultural milieu, and convincing in its own way. "There was not a movement that Dreyer did not supervise and direct," says Bent Rothe,

who performed superbly as the husband. "None of the acting was ours, it was all his, expressing his ideas." The whole adds up to a rare stateliness, which is miraculously so simple, direct, and austere that it entirely escapes pretense and pompousness.

The film-maker's intentions are, of course, interesting only in so far as they are realized convincingly, and in so far as the artist is an interesting mind. Both are the case here. Dreyer's purity of heart—or "abominable naiveté," as one critic put it—has once more baffled critics, who want to see satire, or even some diabolic attack on human values, in this film. (It has been ingeniously suggested that *Gertrud* is a Christian satire on the futility of materialistic ideas.) But Dreyer cannot, according to his own words, for the life of him see why he should be satirical about perfectly charming, cultured people, and he insists on treating with tenderness and respect an age (his own youth) and a milieu that are often ridiculed or vulgarized. Nor can he see why he should make propaganda for some idea or faith, when the human lessons he draws from the section of life he is showing are so interesting in themselves. He follows the artistic principle of "divided sympathies," so that nobody is let down completely and nobody unduly glorified, but he does this out of honesty and insight, not as a principle. With his usual passion for truth—artistic, moral, and even factual, in short anything but naturalistic verisimilitude—he has based his additions to the plot on the real life of the person who was a model for the play's heroine. It all serves his art, even when he is not entirely conscious that it does so, but is more concerned with other aspects.

This brings us to the timelessness of the film—nothing less will do. A French critic, Maurice Drouzy, who has carefully compared the play and the film, reaches the conclusion that Dreyer "has transformed a domestic drama into a spiritual meditation on the loneliness of the soul and the possibilities and impossibilities of human love." That sums it up neatly enough. The film does register—as did the play—that life is futile and love doomed and Dreyer uses Søderberg's text to say so, though he uses his own groupings and lightings and his power of making the very silence speak to say it more effectively. But he also shows that however futile life may seem, he never really believes in its futility. His interest in the futility itself is "a desperate registration of some instinctive belief that life might be, could be, indeed *is* full of significance." To him what makes things petty is an everpresent sense of their latent grandeur. Gertrud herself, in Dreyer's interpretation, is both very human, to the extent of stooping to folly, and not human at all, but somehow universal, a tragic embodiment of a longing for the impossible, a longing followed with terrible consistency to the truly inexorable loneliness that is not merely hinted at, but demonstrated: the film ends with a hypnotic sequence in which Gertrud's room is virtually changed into a tomb under your very eyes—by the closing of a door, a shifting light, and the distant sound of bells.

Dreyer himself has subtitled *Gertrud* "a period piece," and a period piece it is, rendered nostalgically and with tender irony. It is also, in his intention, a tentative effort in the direction of the tragic film poetry which he believes will come about, when the truly cinematic tragic style has been formulated. The question is, however, whether he himself is not the tragic film poet he is waiting for. The style he has developed, and, with modifications dictated by his choice of milieu and theme has used in *Gertrud*, is certainly so close to film tragedy that probably only he himself could see any distance to the goal. It is an Apollonian kind of tragedy, in the vein of Euripides, the first "modern" tragic poet, but austere, almost Doric, in style. By creating it, Dreyer has refuted the words of his compatriot and contemporary, Isak Dinesen, to the effect that tragedy is no longer possible in modern times. Tragedy, he proves, is not only possible, but possible in the most modern of contemporary media.

Gertrud is an autonomous work strikingly different in style from Dreyer's earlier works, particularly from *Ordet*, his previous film, though reflecting a steady continuity of mind and feeling. But the film is also more than an indication that Dreyer's plans for a *Medea* (in non-

naturalistic color) and his other projects that have remained so long undone for lack of funds, will be worth anybody's time and money. It will certainly be a mystery to the future, if at this point nobody turns up in the eleventh hour to allow Dreyer to create more films, for even a failure of his would be infinitely more interesting than the successes of most movie-makers. And this in itself is a true measure of his greatness as a film poet.—ELSA GRESS WRIGHT

Julie Christie and Lawrence Harvey: DARLING.

DARLING

Director: John Schlesinger. Producer: Joseph Janni. Script: Frederic Raphael. Photography: Kenneth Higgins. Music: John Dankworth.

John Schlesinger's *Darling* is a film of excessive and self-defeating brilliance. Schlesinger is intelligent, but his approach is one-dimensional. His characters are fashionable types, his symbols are too often gimmicks; and *Darling* becomes a dangerously facile film.

Much of the film turns on the major symbol of glass. *Darling* is full of fine crockery and cruel glass walls, which jolt the light until it dazzles and blinds. At the beginning of the film when they are initiating their affair, Diana (Julie Christie) and Robert (Dirk Bogarde) look through broken windows into a deserted house that can be remodeled. Later the windows will be closed. In one scene Diana stands behind a window in the apartment she shares with Robert. He is typing, and she scratches at the window in pathetic pain and boredom. The window motif is carried further when Robert comes back one night after having left Diana. He looks up at the one window with a light in it, behind which Diana is entertaining Miles (Laurence Harvey). Robert goes upstairs to try to re-establish his relationship with Diana; but Miles comes out of the bedroom and Robert flees.

The window is but one glass symbol; there are others. When Diana watches Robert's family cleaning up their yard, she watches through a spyglass. When she has taken Robert from his family and is living with him, she writes messages to him on the mirror. All communication is like that lipstick on glass. It leaves a smear as she furiously tries to erase it when he has left her. Diana is trapped in a glass world. Even the organization for which she works is named Glass.

The paramount use of glass as a symbol is the goldfish bowl. It is central to much of the action; Schlesinger even takes camera shots through it. The fish—you guessed it—represent Diana and Robert. (To emphasize the parallel, Robert's surname is Gold.) After Robert leaves her, Diana returns to the apartment with Malcolm, an effeminate photographer (Ronald Curram). They drink and eat huge amounts of garish delicacies, and they pollute the fish bowl with them. The scene ends with the goldfish floating lifelessly on the surface of the fouled water.

There are several telling scenes using food in this symbolic way: the woman picking the meat out of a sandwich and leaving the bread; Diana dangling the shrimp as she talks to the Italian prince (Jose Luis de Villallonga) who wants to marry her; the lonely meal at the long table in her husband's palace. The characters eat, but they do not get substance.

Diana has lived an empty dream. She has been selected the "Happiness Girl," and subsequently has married an Italian prince, and she is the stepmother of seven children. But at the end of the film, she is totally alone. It is not clear how we are to take her; the film's ironies are both too neat and too uncertain. But at least

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the ending does not play upon sentimentality. Instead of an emotional parting between Robert and Diana, the film focuses on an old woman, with a half-belligerent, half-vacant stare, singing "Santa Lucia" in Piccadilly Circus. It is typical of Schlesinger's fondness for the social cameo; it has a detached, brittle effect, rather than a maudlin one, and it is effective.

There are many good things in *Darling*, even some brilliant moments. The scene where Diana is sunbathing with several men, and the timer buzzes, and they all turn over leaving her alone on her back, is a comment on several levels. Also, the stop-action modeling sequence is a stunning one.

But although it is cleverly conceived, the danger of Schlesinger's approach is that everything is so contrived that the film becomes essentially a tour de force. The characters become types. Everyone in the party scenes and street scenes is bizarre; and it all becomes incredible. The viewer begins to stop caring. There is witty line after witty line, clever shift after clever shift. Every bitter line draws a guffaw; yet the laughter is unwholesome, because it is excessive. Such wit, *Darling* proves, can become tiresome.—F. A. MACKLIN

THE LOVED ONE

Director: Tony Richardson. Producers: John Calley and Haskell Wexler. Script: Terry Southern and Christopher Isherwood, based on the novel by Evelyn Waugh. Photography: Haskell Wexler. Music: John Addison.

One's immediate reaction to *The Loved One* is to allocate blame. How to reconcile such a disaster with the talent that went into it? Rejecting the theory of coincidence of off-days, one conclusion remains: when faced with Waugh's book, what some considered talent is exposed as mediocrity.

The problem is that *The Loved One* is never parody, let alone satire, and rarely even reaches mockery. It lacks subtlety and insinuation. It is devoid of style, wit, and perspective. As light of touch as a kick in the groin, it arouses the same response.

The catalogue of faults is depressing, starting with the over-all conception. *The Loved One* takes place in Los Angeles, a city which is a living parody and refutation of itself. This is the one place in the United States (with the possible exception of Vermillion, South Dakota) in which a funeral emporium like Whispering Glades could be invented and accepted. The challenge, then, is to present the bizarre within this absurd framework. The film must convey the Los Angeles and Hollywood ambience. It does not. *The Loved One* could have taken place in England.

Robert Morse as Dennis starts the trouble. As the Englishman abroad he never convinces. He is less innocent than clumsy; more an eager clod than a bemused cavalier temporarily bereft of his wits. Since Morse's movement and gestures are purely external and his accent unconvincing, Richardson is unable to let him be our guide, and the film suffers from vagaries of perspective. On his initial visit to Whispering Glades, for example, he is conducted around, but we see the place from the point of view of how terrible it is—as depicted by a nudging sound track and camera. We do not see it from his innocent and naive and slightly bewildered and amusedly incredulous perspective which would justify his agreeing to everything that happens and fully participating in this mad colony. Nor does he ever persuade us of the credibility of his ultimate invention—sending the girl up in the rocket meant for the dead astronaut—for he has never displayed that crucial but slight British arrogance.

Similarly, to Dennis the girl is all external. She is presented by Anjanette Comer like some kind of beautiful ghoul. Thus her suicide is almost irrelevant.

Gielgud on the other hand seemed to be, by style and character portrayal, in a different and much better movie. For as the film thumps its points, only Gielgud provides a rapier to the heart. This happens in the scene in which the secretary says good-bye to Gielgud who has just been fired. She is kind and conciliatory and then asks him in a sharper tone if the painting he is carrying (which he has painted) is studio

the ending does not play upon sentimentality. Instead of an emotional parting between Robert and Diana, the film focuses on an old woman, with a half-belligerent, half-vacant stare, singing "Santa Lucia" in Piccadilly Circus. It is typical of Schlesinger's fondness for the social cameo; it has a detached, brittle effect, rather than a maudlin one, and it is effective.

There are many good things in *Darling*, even some brilliant moments. The scene where Diana is sunbathing with several men, and the timer buzzes, and they all turn over leaving her alone on her back, is a comment on several levels. Also, the stop-action modeling sequence is a stunning one.

But although it is cleverly conceived, the danger of Schlesinger's approach is that everything is so contrived that the film becomes essentially a tour de force. The characters become types. Everyone in the party scenes and street scenes is bizarre; and it all becomes incredible. The viewer begins to stop caring. There is witty line after witty line, clever shift after clever shift. Every bitter line draws a guffaw; yet the laughter is unwholesome, because it is excessive. Such wit, *Darling* proves, can become tiresome.—F. A. MACKLIN

THE LOVED ONE

Director: Tony Richardson. Producers: John Calley and Haskell Wexler. Script: Terry Southern and Christopher Isherwood, based on the novel by Evelyn Waugh. Photography: Haskell Wexler. Music: John Addison.

One's immediate reaction to *The Loved One* is to allocate blame. How to reconcile such a disaster with the talent that went into it? Rejecting the theory of coincidence of off-days, one conclusion remains: when faced with Waugh's book, what some considered talent is exposed as mediocrity.

The problem is that *The Loved One* is never parody, let alone satire, and rarely even reaches mockery. It lacks subtlety and insinuation. It is devoid of style, wit, and perspective. As light of touch as a kick in the groin, it arouses the same response.

The catalogue of faults is depressing, starting with the over-all conception. *The Loved One* takes place in Los Angeles, a city which is a living parody and refutation of itself. This is the one place in the United States (with the possible exception of Vermillion, South Dakota) in which a funeral emporium like Whispering Glades could be invented and accepted. The challenge, then, is to present the bizarre within this absurd framework. The film must convey the Los Angeles and Hollywood ambience. It does not. *The Loved One* could have taken place in England.

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Ayleen Gibbons as "Ma" Joyboy: THE LOVED ONE.

property. His response, words, and particularly gestures, raise the film to a penetrating height it never again attains.

As for the others, Morley plays himself; Steiger is erratic, starting to build a character and then suddenly subsiding into mannerisms. Winters sometimes touches the depths of the diabolical reverend.

I dwell on the performances because when lightness and underplaying is required, too often we see parodies of caricatures. Liberace as a casket salesman comes closer to what is needed, playing his role as straight as he is able in a wonderfully cloying way; especially good is his expression of petulant annoyance when Dennis says the body might wear its own clothes.

There were other things wrong. Too often the sound was inaudible; the dubbing was poor. Richardson' technique seemed self-consciously derivative, and the best shot in the film (the interior of the funeral parlor from on high) is reminiscent of *Citizen Kane*. There is another shot, in which Margaret Leighton holds a gun with just the hand and gun projecting into the frame, which comes straight from Godard. Many transitions do not work or, even worse, obtrude. For example Dennis and his uncle talking at lunch is suddenly cut to outside where they are continuing their conversation at exactly the same point. But the meal had not been over at the time of the cut. It is a petty thing but indicative of the frequency with which contrivance replaces imagination or even expertise. In the same vein, soundtrack often overlaps change of scene, but to no point.

The photography is a great disappointment. It is as if Coutard never existed. When stylization is demanded, we see only conventionality and standard Hollywood which vitiates the film's theme.

More important, *The Loved One* simply does not hang together. It lacks any feeling of coherence, direction, organization, and inevitability. It is episodic in the bad sense of unrelated. In *Strangelove*, Southern had a novel which contained an inexorable drive, a central question (will they or won't they get through?) to which everything was tied. There is no such unifying bond here.

Southern's forte (like Woody Allen's in the much funnier if less ambitious *What's New Pussycat?*) is for the one-shot gag on the obvious target. This can be funny, as *Strangelove* proved. Thus a whole succession of targets is briefly bludgeoned. But in this case, what may have seemed droll in conception is too often dull in execution, and cheap. As an example, the British colony in Hollywood invites fun with its crass, comfortable combination of Sammy Glick and the tea-sipping raj. There is a brief attempt at this but it hardly rises above the club meeting in which President Johnson's portrait is taken down and replaced by the Queen's to the accompaniment of the National Anthem. Similarly an elephant gets in the way when Dennis and his uncle are talking. It is not particularly funny and, more important, it has little relevance to the film's theme or purpose.

Worst of all, images and words tend to reinforce each other not like a bow and arrow but like a tank and howitzer, or a bullet and poison.

Clearly the Marx Brothers should have made the film when the book was originally written, bringing to it the right combination of verve, imagination, and absurdity. As it is, British social consciousness and American technique have combined to produce what can only be called Hollywood gauche.—DAVID PALETZ

THE LEATHER BOYS

Director: Sidney J. Furie. Producer: Raymond Stross. Script: Gillian Freeman, based on the novel by Eliot George. Photography: Gerald Gibbs. Allied Artists.

The Leather Boys should be retitled *The Naugahyde Fellas*, for a more synthetic product would be hard to find. The film concerns a young English mechanic (Colin Campbell) who marries his teen-queen (Rita Tushingham) and soon finds out that married life isn't even a cup of tea; the bride just wants to have fun, and soon things are down to beans every night and a lot of quarrels and slamming of doors. Comic relief is provided by motorcycles, of which the hero has one, which brings him into contact with a cycle clyde (Dudley Sutton), or bike freak. The new boy is so queer for the gear that even Shirley Temple could tell him from the regulars, but not Our Hero. They end up bunking in his gran'mum's guest room (in a campy brass bed), but, we are to understand, nothing happens.

Time passes. The two chaps have become best buddies, having scads of "giggoos" (giggles), while the bride lives alone or with an occasional she has taken up with. On a long gang tour to Edinburgh the two normals are thrown back together, but not for long, and Black Leather makes his final squeak: that they should (just the two of them) ship for New York or other foreign parts on a freighter. The groom is just about to pull an Ishmael when, in a pub on the waterfront, he suddenly realizes the Truth about the Merchant Marine, and cuts out on the saddest queer *you* ever saw.

I should apologize for the levity, but I won't; too much happy slop has been spilled over this film. The story is potentially tragic, even believable, but wait until you see Rita the Tush struggling with the role of teen chippy, complete with beehive hairdo and chewing gum. Campbell (who seems to have plenty of potential talent) is forced to play opposite a three-dollar-bill which he must pretend is straight currency, and Sutton has been assigned the task of playing a queer who is supposed to be enough of a regular guy to fool the hero but still faggoty enough to let the audience in on the secret. I can't go along with the theory that homosexuals are our no. 2 minority, but I do think that their situation is a pathetic one, and that legitimate drama could be made out of materials suggested by this particular story.

There *are* miserable teen marriages, there *are* plenty of deviants attracted to black leather and cycles, and there *are* normal young fellows who, placed in such a situation, would react ambiguously. But, except for Gladys Henson, who turned in a fine performance as the hero's bereaved grandmother, picked on and pushed around by everyone except him and his buddy, the cast seemed uncertain as to what was going on, and a potentially realistic vehicle collapsed like a Moto-ped trying to keep up with a 500cc Triumph.

It remains to be added that the attempt to use the cycles symbolically, and to jazz up the visuals in the race to Edinburgh, comes off lamely; it is only in the interiors, where he can play the characters against the seedy homeyness of working-class England, that Furie comes near a style.—JOHN SEELYE

The roadside café: THE LEATHER BOYS.

REPULSION

Director: Roman Polanski. Producer: Michael Klinger and Tony Tenser. Script: Gerard Brach and Roman Polanski. Music: Chico Hamilton. Photography: Gilbert Taylor. Columbia.

Ever since Roman Polanski, the Polish director, enacted the adolescent tough who beat up one of the protagonists in *Two Men and a Wardrobe*, his work as actor or director has led one to expect surprises; he is a one-man embodiment of total cinema, from initial idea to final print. Polanski's short films are all fresh evocations of mankind's greediness, charm, humor and deadly self-concern in the struggle for survival. His youthful cynicism is present in every composition of his films, and now that he has left Poland to make feature films in England, his dark sense of humor, linked to Hitchcock's theories of suspense, has led him to make a horror film entitled *Repulsion*. It is as unlike *Knife in the Water* as one could imagine, and as an additional stroke of cinematic mischief, Polanski has chosen fragile Catherine Deneuve to play his schizoid heroine, infusing Demy's princess with a stark witchcraft nature, alternately catatonic and violent. After the eclecticism of his Polish shorts and first feature, *Repulsion* might appear to be a work of less stature in subject-matter, but its psychological implications and mastery of social criticism are very intact. Polanski has chosen *his* London with an understanding eye, and what we see is true to life as far as the context of the story is concerned. The director has collaborated on the screenplay, essentially a one-woman show about a beautiful French manicurist, Carol who lives with her sister Helen (Yvonne Furneaux) in London. Their relationship is strained because of Carol's withdrawn, odd behavior, but her sister has long since accepted this and concentrates upon her own love affair with a married man (Ian Hendry). Carol is aware of her eccentricity, but prefers to remain in her private world of reverie, often to her disadvantage, particularly during her working hours in a swank beauty salon. (The customers are mostly old, lacquered harpies who lie under sheets with their faces caked with creams, mud packs or oil restoratives, calling out pettish orders for "Fire and Ice" on their fingernails.)

Since the spectator anticipates horror, he is able to savor Polanski's deliberate, ominous pacing of narrative as a method of suspense; but Polanski is not yet a master of the "Hitchcock tease." The continual shots of Deneuve's listless catatonia on the London streets, her movements counterpointed by Chico Hamilton's American jazz (strangely like Komeda's lilts in *Two Men and a Wardrobe*) tend to grow rather monotonous, and, after Furneaux leaves for a weekend vacation, Deneuve's lonely aberrations in the gloomy apartment have to *surpass* an audience's eager expectations of horror. Whether or not Polanski succeeds in this respect is a matter of conjecture. We do watch two exceptionally brutal murders, but these are less memorable than Carol's detailed descent into homicidal insanity. Her mental decay is symbolized by the carcass of a skinned rabbit which is left on the kitchen sink, gradually becoming a fly-blown piece of fleshrot as Carol struggles in and out of her hallucinations of masculine intimidation or physical rape. She experiences an apprehensive chill upon hearing a stranger breathe amorously over the phone, and in one of the film's most agonizing (and sensational) sequences, Carol lies in bed, listening to her sister's love-gasps in the next room. The psychological effect of this episode is unnerving enough to make even a sophisticated film audience titter with embarrassment, yet one marvels at Polanski's brilliance in throwing the structure of *Repulsion* askew with such Kafkaesque impressions. An inquisitive matron with a dog, who lives at the far end of the hall, remains an impressive figure by simply wearing the bundled mufti and indignant bearing of an authentic snoop; she evokes laughter and just enough of a hint of menace to make one regret that she never becomes more than a fragment of Polanski's London.

The most frightening moments as far as the tradition of cinematic horror is concerned lie, first, in those sudden appearances of a phantom assailant who springs into view upon the casual swingback of a mirrored door, or leaps out from beneath a pile of bedding. Secondly, a lengthy scene between Carol and her landlord (Patrick Wymark) is a suspenseful, extremely Polish mix-

ture of humor and doom. When the director allows this sequence to explode, he is not afraid to present his audience with the *grandest* Guignol. Here, Polanski toys with his experiment in terror and its effect, and perhaps by the time this sequence occurs, many spectators will have lost interest in the accomplishment of murder and begin to reflect upon the reasons for Carol's madness. After this point in the film, the linkages with Hitchcock disappear and one is suddenly aware of an updated atmosphere of Kensington horror, in the literary neighborhood of Marie Belloc-Lowndes. Once death has stalked through the film, Polanski tries to tidy up the chaos.

A closer look at Deneuve's performance justifies Polanski's choice of this particular actress and illuminates his abrupt shift from the horrific style to the firmer realities of cinematic satire. Unfortunately, the simple gestures of dementia utilized by Deneuve (awkward jabs at an itchy right nostril, smearing of lipstick, blank stares, and so on) are rather unconvincing, a mixture of Krafft-Ebing and such Hollywood schizisms as *Lizzie* and *The Three Faces Of Eve*. However, the film's thematic indictment of society is made with sardonic and succinct visual ironies. The acceptance of beautiful women as physical objects of desire and the complete indifference of modern society toward the bizarre (this glamorous era of eccentricity, when odd behavior, no matter how outrageous, is considered to be "individualistic") makes it easy for insanity to flourish, undetected by mothers, sisters, prospective lovers, and employers. In other words, Carol's physical beauty is so dazzling that one would never think of branding her with the description of homicidal maniac.

The final sequences of the film exemplify those areas of social satire that Polanski handles so authoritatively: in the shambles of apartment fifteen, he studies the Britisher's reaction to gore as Carol's neighbors crowd into the rooms. There is curiosity on their part, with each face a splendid reflection of prurient horror, but there is also inherent in them a somber awareness of the *dignity* of the situation; after taking a good look round, an elderly gentleman decorously puts out the lights before leaving the chaotic

Catherine Deneuve and Yvonne Furneaux: REPULSION.

living-room. The inescapable reality of human aberration always numbs the sensibilities, especially in England, where decorum in the midst of murder is a part of the social and literary tradition. In the unnatural order of violent death, only the English are able to master the paradoxical conflict of repulsion and pleasure which represents the passion of restraint, a mood that seemingly dominates the country when viewed by a foreigner. It is etched sharply in that moment when Michael holds the unconscious Carol in his arms, pitying her terrible madness and yet still drawn to her beauty. Here, a young Polish director is trying to express this mood and when he has his cinematographer (Gilbert Taylor) show us some nuns in white, playing volley ball in a convent yard, or Carol's boyfriend (John Fraser) stealing a look at a girl's buttocks, the intense close-up of a lock on a battered door, or costermongers playing *Waltzing Matilda* on the streets (a trio of lyrical senility, bent, ignored and indifferent to the city's alienation) Polanski is consciously balancing out the juxtaposed events of Carol's illusions and London's reality. He fails only once in the latter sphere, with two jokers in a pub, intended to supply comic relief. But as a whole, *Repulsion* succeeds as a psychological study of the paraphernalia of madness.—ALBERT JOHNSON

PIERROT LE FOU

Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Producers: Georges de Beauregard (Paris)/Dino de Laurentiis Cinematografica (Rome). Techniscope & Eastmancolor. With Jean Paul Belmondo and Anna Karina.

Pierrot le Fou opens at night with scenes of a river while a voice (Belmondo) reads to us about Velasquez the painter, we are told, of twilight, silence, and space at the time of the *auto de fé*. This is a transformation of the opening of *Le Petit Soldat*—Bruno driving into Switzerland at twilight telling us not about Velasquez but Klee. The opening scene of *Pierrot le Fou* comments on a bourgeois party that occurs a bit later. Inside the room there is loud talk and no space; instead of the modulated shadows of Velasquez we see color and at times everything is red. There is no Inquisition, but the quality of life is tense and sterile. People pledge loyalty in an automatic way to the new gods; they speak pop talk; the men plug the virtues of Oldsmobile; the women touch their hair and advertise their brand of hairspray.

Then we see Belmondo at the party. He faces us with his back to a bar. There is a girl on his right. To his left there is a man in dark glasses. The man tells us he is Sam Fuller, an American film-maker, and defines film as a "battleground: love, hate, action, violence, death; in a word, emotion." Because Belmondo cannot understand American, the girl translates Fuller's statement into French. This scene derives from *Le Mépris*. It is taken in a single long shot and is not intense but distanced from us. Fuller, unlike Palance, is not developed into an epic figure and disappears from the film. His values, however, which are an extension of the romanticism of *Le Mépris*, are acted out in *Pierrot le Fou* as dull and inane.

After Belmondo leaves the party (his wife remains behind flirting with an important business contact) he drives away on an anarchic fling with Karina, his babysitter. They stop at a gas station to refuel, and after a Zazi-like slapstick fight with the attendants drive away without paying. It resembles the red gas station that Bardot and Palance stop at near the end of *Le Mépris*. It is a "Total Gas" station—at this moment total freedom and total chance seem to be the laws of *Pierrot le Fou*. Soon, however, they have to abandon their red Peugeot because the cops are after them. They calmly drive it next to a wreck whose occupants look like cardboard victims in a Drive Safely display. Karina shoots the gas tank, and the Peugeot goes up in flames. Then they walk away from us into a large green field—this is shown in a long shot that is held until they are far off.

Soon they steal a Ford (again cool slapstick mostly shown from a distance in a static long shot) and have a conversation about freedom. Belmondo demonstrates that he is not bound to travel straight down the road by making a sharp right turn and driving into the calm ocean. Again this is shown to us in a static long shot, and the characters seem small and insignificant in relation to the natural setting.

A sense of insignificance pervades *Pierrot le Fou*, quite unlike the romantic nihilism so frequent in Godard. In this respect *Pierrot le Fou* is unlike *Le Mépris* where, working with Homeric parallels, Godard elevated Bardot and Palance to the status of epic people who could not live in the real world. In *Le Mépris* the recurrent music and the first image (the camera slowly approaching us) expressed a determinism both psychological and external that infused the film, and gave the final sequence at the temple-like stairs an aura of magnificence and loss. In *Pierrot le Fou* the determinism remains. Although Belmondo makes flamboyant attempts to change his life the film ends with Belmondo a suicide and Karina shot by accident. It is summed up in a story Karina tells early in the film about a man who flees Paris to avoid death but is killed in a car crash en route to the Riviera. However the determinism is not expressed in the rhythm of *Pierrot le Fou*, which is very slack. This is a sign of Godard's new style.

The middle of the film, as in *Le Mépris*, is a long domestic scene. Belmondo and Karina attempt to find freedom and happiness in a very stylized and prolonged idyll in nature. Belmondo sits near the ocean with a parrot, putting down his few experiences in a notebook in late

Joyce style. Karina wanders very bored along the shore casting rocks into the ocean, repeating and repeating that she wants to have some fun. The problem is that they are not able to enjoy any of the emotions that Fuller speaks of at the start of the film. Karina complains to Belmondo "You speak to me with words, and I look at you with emotions." But neither words nor emotions have any intensity. Stealing and wrecking cars, going on the road without any money or responsibility, an interlude of contemplation and study at the beach—all are dull. Belmondo manages to drift through the idyll but Karina, like the girl in *Une Femme Mariée*, is just bored.

Karina also seems bored with making the film. In one scene she stabs a dwarf who is walking round her brandishing a pistol looking a lot like the Bruno-Godard young man with a camera who photographed Karina in *Le Petit Soldat*. In that film Karina was a "little girl from a play by Giraudoux" and carried a toy dog; now she is old, bored and the toy animal has become a combination toy and purse. Godard's use of personal experience is in tension with a more objective quality, a strained intellectualization that makes the film at once a bit slack and tumescent. There is a certain incongruity in the style, as there is in Poe whose *William Wilson* is alluded to in the film, something like the expansive dullness of Welles's Kafka; Godard seems to be working to express a new content.

Public as well as private events are seen from this point of view. The war in Vietnam is shown in a cross between a comic strip (the character's clothes change) and the style of a Chinese political play. Belmondo is dressed as an American sailor; he brandishes a gun at Karina who is in yellow-face and begs for her life in pidgin-Vietnamese. Several American tourists watch ("I like that, I like that a lot," they say.) At the end of the film Belmondo paints his face blue, and runs along a cliff flapping two batches of dynamite, trying to fly. He wraps the dynamite around his head, like a fence, and lights the fuse. From a distance of about a hundred yards we are shown the explosion. Belmondo's final withdrawal is as absurd as the war and the popgun battles the film has shown us. The immolation refers back both to Vietnam and to the *auto de fé*, to a history of futile destruction and self-destruction. (Pierrot's real name is Ferdinand. Godard makes this stick in our mind by often having Karina call him Pierrot to which he always retorts: "My name is Ferdinand." Ferdinand was the name of the king of Spain during the *auto de fé*; it is also the name of the prince who inspires Miranda to think of the "brave new world" that in this century has become a metaphor for the wasteland.)

The coolness that pervades the film, as I have said, is best expressed in Godard's use of long shots, by which I mean that the actors are photographed from a distance for a duration of time, that there is little dynamic action within the frame, that the camera does not move. The shot of Belmondo and Karina disappearing into the lush green landscape is quite unlike, for example, the shot from a distance of Palace striding back and forth on a stage-like embankment in *Le Mépris*. This coolness extends to the way figures and blocs of color are composed—the tense and taut beauty of composition in the long shots of *Le Mépris*, perhaps derived from the architecture of the gun battle near the end of Lang's *Rancho Notorious*, is rarely found in *Pierrot le Fou*. The key to the style of *Pierrot le Fou*, then, seems to me to be Godard's use of the long shot. Here let me refer to Eisenstein.

> And doesn't what is said here about written language seem a duplication of the clumsy long shot, which, when it attempts to present something dramatically, hopelessly looks like a florid awkward phrase, full of subordinate clauses, participles and adverbs of a "theatrical" *mise-en-scène* with which it dooms itself? . . . One may speak of the *phrase* as the author of "A Discussion of Old and New Style in the Russian Language," the Slavophile Alexander Shishikov, wrote of words: "In language both long and short words are necessary; for without short ones language would sound like the long-drawn-out moo of the cow, and without long ones like the short monotonous chirp of the magpie." (*Film Form*, p. 249–250.)

What is happening is that Godard has taken the equivalent in film language to the long, complex, hypotactically structured sentence of old-style

novels and used it to tell a tale that, regarded as a sequence of actions, is dramatic and paratactic. The result is a pop incongruity that, if we are overcome, renders absurb both the old style of telling and our dreams ofa new style of living.

—MICHAEL KLEIN

LE SOLDATESSE

Director: Valerio Zurlini. Producer: Moris Ergas. Script: Ugo Pirro. Score: Mario Nascimbene. Photography: De Nicoli.

LA 317E SECTION

Director: Pierre Schoendoerffer. Script: Schoendoerffer, after his own novel. Photography: Raoul Coutard. Score: Pierre Jansen.

Most war films cheat. The more serious ones often mar the realism of their portrayal with meretricious superfluities — an unquestioning patriotism, varying degrees of sentimentality, a kind of romanticization of death. Others are simply adventure films that happen to be set in wartime, and purvey the animal excitement of a fixed wrestling bout. In both cases, the truth hovers discreetly in the background.

In two recent films, however, the truth shows its ugly face. Valerio Zurlini's *Le Soldatesse* (The Campfollowers) deals with one of the less meritorious aspects of Italy's record in the last war. An Italian lieutenant has to escort fifteen Greek prostitutes in a truck from Greece to Italy. The prostitutes are a rag-bag of different types, some cynical and only too willing to sell their bodies to the Italians, others forced by necessity into a profession they abhor. As they jolt through Greece and Yugoslavia, they are picked off one by one either by sex-starved units of Blackshirts or by the unforgiving guns of partisans.

Le Soldatesse is full of the same subtlety that made Zurlini's previous films (especially *La Ragazza con la Valigia* and *Cronaca Familiare*) so rewarding. Basically, his style has many of the characteristics of understatement one finds in Antonioni: composition in depth, with the action often on several different planes, telling silences, eloquent looks, sparse dialogue. But there is one major difference. Antonioni is always tempted by formal experiment and tends toward abstraction (I am thinking especially of *The Red Desert*); Zurlini, on the other hand, gears everything to the progression of the narrative—by narrative I mean not only the story line but the evolution of relationships. And so whereas Antonioni's characters more often than not act ambiguously, in Zurlini's films every thought and motive is crystal clear. This is why *Le Soldatesse,* although extremely slow-moving, is always resonant and full of emotional suspense.

This control enables Zurlini to avoid the obvious pitfalls of a film with this sort of situation: superficial ribaldry and pat compassion. One both laughs and pities; but above all one understands the characters' predicament. At the beginning of the film the lieutenant is an unthinking cog in Italy's war machine. He feels distaste for his job, but nothing more. He is very far from that comforting figure, the Italian resistance fighter. But gradually his contact with the prostitutes, a long encounter with an unscrupulous Blackshirt, and above all the sight of some partisans being mercilessly shot crystallizes a feeling of revolt within him. At the same time, he is cruelly aware of his own helplessness, his inability to do anything.

Parallel to this *prise de conscience* of the lieutenant, there is an ever-increasing sense of the inexorability of war. The lieutenant and the truck-driver try to form relationships with two of the prostitutes; they make love, and talk of marrying and setting up home when the war is over. But Zurlini refuses to make any compromises. In an extremely moving scene, Marie Laforêt (one of the prostitutes) leaves the lieutenant (Tomaso Milian) and vanishes into the night. The story that began with a chance meeting ends with an enforced parting, and the logic of the film is wrenched into place.

Whereas *Le Soldatesse* shows us the emotional ravages of war, the impact of Pierre Schoendoerffer's *La 317e Section* (Platoon 317) is chiefly physical. The basic story line has many of the characteristics of a traditional war film: the action takes place in Indochina in 1954, shortly before the armistice; a platoon consist-

novels and used it to tell a tale that, regarded as a sequence of actions, is dramatic and paratactic. The result is a pop incongruity that, if we are overcome, renders absurb both the old style of telling and our dreams ofa new style of living.

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Director: Pierre Schoendoerffer. Script: Schoendoerffer, after his own novel. Photography: Raoul Coutard. Score: Pierre Jansen.

Most war films cheat. The more serious ones often mar the realism of their portrayal with meretricious superfluities — an unquestioning patriotism, varying degrees of sentimentality, a kind of romanticization of death. Others are simply adventure films that happen to be set in wartime, and purvey the animal excitement of a fixed wrestling bout. In both cases, the truth hovers discreetly in the background.

In two recent films, however, the truth shows its ugly face. Valerio Zurlini's *Le Soldatesse* (The Campfollowers) deals with one of the less meritorious aspects of Italy's record in the last war. An Italian lieutenant has to escort fifteen Greek prostitutes in a truck from Greece to Italy. The prostitutes are a rag-bag of different types, some cynical and only too willing to sell their bodies to the Italians, others forced by necessity into a profession they abhor. As they jolt through Greece and Yugoslavia, they are picked off one by one either by sex-starved units of Blackshirts or by the unforgiving guns of partisans.

Le Soldatesse is full of the same subtlety that made Zurlini's previous films (especially *La Ragazza con la Valigia* and *Cronaca Familiare*) so rewarding. Basically, his style has many of the characteristics of understatement one finds in Antonioni: composition in depth, with the action often on several different planes, telling silences, eloquent looks, sparse dialogue. But there is one major difference. Antonioni is always tempted by formal experiment and tends toward abstraction (I am thinking especially of *The Red Desert*); Zurlini, on the other hand, gears everything to the progression of the narrative—by narrative I mean not only the story line but the evolution of relationships. And so whereas Antonioni's characters more often than not act ambiguously, in Zurlini's films every thought and motive is crystal clear. This is why *Le Soldatesse,* although extremely slow-moving, is always resonant and full of emotional suspense.

This control enables Zurlini to avoid the obvious pitfalls of a film with this sort of situation: superficial ribaldry and pat compassion. One both laughs and pities; but above all one understands the characters' predicament. At the beginning of the film the lieutenant is an unthinking cog in Italy's war machine. He feels distaste for his job, but nothing more. He is very far from that comforting figure, the Italian resistance fighter. But gradually his contact with the prostitutes, a long encounter with an unscrupulous Blackshirt, and above all the sight of some partisans being mercilessly shot crystallizes a feeling of revolt within him. At the same time, he is cruelly aware of his own helplessness, his inability to do anything.

Parallel to this *prise de conscience* of the lieutenant, there is an ever-increasing sense of the inexorability of war. The lieutenant and the truck-driver try to form relationships with two of the prostitutes; they make love, and talk of marrying and setting up home when the war is over. But Zurlini refuses to make any compromises. In an extremely moving scene, Marie Laforêt (one of the prostitutes) leaves the lieutenant (Tomaso Milian) and vanishes into the night. The story that began with a chance meeting ends with an enforced parting, and the logic of the film is wrenched into place.

Whereas *Le Soldatesse* shows us the emotional ravages of war, the impact of Pierre Schoendoerffer's *La 317e Section* (Platoon 317) is chiefly physical. The basic story line has many of the characteristics of a traditional war film: the action takes place in Indochina in 1954, shortly before the armistice; a platoon consist-

ing of four Frenchmen and some forty Laotians receive an order to cross 100 miles of dense jungle to a new camp; in a series of skirmishes with the Vietminh their numbers are gradually reduced, and eight days later only one Frenchman and three Laotians reach their destination. Schoendoerffer has made of this a remarkably powerful and original film. On a narrative level he has managed, as does Stendhal at the beginning of *The Charterhouse of Parma* when he describes Fabrice's experience of the battle of Waterloo, to convey a sense of total confusion and disorientation in the scenes of combat. The soldiers trudge through the muddy jungle; there is a sudden burst of fire from somewhere; the men duck, the camera with them; there is frenzied counterfire at the invisible enemy and running for cover; it begins to pour with rain; there are the agonized cries of the wounded stranded in the open. This panic-stricken chaos makes the battle scenes of most war films seem by comparison like well-orchestrated deployments of tin soldiers.

But the originality of *La 317e Section* goes further than mere graphic verisimilitude. It explodes a myth. So often in the cinema the futility of death in battle is gilded by an emphasis on something *positive*—the hero dies while, for example, saving a friend's life, destroying an enemy emplacement single-handed, or simply fighting for a noble cause. Schoendoerffer has completely shorn his film of heroism: the soldiers die like the squealing piglets they plunder from the villages; they are not even fortunate enough to have a cause in which to believe.

Take the two main characters. Jacques Perrin plays a green, upper-class young lieutenant, a fortnight out of the St. Cyr Military Academy, who sees war in terms of his recently crammed lessons on tactics, and who, when his platoon is in great difficulty, looks forward to the heroic prospect of doing his own Charge of the Light Brigade. The other man, his subordinate, played by Bruno Cremer, is a war-hardened professional soldier from Alsace, who was enlisted by the invading German army in the last war and has been fighting in Indochina almost without a break ever since. Neither of them believe fervently in stamping out the Vietminh or furthering the cause of French colonialism; but neither do they particularly sympathize with the aspirations of their enemy or have any qualms of conscience. They are doing their job.

The film has been attacked by French left-wing critics because it does not take a stand against the French policy of the time. They claim also that the film extols the camaraderie of soldiers, and Schoendoerffer has even been called a Fascist. This sort of criticism defies the evidence of the film. First of all, what camaraderie there is consists chiefly of a kind of muted pity at a fellow soldier's death—quite a natural reaction. The young lieutenant is violently criticized by the infinitely more experienced Willsdorf, and admires him for it—again a fairly normal reaction. Where the film shows its true colors is in its description of battle. At no time is there the exultation, the thrill, or the *esprit de corps* of soldiers fighting side by side that can be found in 90 per cent of war films and Westerns. Battle is shown to be what it is, a perpetual teetering on the brink of death. The soldiers cannot control their bowels, either through fear or dysentery; when hit, they yell with pain; when dying, they do not entrust their comrades with trite tear-jerking messages for their loved ones, but repeat, with horrible insistence, "I am going to die," or simply ask for a cigarette.

Schoendoerffer (who himself fought in the war) has given everything else in the film the stamp of authenticity: the whooping cries of jungle birds that mock the soldiers as they scour the undergrowth for an enemy they never see, the terrified kowtows of war-weary villagers, the distant and unconcerned English voices of the BBC's Singapore Service that come over the radio, the leisurely flight of a passenger aircraft through the clouds above (a truly memorable shot; Raoul Coutard, with his grey, atmospheric photography, made an enormous contribution to the film).

And far from finding fault with Schoendoerffer for not taking an anticolonialist stand and not giving us more morally sympathetic

characters, I would say that the film gains from this neutrality. As I suggested before, the absence of a "cause" only highlights the absurdity of war. The moral ground is cleared; these men are soldiers because it is their job, they are fighting for the sake of fighting. Like a street-sweeper or a morgue employee, the soldier can get used to the less pleasant aspects of his task. But one day he ends up dead. This, and this only, is the simple antiwar message that *La 317e Section* gets across with a punch that leaves one weak at the knees.—PETER GRAHAM

TOKYO OLYMPIAD

Director: Kon Ichikawa. Producer: Toho.

One of the more popular games among film buffs these days is the one called "Lost Masterpiece"; a game whose basic premise holds that the vaults of production companies are full of films whose final versions are but shadows of the director's intentions. Last year we fumed over Jerry Bresler's *Major Dundee* and Joe Levine's *Contempt;* this year the scandal will surely center about Jack Douglas's *Tokyo Olympiad.*

Well, *Tokyo Olympiad,* filmed for Toho by Kon Ichikawa, *is* a hell of a lot better than the shorter (by an hour) American version, and worthy of some anguish over its abbreviation. It's a very good, sometimes brilliant, documentary of the 1964 Olympic games, filmed in color by 104 telephoto cameras, the action dropped right into the spectator's lap. If it never quite transcends its subject, the film most thoroughly covers it.

The subject is the human body—more precisely, the human spirit as servant of the body. If we respond immediately to the beauty of the body in action, we are impressed equally by the spiritual agony that seems necessary to such feats. The telephoto lenses take us down into that agony, the sweat and strain so apparent as to be sometimes embarrassing. A lesser director would have given no more than the act itself; but for Ichikawa the spiritual preparation is at least as important. This, of course, is very Japanese—its relationship to *bushido* or Zen archery is obvious. And it's the really remarkable thing about the movie.

Donald Richie points out in his recent book on Kurosawa that the documentary forms with which the Japanese are most familiar are the German and Russian; the British documentaries are almost unknown. *Tokyo Olympiad* is reminiscent of both traditions, but it's generally pretty Russian. Ichikawa hasn't forgotten Riefenstahl (Berlin '36), but it's Eisenstein (Odessa '25) he loves. Pure montage, almost unknown in modern films, makes a strong comeback here. And surely the montage on the hammer throw is one of the more beautiful things done in this style. (The athlete is Russian, so perhaps it's a tribute.) Ichikawa also uses slow motion to great effect, in this way subordinating mere action to the emotion behind it. There are some "Japanese" touches, too (raindrops glistening on umbrellas, etc.) and the standard crowd shots of pretty girls, old people, and children. It's remarkable, in fact, how easily the film swings between the beautiful and the banal.

In structure it's vaguely chronological, a day-by-day coverage which has the disadvantage of relegating the less spectacular events (fencing, rowing, and the like) to the end of the film, where they seem a letdown. But the concluding Marathon race sequence (with almost two full minutes of camera on the face of the Ethiopian winner as he resolutely sweeps along) restores the film to the heights of its opening scenes. About halfway through there's a short section following a single entrant from the Republic of Chad, the kind of thing upon which whole documentaries are hung. For Ichikawa it's just a breather between the more impersonal scenes, but it's well done, and the African's sense of dedication and his loneliness quite moving.

In short *Tokyo Olympiad,* if no masterpiece, is a good movie. People who care about sports will probably love it; those who find athletics monumentally boring should at least enjoy it. With the remarkable variety of means used to record each event freshly and accurately, it's almost a textbook on how to make a movie. For that alone, a film worth seeing.—JOHN THOMAS

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Entertainments

R. M. HODGENS*

The Bedford Incident. The latest gasp of danger on the right. The propaganda may still be of some interest, to some, but the film itself does not quite make it. The Captain (Richard Widmark, who thinks he's playing Goldwater and puts on horn-rimmed glasses to make the point) of the old *Bedford (113)* hunts Russian subs the way Ahab hunted the whale, so you can guess the end. As he drives his mechanized men, too hard, toward that fatal moment, a couple of conscience-figures (Sidney Poitier as a peculiar journalist and Eric Portman as an even more human old U-boat man) expose him for what he is for us—the crazy Nazi. And the heavy action takes place in a bath tub. Producer James B. Harris, who also produced that more notable gasp, *Dr. Strangelove,* directed this one. I would not predict a future for him, but then he evidently does not expect one.

Bunny Lake Is Missing so closely recalls, stylistically, the cinema of Otto Preminger, the director of *Laura,* and remains so alien to that of Preminger the director of *The Cardinal,* that one finds reason to believe that the film-maker himself has been missing for a number of years. As one would expect, the director keeps reminding us, by occasional lapses of taste, that *Bunny Lake,* as the credits so subtly inform, is indeed "an Otto Preminger Production." (His camera lingers a bit too long, for example, on a tilt shot showing a row of Lilliputian toilets inside a nursery school washroom.) Nevertheless, his new picture is constructed with the kind of economy of unnecessary detail that is needed to suspend our disbelief. And his manipulation of the John and Penelope Mortimer screenplay (from Evelyn Piper's novel) reminds us that he is more than capable of mixing wit with woe. One of *The Cardinal's* primary vices—the introduction of a number of interesting minor characters—proves a virtue in this film. Especially delightful is Noel Coward's portrayal of Wilson, Ann Lake's antisocial landlord, a self-styled "poet." No time is wasted in getting to the heart of the matter: Bunny Lake *is* missing. And her distraught mother has Inspector Newhouse (played deftly by Laurence Olivier) and half of Scotland Yard turning London inside out in an attempt to find the girl. Only, Newhouse has reason to believe that Ann Lake has invented her illegitimate daughter to satisfy some deep psychological need, even though her brother (Keir Dullea) resolutely supports her story. In spite of the film's confused attempts at psychoanalysis, *Bunny Lake* holds our interest almost unwaveringly. Preminger has made his picture more visually exciting in its 100 minutes than was either *The Cardinal* or *Exodus* in twice that length. Though the film is robbed of considerable power by an overlong and labored dénouement, its director has kept us interested in the search for Bunny right up until the final shot.

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China, Felix Greene's one-man documentary, is an intriguing disappointment: one had hoped to see how people live in China today, in some detail. Instead, Greene shows us a myriad scrappy, fascinating details; it's a veritable home-movie, jumping from restaurant (sumptuous by my Chinatown standards) to village (solidly built) to construction project (Asiatic hordes) to sports display (totalitarian) to musical concert (schmaltzy—Liszt). Now let's have Leacock or somebody go there and hang around for a while, in one randomly chosen spot. Chinese documentary is reportedly both grandiose and sanctimonious; what Greene gives us only whets

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our appetite for a film that will show us what's happening in an area where we *don't* already know all too well. —E. C.

The Hallelujah Trail is not much to cheer about—not even, perhaps, for John Sturges' fans. Like the last hard-ticket Cinerama comedy, it is elephantine, and the titles alone seem to take hours. It must have seemed promising: a wagon-train of whiskey for thirsty miners, with thirsty Indians and radical prohibitionists interfering, the teamsters on strike and the Cavalry caught in the middle, along with a bewildered narrator. Unfortunately, the final product is hampered by its imposed size, by stars not noted for their comic talent, and by Sturges' own talent for beautiful action. The stuntmen are fantastic, but they are not funny. The dust storm just before intermission has little to offer but incoherence, and the quagmire at the end has only disaster. The first time the wagonmaster announces that he is a taxpayer and a good Republican, one suspects that the booze will be lost; as he insists upon it throughout, the suspicion becomes certainty, and the final effect is something like Tragedy.

The Heroes of Telemark is one of those films wherein the parts outshine the whole. Set in Nazi-occupied Norway, it has to do with efforts (ultimately successful, of course) to sabotage German atom-bomb development. In that the sex implied therein still seems more shocking than the many deaths depicted, the film's morality is as questionable as that of *The Guns of Navarone.* But this is a better picture, because it's only a thriller and not on the overblown, dull, "important" order of *Navarone* or *The Bridge on The River Kwai* or *The Devil at Four O'Clock.* Anthony Mann's direction is clean and efficient, never perfunctory, and Robert Krasker's photography superb. The acting is generally good; only Ulla Jacobsson, surprisingly enough, seems inadequate, her Ingmar Bergman theatrics being out of place in the adventurous atmosphere Mann and his male actors create. A scene in which Douglas and Richard Harris, on skis, are pursued by Nazis, also on skis, is shot in such a way as to remind us vividly of Mann's Western background. This turns out to be the movie's advantage; indeed, there is the Western's emphasis on visual over verbal, to a large degree, and the night raid of the saboteurs on the hydroelectric plant is accomplished with breathless efficiency. And there's no Dmitri Tiomkin mickey-mousing on the soundtrack. —DAN BATES

The Hill, about a British military prison in Egypt, run by a fanatic disciplinarian assisted by a clinical-case sadist, is another attempt at Cinema by Sidney Lumet. Once again, he directs actors with depth and precision. And once again, by inept striving after visual effects, he ruins everything, particularly in the climactic scene when rebel and camp tyrant simply begin yelling at each other and the camera comes in for a series of blatant—and mismatched—Big Close-Ups. (If you can't handle the scene as a scene, chop it up into bits; and if the bits seem too insignificant, enlarge them.) The script, by Ray Rigby, is fairly intelligent and sensitive to the psychological underlayer of the action; but it breaks down badly when Ozzie Davis is allowed—he may have been improvising?—to act like a free man and hence destroy every assumption on which the rest of the plot turns. We of course have been wishing they could be broken down, but his outbreak changes nothing; it merely provides us with cheap and irrelevant laughs.—E. C.

I Saw What You Did and I wish to God I hadn't. —DAN BATES

Inside Daisy Clover has given Gavin Lambert and Robert Mulligan the chance to unabashedly turn their backs on "reverse hokum," as William Johnson called Hollywood's over-reaction to the impact of European films. They have gone in for the original article, lovingly rehabilitated from the thirties: the tough little poor girl with a great talent (established by three loud repetitions of a song called "You're Gonna Hear from Me!") who is made a Star and suffers the corruptions of Hollywood life, but fights back bravely. They go so far as to introduce a filmed plug for Daisy which, though it begins in the tawdry black-and-white format of the story's time, soon

Natalie Wood: INSIDE DAISY CLOVER.

our appetite for a film that will show us what's happening in an area where we *don't* already know all too well. —E. C.

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Red Line 7000. Fragments of stock racing and stock romance. There does not seem to be much plotting, but problems do develop, then suddenly get solved, both at the track and back at the motel, and it's over. I would like to identify all the new faces that producer-director and co-author Howard Hawks has assembled here, but I doubt that I could keep them straight: a driver dies, and then his girl shows up, convinced she's a jinx, and falls for another driver but naturally holds out—while he has broken up with his girl and she has fallen for another driver, and he falls for her too but puts things off until he has tried to kill her former boyfriend, whose luck is holding out, thus refuting the jinx—while a new driver gets a girl, wins a race, deserts her, crashes and loses a hand, but gets her back and goes on racing. "A hell of a way to make a living," says one of the ladies, resigned to the uncertainty of it all. But they all do all right. Hawks's latest is assured, surprisingly relaxed (or resigned?) and quite likable.

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the audience, just before the ferocious pre-titles sequence, seems redder. The title song seems to be about Bond himself, underscoring the anti-heroic film-makers' idea of the hero as a Fascist, or the Fascist as Hero, or whatever it is on their minds: "He knows the secret of success; / His needs are more so he gives less;" in fact "He looks at this world and wants it all, / So he strikes. Like thunderball." The plot tends to get lost (what ever happened to that Pole?) in all the fun. The gadgets do look pretty, but tend to be deliberately foolish and so, of course, do the girls. One of them (Luciana Paluzzi as an unconverted bad girl) would appear to be an actress, but the others get hard to keep track of. The big thing is a battle of frogmen over a couple of atom bombs off Miami—a long sequence which is less inspired but finally more successful than Jacques Tourneur's underwater efforts in *Giant of Marathon* and *War-gods of the Deep;* and one of Bond's death-jokes is funny, for once. Director Terence Young is back. He managed the first two Bonds better.

Viva Maria. "Viva Bardot"? "Viva Moreau"? All right. And maybe viva co-producer, co-author, director Louis Malle as well, for concocting this big, pretty bomb for the stars. Malle used to complain that audiences still care about the subjects of films. To the extent that his subjects here are the stars and his own versatility (for it is one of those films that has everything), there may be no reason for complaint. But it takes shape as a what-the-hell type daydream (a Leftist Artists' daydream, to be sure) —erratic, bloody, foolish, and dull. An Irish anarchist terrorist (BB) joins a theatrical troupe in Central America, takes to life upon the wicked stage with great enthusiasm, and strips; but a local revolutionary (George Hamilton) makes BB's co-star swear to "take on the Cause" as he dies in her arms. All the artists take on the cause: Art serves *la Revolucion* spectacularly, and when it's over—with a hint that it has not been a complete success, despite their killing the heads of state and church—the whole troupe returns to Europe to celebrate *la Revolucion,* and themselves, with their Art. So much better than the old striptease? I wouldn't say that.

The War Lord. Get this classy director Franklin Schaffner—he did *The Best Man*—and let him do an epic that's different, see? New setting: Norman duchy in Low Countries, 11th century. Clash of cultures: pagan natives with druids, witchery, eerie music in dark woods; Christian Normans, down-to-earth and legalistic; brutal Viking plunderers thrown in for luck. Clash reaches dramatic pitch when Norman knight falls for local girl, claims *droit de seigneur.* Get Heston for the knight. What a minute—Heston a *rapist?* Switch people's minds off *that* idea PDQ. Tell Schaffner to play down clash of cultures crap, concentrate on clash, period. You know, arrows, boiling oil, siege engines, ballistae—take a look at *Ben-Hur, El Cid* and all that. Kill, maim, burn. More. More. (And don't forget, as soon as Sieur Charlton gets that broad in his bed, she has to goddam well fall in love with him.)

—WILLIAM JOHNSON

Short Films

REPORT

By Bruce Conner. Film-Makers' Coöp, 414 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y.

As in *A Movie* and *Cosmic Ray,* Bruce Conner did not shoot any footage (omnipresent *A Movie* titles excepted) for *Report.* The three films are constructed from clips of film leader, newsreels, advertisements, war footage, documentaries, and theatrical films. In this respect the films offer a convenient parallel to Conner's other art work of the past ten years: his physical assemblages of clearly recognizable everyday junk such as old couches, suitcases, and women's underwear. The films are also an extension of Conner's welding of death and comedy.

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Conner shows us spectacle, rudiments of our entertainment, raw material of what is casually called western "Civilization," by way of implicational montage and a comic, alien detachment. While *A Movie* abstracts structure and grace directly from violence and destruction and *Cosmic Ray* leaves pornography limp, *Report* answers the question posed in the vernacular of our culture, as it were, "Why did God kill President Kennedy?" By being the most specific *Report* is the most hard-hitting and has the loudest ring of truth.

Shunning any conventional posture of social commentary, perhaps self-consciously, Conner opens *Report* with several minutes of a printed film loop of Jackie and Caroline as they approach, kneel at, and walk away from Kennedy's coffin which is lying in state. Conner makes his splice as Jackie returns to very nearly the same spot where she started. With the weak photographic resolution and washed-out image Jackie ends up looking like a big mechanical doll wound up for the grief spectacle. In two or three minutes Conner is able to produce in us a boredom closely approximating that of the days of ceaseless post-assassination telecasts. This is one of the rare justifiable examples of boring the audience to convey boredom and perhaps mainly because it does not take Conner half an hour (or eight hours) to accomplish it.

We go through a few loops before the sound track begins. It is a radio newscast of the five minutes of routine Dallas motorcade that preceded the assassination. Here *Report* is closer to *Cosmic Ray* than *A Movie*: The former matches Ray Charles's *What'd I Say?* with a dancing nude while the latter uses Respighi as a contrast to cheap spectacle and death.

What follows the film loop and occupies the remaining ten minutes of the film can only be described as a tour de force of implicational montage. The image is a constant shuffle of several groups of footage. The first thing we see is a close-up of matador and bull in the thick of battle. The telephoto flattening effect makes the pair look even closer together than they actually are. The bullfight action shots remain the most powerful image in the film. The crowd demands more and by the end of *Report* both bull and matador have met disaster. There are shots of the president's arrival in Dallas and the motorcade. There are shots of the funeral procession with its array of armed forces, and a single shot of PT 109 mounted on a float amidst the procession. Of course there is the war footage but there is also an atomic mushroom this time. If this over-used symbol belongs in any film, it is Conner's. There is also the stop-motion footage of the murder of Oswald, one of the greatest mass death spectacles of all time. One surprise is a repeated view of a neatly, sanitarily groomed girl operating an IBM tabulator in a spotless office. Somewhat oblique but fitting the fast and relentless tempo is the super-slow-motion (speed implied) shot of a bullet penetrating a light bulb. Then to retain the Conner flavor there is a professor's laboratory scene from *The Bride of Frankenstein*, a reminder that *Report* is no less funny than Conner's other films: none of them are meant simply to offer sporadic laughs.

Conner's film loop makes some of us indignant for his apparent irreverence to one of the sacred moments of our time. (He treats a more authentic martyr similarly, with his large awful blood-dripping assemblage of a crucifix.) But who can watch *Report* to the end without realizing that Conner is as serious as Jonathan Swift in *Gulliver's Travels* and that his brand of social consciousness in its expression must transcend conventional morality? In Conner's eyes society thrives on violence, destruction, and death no matter how hard we try to hide it with immaculately clean offices, the worship of modern science, or the creation of instant martyrs. From the bullfight arena to the nuclear arena we clamor for the spectacle of destruction. The crucial link in *Report* is that JFK with his great PT 109 was just as much a part of the destruction game as anyone else. Losing is a big part of playing games.

On paper this view of the world sounds neither fresh nor original. Ironically enough even Herbert W. Armstrong and Billy Graham are wont to link moral decadence with the

depersonalization of the modern technological triumph. We see the material in *Report,* though, from Conner's cosmic point of view, where the spectacle of disaster and death become humorous, even if we are too embarrassed to laugh. He takes the all-too-familiar products of modern western culture and reassembles them to show us the spectacle of our world the way it looks from the outside, where Bruce Conner is.

If he is a dadaist, Conner is a dadaist with a style. I defy any skeptic to construct, from clearly recognizable garbage, assemblages with the feeling of crystallization of Conner's, or from stock footage a film with the unity of outlook of *A Movie* or the sense of horror, humor, and truth of *Report.*—DAVID MOSEN

DEAD BIRDS

Director: Robert Gardner. Sound: Michael Rockefeller. Produced for the Peabody Museum. Contemporary Films.

Cultural patterns are relative, and I suppose none more so than warfare—whose complex history, indeed, is a specialty all to itself. Anthropological film-making has concentrated, however, on far simpler institutions and activities: art or basket-making or individual rituals. *Dead Birds* is an attempt to recreate an entire system of ritual warfare, and is perhaps the most ambitious anthropological film yet made.

Unfortunately, one gets the impression that the makers of the film regard the warfare of the Dani, a New Guinea tribe, as dreadful. (Remarks on the film by Robert Lowell and Margaret Mead are circulated with it and Miss Mead goes so far as to say that the Dani fighting is terrible *because they lack ideological reasons!*) The narration, which is rather wordy, verges on a voice-of-doom tone. The light dramatization given to the film is provided by focussing on one man and his affection for a child killed in the warfare; but you get the feeling that this affection is portrayed in western terms through the narrator rather than captured on film—it has the look of an artifact of editing. We see the men working on various ceremonial objects, yet we do not learn what the Dani eat (except a ceremonial pig); nonetheless we see many long shots of their agricultural areas. We do not learn what kind of family structure they have. And this isolation of the warfare pattern thus comes to seem artificial, distancing, perhaps condescending.

I think this is probably because Gardner and his co-workers tried to organize their film without resolving their own perspective on war. Middle-class people dislike the sight of blood; our first response is that war is awful. And so it is. So is the slaughter of animals in our abattoirs. The awfulness much abates for us, however, when the blood is kept out of sight—when wars, above all, are kept at a safe distance. Dani war, in *Dead Birds,* shows us a little blood, which has been shed directly by another human hand, without intervention of jet plane or even carbine. Hence western people, even anthropologists who ought to know better, react to it as a pretty terrible business.

Now the very awfulness of war entails an obligation, in undertaking a film about somebody else's war system, to be unprejudiced toward it. After all, it may not only be "not so much worse" than ours (in Lowell's words). It may be *better.* It depends what you regard as important about living, and hence it influences (in the case of a film) how the shots are planned, how the editing is structured, and especially how the narration (if there has to be one) is phrased. In other words it is by no means a quibble, but a practical matter of the utmost gravity.

And if you ask *me* whether a war system that kills a few people every year in highly ritualized hand-to-hand combat is better or worse than ours, which kills tens of thousands by bombs, bullets, napalm, and newer impersonal refinements now being tested in Vietnam, I must come down squarely on the side of the "savages." Their wars are biologically far more humane and psychologically far less damaging than ours. We have come to talk of "kill ratios" and "cost effectiveness." But the Dani warfare rules are arranged to make killing infrequent and to define and limit its consequences. Being

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illiterate people, the Dani still take life seriously; they do not have our opportunities to learn that death can be only a statistic. When a Dani is stabbed, all the tribe sees him bleed, and sometimes die. We only read of casualty lists, which never surpass the highway death lists anyway; our congressman votes more money for VA hospitals, located in out-of-the-way places.

Dead Birds, however, tries to by-pass such reflections; the film is made as if it is documenting, from a higher cultural perspective, a tragic waste of life. Note however the character of the Dani hostilities. They occur first, of all, in a highly sacred ambiance: unless the fighting is properly conducted, souls are in danger. The immediate motivation for combat is revenge: a powerful and direct human emotion, activated by the death of a member of one's clan. After subtribe A has killed an "enemy," its men relax into a defensive posture; it is the turn of subtribe B to try to redress the balance. The fighting is conducted by fixed rules, though ambush is permitted: hence the fanciful look-out towers in the fields. Generally the fighting is in open areas between equal bands of men on foot. Nothing but spears are used. We see some of this fighting (in long shot—probably from one of the towers) and it is worth observing closely. One man rushes a few steps forward, crying out and brandishing his spear; a nearby friend may support his move. Members of the enemy band must counter; they rally to the threatened area, just enough to make the threateners withdraw. It is not unlike the game of Go, but played rapidly. Yet the spears are sharp; a slip of the foot, a miscalculation of distance, and there can be a wound. The wound itself is unlikely to be fatal; the wounder does not press his advantage but withdraws; what kills are the subsequent complications in an area without medicine.

Now even this highly stylized battle is subject to still further restraints. For one thing, it's all off if it rains. For another, fighting must stop early enough in the day that everybody can get home before dark, when the ghosts come out. Under such conditions, it is no wonder that months pass without anybody getting scratched. But, as the narrator points out lugubriously, the warfare provides an exciting center for Dani life, which would otherwise be quite a dull affair.

Now perhaps a society which has already passed its second "world war" might learn something from the Dani. I myself find their system full of suggestive hints as to how we could better manage our own wars. The limitation of armaments is an area in which we have (in theory) already begun to learn a little; but how far we have to go before, like the Dani, we confront each other with nothing more lethal than a home-made spear! It is also instructive to consider the socially desirable consequences of having the head-men fight along with everybody else; let us, like Walter Lippmann, disdain having old men start wars which young men must fight, and send Lyndon and his congress to Vietnam! I also find the reciprocity aspect fascinating; how much more civilized our war in Vietnam would be, if once we had gunned down some Vietcong or luckless villager, we held our fire until one of our own side had fallen! Wars, if we heeded the Dani example, would take much longer; but we might not mind much, since our own have begun to blur one into the next anyhow. Best of all, if death resulted only from hand-to-hand combat, and the wounded were mourned in public ceremonies, it would give us a far healthier emotional relation to death in general and killing in particular. You cannot image a Dani saying anything that would be remotely as inhuman as the American expression "Killing gooks." No, the Dani are serious people; far from being ignorant primitives, they are wiser than we. They build odd-looking towers and wear personal decorations that tickle us; they are very concerned about ornamented belts. But they have not forgotten important things that we, long ago, must also have known and someday must learn again: that human life is after all sacred, and can only be kept so by due attention to our animal nature; that strong emotion is best expressed simply and directly; that social conventions can, if they are sensible

enough, even curb man's bloodthirstiness; and most of all, that the quality of human life does not depend merely on technology and the efficiency with which means can accomplish ends, but on the human quality of both ends and means.

If *Dead Birds* helps modern men reconsider such questions, it will have made a major contribution. I wish it had a terser and more informative narration; I wish it were somewhat shorter; I wish it were more genuinely anthropological in its outlook; I wish it had more telling observation of crucial aspects of Dani life—including some aspects of the warfare. But, even given its defects, the Dani do come through: a saturnine Stone Age tribe. There may be other peoples from whom we can also learn, before we wipe them out.

—ERNEST CALLENBACH

Books

UNDERSTANDING MEDIA

(By Marshall McLuhan. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964. $7.50; paper, $1.95)

This is one of the most persuasively iconoclastic books to have appeared in quite some time, and the absence of all but minute traces of the scurrilousness and sanctimony that usually accompany iconoclasm renders it more persuasive still. Not that the book is in any way modest. In it McLuhan offers nothing less than a loosely formulated world-view, a compendium of corrections to assertions by major thinkers in all fields, and even the beginnings of a curriculum for the wholesale re-synthesis of the knowledge and experience we have acquired to date. And he does this without seeming a crank, a Cassandra, or a hysterical reformer. To boot, a great many of his conclusions and prescriptions make eminently good sense.

McLuhan's chief purpose in *Understanding Media* is to relate our experience in general to our experience of media in particular, and I should like, therefore, to discuss the book first in general terms and then specifically in relation to film. Film, perhaps more than most other media, needs to be "understood" in McLuhan's sense—understood, that is, not parochially but in as broad and suggestive a context as possible. The promise of five years ago and earlier that films were drawing closer to the centers of our experience now seems—with many too few exceptions—to be a tease, and lamentations about the film industry's impervious crassness furnish neither consolation nor insight. Too often film-makers represent themselves as "artists" when they make good films and victims of the "Industry" when they make bad ones, the assumption, I suppose, being that art is some sort of respite from the Industry's day-to-day venality, a kind of holy holiday. Quite to the contrary, art and industry interpenetrate in film as perhaps in no other medium, and *Understanding Media* illuminates that exasperating relationship in a variety of ways.

First off, I should mention that the book in question has been around for well over a year, that in certain circles it is having something of a *succès d'estime*, and that reviewers were for the most part vaguely mistrustful of it. Generally the mistrust arose in at least one of three areas. The first was style. McLuhan, it seems, does not write syllogistically. He does not organize his material so that regular cadences of evidence culminate in neatly wrought conclusions. Rather, the book is a jagged patchwork of evidence *and* conclusions. By avoiding scholarly rigor, it aims to substantiate a multiplicity of related *insights*, some of which are delivered in almost throwaway fashion. It prefers to remain open-ended and provocative, to raise more questions than it answers.

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The second area of mistrust had to do with McLuhan's stubborn disrespect for the traditional boundaries that partition learning into so

many special fields of enquiry. Not that he is willfully eclectic or out merely to demonstrate the extent of his erudition. He maintains only that by sticking doggedly to the old disciplines we disqualify ourselves from apprehending many new phenomena. The era of "education by classified data," he feels, is coming to an end anyway. An important thesis of this book, one bound to ruffle the feathers of many a specialist, is that the separate fields of knowledge will be compelled by force of circumstance to merge and overlap in a multitude of different ways. In today's world, McLuhan implies, adherence to specialization is more than narrow-minded: it is irrelevant and boring.

The third area—probably the one that most vexed the reviewers—concerns the question of humanism, for the jabs and potshots that keep coming up in the text accumulate into one of the most considerable assaults on traditional humanism to have been launched in a long while. Moreover, the assault draws added strength from the fact that it is almost disarmingly untheoretical. McLuhan's challenge to humanism is posed neither on philosophical grounds, as, say, Nietzsche's is, nor on personal grounds, as C. P. Snow's is. As long as we remember that the correlation between philosophical assertions and mundane phenomena is always moot, Nietzsche can at least be parried. And Snow's arguments—which bear heavily on the discussion at hand, since they bring humanism into opposition with technology—too easily reduce to a plea to humanists to forget that scientists are boors, and scientists that are humanists are snots. But what McLuhan is saying—it is in fact the cornerstone of his thinking—is that Snow's "two cultures" do not exist apart from each other, that technology and humanism have always been closely interdependent, and that specialists on both sides would do well to open their eyes and own up to the fact. That so many thinkers have failed to do this is a result less of bullheadedness than negligence. Technology, McLuhan suggests, has always inhabited every corner of our lives, has in fact radically altered the nature of our being —and done so not just recently but throughout the millenia, since the beginnings of even the crudest technologies. In consequence, as the truth of this becomes increasingly plain, a humanism uninformed by that truth is already academic and has every chance of growing vestigial and obsolete.

Listed in the bibliography at the end of *Understanding Media* is another book that had a strange fascination for reviewers of a few years back—Lynn White's *Medieval Technology and Social Change*. In his book White sets out to trace the evolution of feudal society to the invention of the stirrup. The route he takes is roughly as follows: 1. By fastening the mounted warrior securely to his horse, horse and rider effectively become a single entity—to wit, the knight. 2. Permitted by his new stability to be better armed and armored than previous mounted warriors, the knight is a devastating war machine—as Charles Martel and his successors demonstrated by using an elite of skilled specialists in mounted shock combat to establish Frankish supremacy in Europe. 3. As with any superior weapon in an atmosphere of military competition, the knight becomes indispensable to survival. . . . 4. But, like all weaponry, he has to be paid for; he requires housing, equipment, honors, and reasonable security, whereupon . . . 5. A social contract in the form of the feudal suzerainty emerges, the lord retaining a corps of knights and thus providing protection to residents in his demesne in exchange for those residents' vassalage.

I cite White's book because it is a rather extreme example of one way to reconcile history and technology, because McLuhan has undoubtedly been influenced by it, and because it offers a useful contrast to McLuhan's own method. White portrays a sequence of events, each following causally from the last, that has been triggered by a technological innovation, a discreet event. McLuhan, on the other hand, conceives of technology not as a collection of events, of first causes, but as a network of processes that persist in time and pervade in space. To him technology is environment. It is omnipresent and ubiquitous, and we react to it continuously.

The environments on which McLuhan focuses the better part of his attention are specifically

modern ones, the environments of advanced societies. In such settings the Industrial Revolution has long ago been fought, won, and forgotten, and its consequences are taken for granted. Here, where "production" is already a *fait accompli*, the watchword of technology is "automation." Whence McLuhan's central premise: "As automation takes hold, it becomes obvious that *information* is the crucial commodity, and that solid products are merely incidental to information movement." The agents of information movement are, in turn, McLuhan's "media."

Speech, then writing, are the older perennial media. But technology promptly intercedes. The technologies of the wheel, of papermaking and road-building, allow information, both as word of mouth and written message, to be more widely disseminated. Then a technological bombshell of inestimable impact: movable type, the printing press. An age of mass literacy ensues. Several centuries elapse in which this literacy proceeds to knead and refashion the human consciousness, and then a second bombshell bursts: the telegraph, the telephone, radio, cinema, television, computers—the electric media. Instant information movement, mass communications, a central nervous system for the whole of society, electronic implosion. Now, unlike print, where information has to be translated into alphabetic characters and then strung out so the eye can scan it linearly, information can be transmitted in a variety of forms. Simultaneity replaces linearity. The entire human sensorium is called into play. We are, finally, in the present.

Such is the evolution of information movement as McLuhan depicts it. And moving in a parallel course is another related evolution—that of the human sensorium. For just as tools like the hammer or plow extend man's physical apparatus, the media are extensions of his sensory apparatus, adjuncts to his nervous system. Each extension, however, is tantamount to a change, and if the extensions take hold and become important then the corresponding changes in the organism may be radical. When a new medium is annexed to the human sensorium, the whole of that sensorium is altered. A new equilibrium among the senses must be established, and until it *is* established the organism experiences shock. New sensors and sensitivities must be broken in, and old ones must be relinquished. Repeatedly McLuhan keeps coming back to these points. He almost seems worried about the way they will be understood. The concept of media as extensions of our central nervous system might be interpreted to be merely an intriguing metaphor, and obviously he doesn't want that. He wants it to be understood as fact.

The facts, he says, are these: primitive, tribal man had speech as his principal communications medium. Speech can traverse only short distances, is instantaneous (i.e., doesn't persist in time as does, say, a written note) and invites participation. It allows information to be stored only in the form of memorized phrases. Played back, these phrases become poems, chants, incantations, myths. The orientation of pre-literate tribal societies is mythopoeic; their cynosure is speech. When literacy emerges it is at first hieroglyphic. Phonetic literacy comes much later, but its repercussions are immense. Information storage need no longer be left to memory; archives can be kept. The old myths break up under pressure from *facts*. Knowledge is no longer incantatory; it can now be reflective, detached, objective, rational. And since literacy is phonetic it can accommodate a wide assortment of languages. All manner of speech can be written down and then transported elsewhere; the localism of tribal languages and tribal hieroglyphs is sundered. Speech and writing can be standardized. One tribe can talk to another. Gradually tribalism gives way to worldliness, mythicism to knowledge. Then, with printing, the process is further accelerated. Printed matter becomes the first "mass" communications medium. Data from a multitude of sources is now made widely available. Knowledge is wedded to literacy.

But literacy is essentially a solitary practice. Instead of participation it encourages detachment, reflection, individualism. Involved, tribal men are superseded by removed *individuals*—individuals, moreover, who from their earliest years are tuning their sensoria to the printed

page. Book by book, line by line, character by character, discreet quantum by discreet quantum, their heads fill up with knowledge. The facts present themselves as though transported on a conveyor belt. Education through literacy is almost an analog of the assembly line, almost prefigures it. Both—literacy, that is, and the assembly line—may be described as linear, sequential, and repetitive. Printed material is in fact among the first commodities to be produced in assembly-line fashion. What sort of mind, for that matter, would be more likely to *conceive* of the assembly line than one already grounded in phonetic literacy? The point—McLuhan's point—is that up until the inception of the electric media, during centuries in which the dominant medium was print, an attitude of mind was formed, and that its formation took place unawares, unself-consciously. Characteristic of that attitude of mind are detachment and linearity. Such a mind is apt to favor categories and classes, to wrap up information into packages destined to be consumed one at a time, sequentially, just like printed characters. In short, it organizes data into patterns modelled on the printed page.

When the telegraph appears, however, print begins to be upstaged. The telephone soon follows, then radio, films, television. In quick succession print finds itself confronted with a phalanx of electronic competitors, new media to which sensoria must make new adjustments. As McLuhan puts it: "The alphabet (and its extension into typography) made possible the spread of power that is knowledge, and shattered the bonds of tribal man, thus exploding him into an agglomeration of individuals. Electric writing and speed pour upon him, instantaneously and continuously, the concerns of all other men. He becomes tribal once more. The human family becomes one tribe again." Along with retribalization, the electric media have subsidiary effects: they appeal to more than one of the senses; they oppose simultaneity to the linearity of print; they promulgate involvement and immediacy. For the rubrics and categories of literacy they substitute patterns, trends, proclivities. With everyone plugged into the world-wide communications media that constitute the social central nervous system, isolated individuals are welded into a mass (no value judgment implied) which is, for all intents and purposes, a tribe.

To advance his arguments in a reasonably orderly manner, McLuhan divides his book into two parts. This first part is a presentation of his tenets in general terms. A couple of important ones have as yet gone unmentioned here. They are: 1. "The medium is the message"; which is to say that the content of a given medium is first and foremost another medium (e.g., the content of radio is speech, the content of film is the screenplay, etc.) while what is usually called the "program" is of only secondary importance; and 2. Media may be described as either "hot" or "cold" according as they stimulate, respectively, detachment or involvement. The fidelity of hot media is high; they ask little participation of the spectator; they leave almost nothing to be read between the lines, few gaps to be filled; they create their own context and largely prescribe the spectator's reactions. "A hot medium," says McLuhan, "is one that extends one single sense in high definition." Radio is a hot medium; so is the photograph. By contrast, television is a cool medium. The intensity and fidelity of its visual image are low. The spectator has to complete the image for himself, involve himself, participate. More on this later.

The second half of *Understanding Media* is an analysis, one by one, of 26 media starting with speech, writing, roads, numbers, and clothing, and concluding with radio, television, weapons, and automation. Obviously the definition of "medium" is kept very broad. Media are agents of information transmission, and insofar as, say, clothing yields information about the wearer and his milieu it is a medium. With each medium the first principles (as already outlined) are applied and then expanded and modified by sundry local insights and observations, a good many of which are valuable. Rigor is held to the barest minimum. McLuhan prefers to establish not a system but a point of view. Much space could be given over to locating contradictions in his book or simply to contesting

some of his assertions, but doing so seems to me to be a waste of effort. Also, I was disappointed to find major art forms like music and painting discussed only *en passant* and not in full chapters—mostly because I would have liked to see how McLuhan envisions the extension of his ideas into arts criticism. But the book is inclined to be more nascent than inclusive, and what it says rings truly enough. We have to be grateful for what we have.

Now for film specifically. As characterized by McLuhan, movies have served as a kind of cultural bridge, spanning the interval during which preëminence among the media passed from typography to television. Cinema's dependence on literacy and literature, says McLuhan, was extreme from the first. Novels furnished not only plots and scenarios but ways of looking at character, at physical surroundings, at the world. Meanwhile typography supplied film-makers with information about the nature of their audience. Print had already taught people how to flesh out imaginary worlds on the basis of limited visual data. Moreover, as with print, the data could be presented sequentially rather than simultaneously. No one would be unduly disturbed if temporarily inconsequential characters disappeared off the side of the frame (non-literate people wonder what has happened to them) or if, through cutting, quick transitions in time or space were effected (again, non-literate people want to know what takes place in the interim). People accustomed to reading had already cultivated two qualities that were indispensable to film-viewing: point-of-view and detachment. The first allowed them to apprehend complex situations one thing at a time, to feel comfortable with a sequence of selected perceptions (i.e., with what in film is called *montage*); the second permitted them to weave these perceptions into whole cloth and to do it with relatively little guidance. Of course, the particular *kind* of cloth varies with the culture. In visual, literate America, where the faculty of detachment had become highly developed, the cloth ran to sequins and chiffon. An audience of detached, isolated spectators was ripe for the consumption of fantasy, and soon dreams became the prime commodity of American silent films. The dreams themselves elaborated on a single, central dream: the *American* dream, the dream of boundless opulence, of the panoply of American consumer goods. To an upward-mobile populace movies offered—in fantasy form—everything from solace to fulfillment. In Russia, meanwhile, where typography had taken less firm a hold and the oral tradition was still quite alive, films had to appeal to a more pronounced appetite for participation. They dealt less with the fantasy of ultimate goals than the reality of achieving those goals. They dealt with the realization not of daydreams but of grass-roots political ideals and agricultural quotas. Even now the "socialist realism" of Russian cinema is an invitation to engagement, commitment and participation. That is why the soundtrack was so warmly received in America and so repugnant to Russian film-makers. With the additional data supplied by sound, less participation* is required of the viewer. He is at liberty to abandon the realities of here-and-now in favor

* McLuhan's choice of the word "participation" is perhaps unfortunate. He doesn't give a precise definition, but he means by it something very much like Brecht's alienation effect *(Verfremdungseffekt)*. It will be remembered that alienation, in Brecht's sense, was intended to counteract the theater's illusory quality, since theatrical illusions were inimical to the spectator's awareness of his immediate social condition. What Brecht in fact wanted was for the spectator to participate in the play before him, to share in its moral crises and take its lessons to heart. He favored a stylized, didactic playing style, one that would never be capable of creating illusions so whole and self-contained that the viewer could escape into them and away from more immediate concerns. Similarly, McLuhan's "participation" also implies a certain alienation from the image, only here the viewer participates not morally but perceptually and socially. Thus, a low-intensity image, one with small information content, invites the viewer to *participate* in its perception, to complete its information gaps with information of his own. To that extent image and spectator are social equals. Unlike high-intensity, information-rich images, the low-intensity image aims not to transport the viewer elsewhere (to create an illusion) but, as it were, to hit him where he lives.

of more nebulous terrain. The vague, dreamy longings turned loose in his head are perfectly well suited to the promotion of consumer goods, but they are also inimical to the harsh realities of social revolution. It is finally in America, where the realities are less harsh and the habit of participation is restored by the sudden all-pervasiveness of television, that cinema encounters its major crisis.

The challenges television poses to the movies are too numerous and sudden to be countered. Eschewing the psychic isolation of film-viewing, television enters the home and infiltrates family life. It is consumed with the same regularity as meals and competes successfully with conversation as a group activity. Instead of dreams it provides services: news, diversion, shopping information, recipes, amusement. It keeps children out of mischief and sifts the tension from adults. The intensity and fidelity of the image are low, casual and involving; the programming likewise. "Personalities" replace stars. They appear weekly or oftener, "visiting" the home, thanking everyone for the opportunity to come into their living rooms. Everything is casual, even the movies that take up so much programming time: a multitude of them every week, broadcast in low fidelity, watched intermittently while talking, drinking beer, cooking meals, preparing for bed. Reduced to TV-fodder, movies are now a part of daily life. Their stars climb down from Olympus to "visit" the home. The old temples of cinema are obviated; one by one they are shut down. Smaller, more "intimate" theaters replace them. Since movies are a common living-room phenomenon, theater lobbies imitate living rooms: coffee is served to waiting patrons and lobby decor resembles that of a fancy town-house parlor. Meanwhile a huge portion of the movie industry is given over to producing films for television. The instantaneous, participatory media prescribe the order of the day. McLuhan ventures a prediction: "At the present time film is still in its manuscript phase, as it were; shortly it will, under TV pressure, go into its portable, accessible, printed-book phase. Soon everyone will be able to have a small, inexpensive film projector that plays an 8-mm sound cartridge as if on a TV screen. This type of development is part of our present technological implosion. The present dissociation of projector and screen is a vestige of our older mechanical world of explosion and separation of functions that is now ending with the electrical implosion."

The prediction will probably come to pass, even if conspicuous exceptions to the above course of events do exist. People still have aspirations, and movies still aspire to fulfill them. From Joe Levine's blockbusters on through the James Bond charades, films still play to the yen for sex, adventure, and the second generation of luxury commodities (soon, no doubt, artifacts of the ilk of Bond's most elaborate paraphernalia will be commonly available). But the more interesting exceptions have been those films that skirted the dream syndrome, films that were artistic, if not commercial, successes. McLuhan is in full accord with the idea of the artist as antenna of his culture, and his ideas have only to be slightly expanded to shed some light on the recent evolution of the art film. For clearly, art films have anticipated McLuhan's social implosion. They invited involvement and participation from the beginning. The neorealist films of early postwar Italy, for instance, were hardly conducive to removed and dreamy reverie. If there had been anything like an "Italian dream," the war shattered it entirely. And Italians had never let typography eclipse their oral tradition anyway. Among the ruins of the late forties detachment was all but impossible; anything less than full involvement would have been the same as catatonia. But involvement meant con-

cern with the agonies at hand, with the problems of rebuilding, with restoring the basic decencies. Fantasies of luxury would have to be deferred for later. There are, after all, manifestations of participation other than the intense involvement with electric media that so interests McLuhan. His is a latter day form; it is post-industrial and presupposes a high degree of material well-being. It was only in America, unsullied by direct contact with the war, that these conditions were satisfied. America had to wait for television as an incentive to participation; in Europe the war's aftermath was incentive enough. Which makes it not surprising that art films, films unusual for their relevance, immediacy, or sensitivity to the present, should have emerged first in Europe and then continued to remain most strongly entrenched there. In America, where television *was* a major incentive to participation, the local counterparts of the European art film were, and still are, heavily coated with TV's ambiance. A typical example is *Marty* (1955), which was in fact adapted from a teleplay. *Patterns* (1956) and *Tweve Angry Men* (1957), likewise adapted from TV originals, followed suit. Even recently *David and Lisa* and *Nothing But a Man* seem to have their origins in the heyday of television drama.

If the pressure once exerted by television upon the movies seems to have eased, though, a permanent detente between the two media still seems improbable. Like typography, television can attain something very close to omnipresence, and can therefore affect the collective consciousness to a far greater degree than cinema. Cinema, for most people, remains a once or twice a week affair; attending movies is still, to a large extent, a special occasion. Those who have lost that sense of occasion, whose minds are casually and regularly suffused with cinema the way most people's are suffused with TV or literature, stand out almost as freaks. Godard's is an example of such a mind, and only recently has resistance to his instinctive, offhanded way of making films begun to give way. Notice, in light of this, how the same critics who were delighted by the suggestiveness of the book titles and paintings that appear regularly in Antonioni's films took offense at Godard's frequent citations of other films. What were "references" in Antonioni became "in-jokes" in Godard. Minds rooted in literature are everyday occurrences, while those whose thoughts turn ultimately to film are written off as *cogniscenti*. And so long as that remains true, cinema is indeed still in its manuscript phase.

I could conclude by asking "Where, in the end, does all this lead us?" but the "us" would have to encompass so many interests that any answer to the question would probably be both suppositious and interminable. Let it suffice to say that each of those interests is likely to find worthwhile things in McLuhan's book. Commercial film-makers will learn a good deal more about the confrontation between their product and its public than can ever be explained by "taste" alone. More artistically minded film-makers will be given an inkling of what the exploration of uncharted cinematic terrain is likely to hold in store. Film critics will perhaps balk at the suggestion that their "liberal arts" orientation may be ridiculously parochial, but they will end up knowing more about the rudiments of the medium they love. Cinematologists will—if they let themselves—be shaken from their scruples long enough to view their researches in the context of the culture in which they take place. And those grizzled, above-average audiences who have been so long used to seeing things go from bad to worse and then back to bad again will be able to console themselves with the promise that they can look forward to exchanging their current gripes for fresh ones. Of value to everyone is the fact that McLuhan has approached the subject of culture, down to the ugliest of its manifestations, with a moral neutrality that is almost perfect; his aim is to criticize, not condemn. Where most books of culture criticism give the impression that they were written to work off a grudge, *Understanding Media* is content to ask what we have gotten into, why we are there, and where we are likely to go next. After insight into those questions deepens, any such grudges will be better taken.—STEPHEN TAYLOR

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