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THE COVER: Marlon Brando as Rio, the outlaw, in *One-Eyed Jacks*, which he is producing and directing. (Photo: Sam Shaw)

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Editor's Notebook

Our allegiance to the cinema is international; much of our material deals with film-makers in other countries. In this issue our lead article deals with Ingmar Bergman. In the next issue will appear an article on Ozu, the most Japanese of Japanese directors, by Donald Richie. But, living in America, we are especially anxious nowadays about Hollywood's artistic fate. Out of Hollywood in recent years have come many fine films by men like Zinnemann, Huston, Stevens, Ford: some squeezing through cracks in the bureaucratic machine, some inexplicably turned out by the same gears that usually produce routine nonsense. In our next issue Colin Young will turn from the young men he discussed in our last issue to such established directors, in control of their scripts, but from whom we have not been getting the substantial things we expect.

For both kinds of men, creative work in Hollywood is hanging on very thin threads. This country needs a healthy native cinema, in Hollywood or *some*where, turning out active, inquiring, technically vigorous pictures that will move us rather than merely entertain us. We need such pictures, moreover, made available on a fairly massive scale. Cinema may not be the inherently mass art it was once taken to be; but its enormous costliness pushes it constantly, and ruthlessly toward large audiences. This is true even for types of film far removed from the ordinary theatrical situation: the school film, the business-sponsored film, the government-sponsored film. And, to date, the domestic art-houses, the 16mm distribution system, and television cannot hope to return with reasonable regularity even the costs of a feature-length film made on a budget as low as that of *Crime and Punishment, USA*—some $100,000. We hope to deal in a coming issue with the question of whether such sources—including pay television—can be expected to provide an economic base for film-making outside the "Hollywood" distribution system, and thus to make possible a new kind of specialized, low-budget film.

In the meantime, the struggle for independence continues in Hollywood, as it continues in studios everywhere in the world. For men who want badly to make films their own way, the obstacles can still sometimes be miraculously overcome, as film-makers have been overcoming them since Griffith fought Biograph on *Judith of Bethulia*.

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EUGENE ARCHER

The Rack of Life

an analysis of the films of the Swedish writer-director Ingmar-Bergman

Although Ingmar Bergman has been called the greatest director in Europe today, his work is only beginning to be known to American audiences.

Bergman was born in Stockholm in 1918, the son of a Protestant pastor. He made home movies as a child, and began writing and directing plays for amateur theatrical groups as a student. In 1944, at the age of 26, he wrote his first screenplay, *Hets* (*Torment*), and the next year he directed the first of his twenty professional films.

Bergman is dedicated to the theater in the broadest conception of the term, using it to connote life's performance upon the stage of the world. As an artist, Bergman is preoccupied less with the external form of that performance than with its interior meaning. The nature of this preoccupation is profoundly Swedish. Bergman has led a renaissance in the Swedish cinema, not by opening new paths for others to follow, but by an intensely personal approach to the medium. Bergman uses films as a means to convey his most intimate ideas, and these are not concerned with the realm of behavior, relating man to society, but of thought. Bergman's twenty films, gradually expanding their range over a fifteen-year period, reflect an inquiry into the philosophical nature of man and the metaphysical meaning of life.

Bergman's essential theme, as expressed in his films, is man's search for knowledge in a hostile universe. The ultimate answer is that there is no answer, but the quest itself provides its own justification. Man must pursue the search alone, since he is as incapable of understanding other men as he is of understanding himself. Society can only handicap man in life's quest for knowledge. Hell is on earth, and life is the process of experiencing it. Maturity comes only from acceptance of these conditions, and from grasping the few comforts that life has to offer. These comforts are in sex, an act of temporary communication which results in procreation as a final justification for existence; in art, which distills the products of man's intellect and emotion into another intangible form of communication and self-expression; and in the imagination, not in any conventional religious form, but as a kind of fatalistic mysticism which offers at least the possibility of an ultimate meaning to the search. None of these comforts provides more than a temporary assuagement of the inevitable solitude of existence, but they are all that life can offer, and as such, they will suffice.

This great theme is evident in all of Bergman's works, from the youthful dramas of adolescent revolt, through a series of brilliant sophisticated comedies, to the mature philosophical films of his most recent period. The theme is most explicitly expressed in *Det Sjunde Inseglet* (*The Seventh Seal*), the parable of man's desperate attempt to fulfill his aspirations before the Apocalypse. The knight who plays chess with Death cannot avoid his fate, but he finds triumph in the act of challenging the inevitable. Sig-

nificantly, his moment of triumph comes after he has discovered that Death has cheated him by masquerading as a priest to hear the knight's confession. Death's deception demonstrates the conspiracy of the natural and social world to prevent man from achieving knowledge, and this demonstration turns the act of challenge into a triumphant symbol of life. "The blood is pulsing through my veins," the knight laughs, "the sun is at its zenith, and I, Antonius Block, am playing a game of chess with Death!"

The knight's search is not for God but for a meaning; he has lost faith, not merely in religion, but in man. In the course of his search, he finds no satisfaction from Bergman's trinity of temporal saviors. Religion offers no answer to the Apocalypse. One pastor burns a child at the stake as a witch, another vindictively commands his followers to flagellate themselves as punishment for original sin. The seminarist who inspires the knight's crusade becomes a grave-robber, and dies of the plague screaming desperately of his will to live. The atheist, however, offers as little solace. The cynical squire denies the imagination in preference for the material comforts of sex, food, and drink, and mocks the knight's vain desire to find hope and faith in the eyes of the mad young witch who faces the void beyond the flames. He offers strong protest to the inevitability of death, but his protest, like the others, is to no avail.

The artist's role, as Bergman represents it, is equally futile. The painter's mural can only depict a chronicle of devastation, and the strolling players attempt a variety of artistic effects without success. One actor masquerades as Pan to perform a rite of seduction, and in another scene adopts the guise of Death to pretend suicide, only to find that Death penetrates his mask as read-

THE SEVENTH SEAL: *Joseph (Nils Poppe) tormented by the renegade seminarist and the crowd.*

ily as his mistress sees through his false beard. Another actor is forced to imitate a bear, and his comic dance becomes a crucifixion. A bawdy song to accompany a seduction is interrupted by the greater performance of a religious procession depicting the Calvary, and Joseph's gentle hymn to Christ can only create a temporary illusion of a peaceful haven along the tortuous route through the labyrinth.

The final solace, sexual communication, offers no more hope of salvation. The blacksmith's wife, disillusioned by her lover's false mask, returns to her cuckolded husband, who accepts her repentance because hell with an unfaithful wife is better than solitude. The knight returns from his crusades to find his youthful bride grown old, placidly accepting his empty-handed return and welcoming his companion, Death. The squire, weary of transient physical conquests, finds brief satisfaction with a mute mistress who silently bears her cross of labor and triumphantly greets Death as the recognized symbol of fulfillment of her obligation.

It is the mute girl's answer, "It is over," which is most meaningful, for the most eloquent testimonials are those that say least: the witch's eyes, in which the knight sees, not the devil as she proudly claims, but only fear; the head of a skeleton which directs the voyagers on their journey; and Death itself, whose answer to the knight's passionate plea for interior knowledge is the terrible denial, "Nothing." Nevertheless, despite the inevitability of death and the failure of life to provide an answer to its meaning, the conclusion is affirmative. Man survives, in the group of strolling players who personify the constant trinity of art, sex, and imagination. Joseph, the foolish visionary, movingly describes the illusion of Death leading the caravan in a dance toward Eternity, while his beautiful wife, bearing the child who will some day perform the impossible feat of juggling a stationary ball, chides him affectionately.

The Seventh Seal is notable for its duality, a conception which lies at the foundation of Bergman's work. The film contains scarcely a metaphor which could not be interpreted in a variety of ways. Art, sex, and the imagination are all depicted as futile, yet, in the end, they survive. The witch's eyes are described at various times as containing the devil, hope and faith, nothing but fear, and nothing at all. The squire's position may be interpreted as existentialist, with man's existence proved only by his actions, separated from other men, yet responsible for them. The knight seems to reject this viewpoint in his quest for metaphysical meanings, but he also resorts to action when he finally upsets Death's chessboard, releasing the nucleus of the Family of Man to continue life's quest. If the knight represents man, then man must die without knowledge; yet the players' child, who is surely the embryonic knight of the future, survives to continue in pursuit of the impossible. The final interpretation is left to the observer, and Bergman's own meaning can only be determined through a study of the total context of his work.

Bergman's first screenplay, *Torment*, was directed by Alf Sjöberg in 1944 the leading Swedish director. In *Torment*, a youthful violinist, inhibited by rigid social conventions at school and within his family, seeks self-expression in an idealistic love affair. When this experience brings him into his first contact with the conception of absolute Evil in the world, he dreams that he is executed by the figure of Evil, while in actuality his inability to adjust his illusions to reality

results in the girl's death and his own expulsion from society. His illusions shattered and his creative vitality figuratively destroyed, he is left to face life without compensations. *Torment,* one of the great Swedish films, achieves an intensity which Bergman's own films, less absolute in their conceptions, have never attained, but its theme contains the essence of Bergman's subsequent philosophy.

Bergman's ability to write a definitive tragedy of adolescence in 1944 is most revealing in the light of his subsequent development. Although the conclusion of *Torment* is enigmatic, suggesting both hope and futility, the youthful protagonist has actually experienced the worst that will ever happen to him, since he will never again be able to respond as intensely as at the age of 17. *Torment* is one of the rare films to achieve catharsis, an effect which Bergman never attempted again.

Bergman's early films as a director, *Kris* (*Crisis*), *Det Regnar På Vår Kärlek* (*It Rains on Our Love*), *Skepp Till Indialand* (*Boat for the Indies,* released in America as *Frustration*), and *Musik I Mörker* (*Music in the Darkness*), continue the examination of youthful revolt against society which Bergman began in *Torment,* with the pessimistic conclusion that man can only hope for salvation in retreat, as a social outcast. The realistic seaport drama, *Hamnstad* (*Seaport*), Bergman's first major directorial achievement and his first production for Svensk Filmindustri, suggests for the first time that the young lovers, whose need for each other survives their inability to communicate, may find the strength to combat life on its own terms. Bergman's youthful pessimism is climaxed by *Fängelse* (*Prison*), which depicts modern life as a total hell from which there can be no salvation because man has lost the ability to believe in God. This powerful expressionistic work, influenced by Pirandello and strongly foreshadowing *The Seventh Seal,* is set in a motion-picture studio, and presents life's odyssey as a passage through an artificial corridor populated by inanimate mannequins, in an expression of one of Bergman's favorite conceptions, the relative reality of artistic illusion. *Prison* is the love story of a virginal prostitute, whose degraded existence is made bearable by her innocence of its implications, and a neurotic actor-writer, altogether dissociated from life, whose private hell lies within his imagination. Their brief love affair brings temporary happiness to both, until the intrusion of his imagination awakens the girl to an awarenes of the horror of her life, driving her to suicide and leaving the illusionist broken by this too-violent contact with reality.

Törst (*Thirst,* called in America *Three Strange Loves*) and *Till Glädje* (*Toward Joy*) investigate the theme of marriage. In the former, a student and his barren wife traveling through the ruins of postwar Germany torment one another with accusations of past infidelities and present incomprehensions, until the enclosure of their train compartment resembles the private hell of Sartre's *No Exit.* The student finally imagines himself murdering his wife in a desperate attempt to stop her from talking, but is relieved to find her still alive, since "hell together is better than hell alone." In *Toward Joy,* a second violinist in a symphony orchestra, tortured by his artistic failure, alienates his wife by accusing her of his own self-doubts. They separate, but finally reconcile, in mature understanding of their mutual need. A stove then blows up in her face, and he is left alone, rehearsing for a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony,

playing with the orchestra Schiller's *Ode to Joy*. In the film's most memorable scene, an elderly symphony conductor (played by the Swedish director, Victor Sjöstrom) recalls his intrusion upon the couple in a moment of intimacy, when he found the wife smiling in maternal contentment, her husband's head cradled in her lap, and muses that, if one could enter into this couple's lives for a single day, one could understand the secrets of the universe.

Sommarlek (*Summerplay*, 1950) is one of Bergman's most personal films, and, for connoisseurs of the director's work, it remains the most satisfying of his early achievements. *Summerplay* introduces a new maturity into Bergman's philosophy and technique. The long flashback to an idyllic summer romance is overshadowed with mystical symbols foreboding disaster, for, in Bergman's philosophy, in the absence of interior knowledge and with only death as a certainty, superstitious omens are fully as valid as scientific facts. The tragedy of the aging ballerina (Maj-Britt Nilsson) who relives her adolescent love affair is not in her obsession with the past, but in the fact that she has forgotten it, and has continued to exist without identity, after surrending her capacity for emotion. When she broods over the diary of her dead lover, it is not his face that she sees, but the image of her own lost youth. Her lover's death has convinced her that life is meaningless, and all that remains is the empty shell—the costumed ballerina with the body of a young girl and the face of an old woman, staring into the mirror at a painted mask of her own face, an image valid only in the theater. Yet it is through acceptance of this image that she reaches maturity. Aided by a choreographer in sorcerer's guise who points out the difference between art and reality, she does not find

ILLICIT INTERLUDE: *Maj-Britt Nilsson, the ballerina, and Stig Olin, the therapeutic clown, in the central mirror scene.*

happiness but something approximating it, with a new lover who needs her without understanding, less romantic than the first, but equally alive. In the end, rising on tiptoe to embrace her future, she dances back onto the stage, as art, like life, perpetuates itself.

Bergman's early films, strange, exceedingly personal, and deeply provocative, sometimes deriving from the Protestant environment of his own childhood, seem to be groping for a style flexible enough to express his gradually formulating metaphysical conceptions. When he created *Summerplay*, it was clear that Bergman had attained complete maturity as a director, and was capable of expressing anything he chose. His films since 1950 are, without exception, masterful in their evocations of mood and movement, the principal ingredients of cinematic style.

In *Kvinnors Väntan* (*The Waiting of Women*), the most technically dazzling of his films, a group of women, waiting for their husbands to join them for a summer weekend at the lake, pass the time by recounting intimate stories from their married lives. The first (Anita Björk) remembers her passionless affair with her husband's

best friend, in which the sophisticated participants find themselves enacting a conventional triangular farce, each aware of the triteness of his role in the situation but unable to avert the inevitable dénouement. The second wife (Maj-Britt Nilsson), a romantic "shopgirl" type, describes in gauzy flashbacks the Parisian idyll which preceded the revelation that her dream-lover had no existence outside her imagination. Temporarily abandoned by her lover after the interference of his wealthy family, she bears her child alone and finds self-fulfillment in motherhood, an experience so complete that she is capable, finally, of marrying the characterless boy after realizing that he can have no existence without her, and satisfying her maternal need by clasping both husband and child to her breast. In the third episode, considered a classic, Eva Dahlbeck is trapped overnight in an elevator with her husband (Gunnar Björnstrand), a successful businessman too occupied with his affairs to have time for his wife. After taunting each other with their infidelities, in sparkling metaphors, they grow intimate for the first time in years, and decide in their new understanding to begin their marriage again. When the elevator is repaired, however, the husband discovers he is late for an appointment, and too eagerly rushes off to work, leaving the incident to be gradually forgotten. The three women, musing over the meanings of their respective memories, then turn to the fourth wife, who smiles enigmatically and says that she has nothing at all to tell. The implication, of course, is that her drama is the most profound.

In *Sommaren Med Monika* (*Summer with Monika*), Bergman returns to the theme of adolescent revolt in the story of a bourgeois boy and a lower-class girl who become lovers through a kind of natural selection and leave the city for a summer idyll in the Swedish north woods. Forced by her pregnancy to return at summer's end, they find themselves trapped by social pressures into a conformity which threatens to destroy them, by turning the boy into an ordinary working husband struggling through night school, and the girl into a slovenly housewife. Suddenly reverting to her natural instinct, the girl revolts against this fate, and abandons husband and child to become a prostitute, after a devastating moment in which she stares defiantly into the camera, daring the observer to condemn her. As played by Harriet Andersson, the most remarkable Swedish actress since Greta Garbo, *Monika* is Bergman's most erotic film, a passionate testimonial to the theme that, for intellectual modern man in search of meaning, sex is not enough.

Nor is art enough, as Bergman demonstrates in *Gycklarnas Afton* (*Sunset of a Clown*, called in England *Sawdust and Tinsel*, in America *The Naked Night*). The artist can exist only by performing before his audience in a mask—the mask of a role to play, a script to follow, of make-up and costume and illusory spotlights to conceal the artist's true identity from the observer. Within this mask, he can achieve the illusion of communication, assuming a kind of universal identity which may bring him greater fulfillment than any other form of action. But by placing his dependence on the mask, the artist confronts a new danger which the layman can more easily avoid, the danger of exposure to his audience without the mask. This, to the artist, is the ultimate horror of existence, to be seen without artifice, in unalterable nakedness, with no retreat from the spotlight. This theme is exemplified in the classic opening sequence when the clown's aging wife parades before the soldiers in her painted face and ornamented dress, then can only retain their

attention by removing her clothes and washing away her make-up by bathing in the lake. The appearance of her husband awakens her to the spectacle of her nakedness, and, in the agony of a blinding sunlight, they make their way through the laughing crowds to the final curtain of their tent. The remainder of the film elaborates upon this symbolic theme in the story of a circus owner and his mistress who, like the clown and his wife, discover that their immersion in art has made it impossible for them to exist in a real world without artifice, and then find themselves exposed to a hostile society without their masks. The circus owner, trying to obtain costumes to give a performance, gradually realizes that, in the perpetual odyssey of his life as a strolling player, he has lost everything he owns. His wife, no longer capable of feeling for him and implacable in her contained self-awareness, refuses to grant him a refuge. His mistress sells her body to an actor who offers a jewel of value "enough to live for a year"; the jewel is worthless, but the price is real, for the jewel is Illusion. Forcing her to reveal her infidelity, the circus owner realizes that "to be a cuckold is nothing; it is to know it that is terrible." Attempting to find release in an exhibition of violent physical prowess, he is humiliated in the circus arena by the frail actor, who kicks the blinding dust of illusion in his face while the audience applauds the performance. Incapable even of suicide, he sees at last that he is only an animal on public exhibition, like the caged bear in his circus, and he symbolically kills the bear as a final act of negation. As the circus takes its twilight departure, the clown movingly describes a dream in which he gradually grew smaller and smaller until he dwindled into a foetus and disappeared.

After this desolate evocation of creative

THE NAKED NIGHT: *Harriet Andersson, the mistress, and Ake Grönberg, the circus owner.*

despair, Bergman significantly turned to comedy, and emerged with *En Lektion I Kärlek,* one of his most brilliant films. The mature psychiatrist hero of *A Lesson in Love* (Gunnar Björnstrand) is perfectly willing to settle for sex as a compensation for the meaninglessness of existence, but his wife and mistress refuse to coöperate. Woman, according to Bergman, is far better equipped to cope with life than man, since woman is capable of motherhood, the most satisfying form of creativity, and certainly the most tangible. Woman, as a result, is less interested in metaphysics than in reality, and concrete reality consists not merely in possessing a mate but in forcing him to pursue her. The mistress, a young tiger-woman, is insatiable in her determination to be seduced; the wife (Eva Dahlbeck), more mature but fully as feline, is equally determined, not only to win her husband back, but to force him to conquer her. When Björnstrand finally realizes that a peaceful sex life can only be attained through violent engagement, he enters wholeheartedly into the battle, a modern Don Quixote bearing the standards of the Cult of Nothingness. The Dahlbeck-Björnstrand relationship, progressing from sophisticated repartee reminiscent of the better Oscar Wilde to a Chaplinesque battle royal in a Danish bistro, emerges as a triumph for dynamic philosophy over passive metaphysics, the comic victory of Nietzsche over Pascal.

Kvinnodröm (*Dreams of Women*), as if to contradict the apparent optimism of *A Lesson in Love,* reëamines the hell of a sophisticated modern civilization whose inhabitants mask their emotions with a glittering display of manners. Following a fashion editor (Eva Dahlbeck) and a mannequin (Harriet Andersson) on a business trip to a neighboring city, Bergman chronicles their respective disillusioning experiences with a virile married lover (Ulf Palme) and an aging roué (Gunnar Björnstrand), neither of whom is capable of sustaining an affair of physical or emotional depth. Camouflaging their disappointments, the women return to the illusory world of high fashion, and adjust their masks with firmer control. *Dreams of Women,* a glacially brilliant exercise in technique, was followed by *Sommarnattens Leende* (*Smiles of a Summer Night*), Bergman's most ambitious comedy, and, with *The Seventh Seal* and *Smultronstället* (*Wild Strawberries*), his most comprehensive examination of his essential philosophical themes.

Smiles of a Summer Night is constructed as an elaborate game of love, with happiness and frustration as the stakes. The playing field, instead of being a plague-infested labyrinth, is nineteenth-century society. The quest, as in *The Seventh Seal,* remains a search for meaning, but the object of the search lies with the natural order rather than the spiritual; in the comedy of life, man's primary concern is not religious but sexual. If imaginative salvation offers greater solace to the intellect, physical gratification offers a more tangible reward.

The protagonists are conventional performers for a rondelay of sex within this social framework: a worldly actress; her former lover, a widower, who hopes she will seduce his theologically inclined son, who is in turn attracted to his father's virginal bride; the bride's childhood friend, who is intensely jealous of her aristocratic husband, the actress' present lover. The game entangles and re-matches the sextet, with interference and observation from the upstairs maid and a poetic coachman. The result is a victory for natural order over the social pattern: youth must mate with youth, age with age, like with like. Convention

may dominate human emotion and even human will, but in a conflict with nature, nature must triumph. Thus the young son may be a ministerial student, but, in the game of sex, he must still elope with his father's youthful bride. The maid may challenge the social order by offering her favors to the household at large, but it is the coachman who must finally gratify her, since only the poet can appreciate true carnality. The rules of the game are rigid, and they must finally be obeyed.

This victory of nature is as inevitable as the victory of death. Existence may be the tortuous process of searching for a meaning, but life, in the end, imposes its own meaning. Life perpetuates itself, and man, in his quest for knowledge, is powerless in the struggle. The trinity of comforts becomes a series of ironic smiles—at romantic youth, leaving childhood in a frantic rush to discover love; at fools, playing at love without comprehending the inanity of the game; and at the old and weary, who have paid the price for their exalted passions with the suffering of experience.

The game, then, must be played at every stage of life, and mature man, trying to savor the three comforts as reward for the completion of his quest, is finally left with none. The widowed lawyer (Gunnar Björnstrand) is a pathetic figure of man at the end of his search for meaning, recognizing that his question can have no answer. Sex is an illusion, for his young bride loses her virginity in another's arms, and his seduction by the friend is interrupted by her husband; even his former mistress refuses to grant him the cognizance of the son he has sired. Imagination fails, for his religious son abandons theology to elope with his stepmother, and even a dignified death as culmination for life's anticlimax proves impossible; suicide is a game of Russian roulette with a blank cartridge. The artifice of manners he has adopted to mask his impotence with an aura of dignity is ultimately a failure as well; he falls into a mud puddle and his pretenses are shattered. "What can a woman ever see in a man?" he perplexedly inquires, and his mistress succinctly replies, "Women are seldom interested in aesthetics. Besides, we can always turn out the light."

With this realistic approach, the women triumph in the game by forcing the men to capture them. The mistress, herself an artist whose entire life is a calculated performance before an audience, and who is well aware of the emptiness of a bare stage after applause has died, retrieves her former lover from his unsuited wife; the countess recaptures her husband from his mistress; the child-wife seduces her stepson from his ethical studies; the maid wins a promise of marriage from her coachman. At this point, *Smiles of a Summer Night* may be enjoyed as a delightful comedy of manners in the tradition of French boudoir farce, but the film, a typical Bergman creation, is subject to a dual interpretation, and an underlying serious meaning is readily apparent. One may suppose that each triumph is transitory: the mistress will soon grow bored again, the

SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT: *The actress (Eva Dahlbeck) visits her mother (Naima Wifstrand) just before the weekend party at the country house.*

count vows eternal fidelity "in his fashion," the theologian will soon be overcome with remorse, the coachman's promise is retractable after the dawn. The game reaches its preordained conclusion, but life, constant and incalculable, goes on, and in the end they all go in to breakfast.

Nära Livet (*Brink of Life*) complements Bergman's symbolic analysis of the theme of death by probing into the mystery of birth, in a powerful realistic drama set in a maternity ward. Ingrid Thulin, as the intellectual woman who loses the child she hoped would save her crumbling marriage, opens the film with a sequence of such intensity that it seems impossible to equal, but Bergman later surpasses it with an overwhelming childbirth sequence in which Eva Dahlbeck, presented as the essence of maternal womanhood, experiences the agony of a protracted labor which kills her child, and can only scream helplessly for her own mother, in a moment as revealing as Death's denial of interior knowledge in *The Seventh Seal.* The third pregnant woman who shares the ward, an unmarried adolescent (Bibi Andersson), gathers the courage through participation in these tragedies to bear her own unwanted child, in an ending of quiet affirmation. Bergman handles this material with extreme realism, but his theme is a direct extension of the meanings inherent in *The Seventh Seal.* Birth and death are the ultimate particles of existence, and both are in the realm of a hostile nature which is beyond the grasp of human intellect, yet man, nature's embodiment and justification, continues the search for knowledge which is itself the act of life.

It is, however, *Wild Strawberries,* which preceded *Brink of Life,* which must be considered Bergman's masterpiece. If *The Seventh Seal* investigates the theme of death, and *Brink of Life* birth, *Wild Strawberries* is Bergman's essay on the theme of life.

Wild Strawberries chronicles a day in the life of a doctor (beautifully played by Victor Sjöstrom), who is traveling from Stockholm to Göteborg to be honored for his life's achievements on his seventieth birthday. In the course of the journey, he comes into contact with a series of people and incidents which introduce associations from his past. Gradually in his dreams and reminiscences, he re-lives his entire life—the idealized past, the unrealized present, and the completed future, observed in physical, intellectual, and emotional terms. Bergman's presentation of these images is alternately stylized, expressionistic, realistic, and finally poetic. The conception of *Wild Strawberries* is roughly parallel to Joyce's *Ulysses,* with Bergman's protagonist on this Biblical odyssey, like Joyce's, the total man—husband, lover, father, son, poet, laborer, man of thought and man of action, inhabitant of past and present, with mankind's weaknesses and strengths—who, at the end of this ninety-minute film, is presented to the observer, complete. Bergman's achievement in *Wild Strawberries* is far too complex to be briefly sumarized, but the conclusion, when the old man reaches through time to clasp the hand of the charming girl who represents man's aspirations, and weeps over the realization of his loss, is as moving a moment as the screen has ever recorded. The film is frequently harsh, cruel, and finally beautiful, and its unforgettable final image, a couple sitting on the river bank, the man's fishing pole forming a perfect arc into the still water, represents Bergman's most personal statement, a comment which is passionately affirmative.

Bergman's twentieth film, *Ansiktet* (*The Face*), as yet unseen here, places a nineteenth-century sorcerer in conflict with a pragmatic scientist, and questions the va-

lidity of magic in the modern world.

In addition to his own films, most of these from his original screenplays, Bergman has written four screenplays for other directors. Simultaneously, he has continued his work in the theater, directing, among many other plays, Camus' *Caligula,* Werfel's *Jacobowsky and the Colonel, Macbeth, Anouilh's Waltz of the Toreadors,* Brecht's *Threepenny Opera,* Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,* Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author,* Molière's *Don Juan,* John Patrick's *Teahouse of the August Moon,* Ibsen's *Peer Gynt,* Goethe's *Faust,* and many plays by Strindberg and by Bergman himself. Bergman usually stages three or four plays during the fall and winter season at his Malmö theater, where he supervises a repertory company, then retires to a sanatorium in the spring to write one or two screenplays, which he directs in the summer. (This schedule explains the prevalence of summer idylls and Swedish "daylight nights" in Bergman's films.) As his reputation has increased, Bergman has received offers from Hollywood, Germany, and Russia, but he has shown no inclination to leave Sweden, where he is able to assume complete creative responsibility for his own work.

Until recently, Bergman was almost unknown outside Sweden, except as the author of *Torment. Summerplay* was shown at the Venice film festival in 1952, and was released in America under the title *Illicit Interlude,* in a severly cut and badly titled version, with the interpolation of two nude scenes shot in New York by another director using a double for the leading actress. This ruined version, not surprisingly, was little appreciated by American critics, who found it unlike Hollywood soap operas, and consequently inferior. *Boat for the Indies, Thirst,* and *Summer with Monika* have been shown at a few American theaters, with misleading titles and exploitation devoted to their obstensibly censorable qualities. A crudely cut version of *Sunset of a Clown* was released in America as *The Naked Night,* and was given the critical reception the title deserved. *Smiles of a Summer Night* was admired in New York, though not always for the right reasons (most critics tended to dismiss it as an imitation French sex comedy, ignoring its serious implications), and only *The Seventh Seal,* of the films so far shown in America, received serious critical recognition here. In Europe, however, Bergman's success has been spectacular. For three years in a row, Bergman films have won major prizes at Cannes, and *Wild Strawberries* won the grand prize at Berlin in 1958. As a result of excited critical approval, *Summerplay* and *The Seventh Seal* attracted large crowds in Paris, and when the Cinémathèque Française presented thirteen of Bergman's films a year ago, a large overflow had to be turned away from the theater each evening. Such periodicals as *Cahiers du Cinema* and *Sight and Sound* called 1958 "the Bergman year," and a recent poll of British critics found a majority selecting either *The Seventh Seal* or *Wild Strawberries* as the year's outstanding film.

The area of greatest interest in Bergman's films is thematic rather than technical, although Bergman's technique alone would place him among the world's best directors. Bergman consciously subordinates form to content, being more interested in what he is saying than in his method of saying it. The desired result is for an observer to emerge from the film preoccupied with its ideas rather than dazzled with its visual imagery. This attitude, far from implying a contempt for technique, indicates Berg-

man's extraordinary respect for the medium as a means of communicating his ideas. Bergman uses technique as a method of expression, and his subtle application of the intrinsic mechanical properties of the cinema is fully appropriate to his material.

Bergman's first film is visually striking, and his fifth, *Seaport*, shows him in command of the medium. By the time of *Summerplay*, his technique is masterful in every respect, and each subsequent film has operated on the highest level of visual imagination. Bergman has continued to experiment with new styles throughout his career. *Boat for the Indies*, murky and fogbound, shows the influence of the early Marcel Carné (*Le Jour Se Lève*, *Quai des Brumes*), and *Seaport*, made in 1947, was influenced by the Italian neorealists. *The Waiting of Women* is sometimes considered a Swedish counterpart of *A Letter to Three Wives*, but its technique is far more sophisticated and dexterous than that of Mankiewicz. *A Lesson in Love* resembles the best Lubitsch comedies, and *Sunset of a Clown* recalls such Emil Jannings films as *Variety* and *The Last Laugh*. *Smiles of a Summer Night* is a kind of Swedish *La Régle du Jeu* (although Bergman had not seen Renoir's film), and sometimes suggests the Max Ophuls of *La Ronde*. *The Seventh Seal* uses devices from the medieval morality play, briefly recalls Dreyer's *Day of Wrath* in its flagellation scene, and some of its playing assumes attitudes from the *commedia dell' arte* and its Elizabethan equivalent, the Shakespearian clown scenes. The conclusion, with the strolling players walking down the open road, bears a marked resemblance, both in meaning and presentation, to the classic Chaplin ending.

Such a diversity of stylistic elements might suggest eclecticism, or at best a superficial cinematic erudition, in a director with a less consistently personal viewpoint. There is little danger, however, of a Bergman film ever being mistaken for the work of anyone else. In Bergman's case, the range clearly indicates his interest in all the facets of theatrical expression and his constant desire for expansion and variation in his work. The wide variety of plays he has directed is similarly significant. Bergman once staged a Shakespearian cycle (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth*) in three reprises, each time directing each in an entirely different style.

Bergman's cinematic style, though never obtrusive, is unconventional. His films are rarely without dream sequences, flashbacks, and parallel plot developments, and *The Seventh Seal* is the only Bergman film without a sequence in which the protagonist stares at his image in a mirror and contemplates a basic truth about himself. (Since medieval Sweden apparently lacked mirrors, the knight in *The Seventh Seal* stares instead into the eyes of the witch and Death.) In *A Lesson in Love*, the hero's mistress plays all her scenes before the audience has been introduced to his wife, to whom he has been married for twenty years. In *Summerplay*, the hooting of an owl, a random chord struck on the piano, the rustling of wind through the leaves introduce the Bergman Mood, in which the characters experience premonitions of disaster; and at one point the young lovers draw cartoons which Bergman proceeds to animate for the illumination of the audience. Such devices are daring in their very obviousness, but Bergman never employs an effect without a purpose, and his touch never falters. Bergman's dream sequences succeed because of their concentration on explicit symbols which directly pertain to the internal meaning of his theme. The visual symbols, like the Biblical references in names of characters and plot de-

SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT: *By-play within the play (Gunnar Björnstrand, Eva Dahlbeck, Ulla Jacobsson).*

velopments, are presented without emphasis or editorial comment, leaving the observer to draw his own conclusions as to their meanings. The director's technique, like his scripts, is noted for its duality—the possibility of several interpretations—and its corresponding lack of emphatic statement. Bergman employs the elementary cinematic principle of visual movement, keeping his camera in irregular motion without distracting attention from the content by a motion which is too rapid or abrupt. Consequently, the camera tracks a great deal, weaving around the sets to encircle the players and center the observer's attention upon the matter of greatest interest, the actors' faces and their dialogue. Bergman tracks more than he cuts, and the cuts he employs are not for violent emphasis but for a contrasting purpose, to mute effects before they are completed. Bergman seldom lingers over a strong effect, preferring instead to dissolve quickly to a new and contrasting scene. He is abrupt only in order to avoid overstatement, and the effect for the observer is of a series of deeply suggestive words and images, with other images left unseen and words unsaid, to be supplied by the observer's own intellectual reflection. Life goes on, and Bergman's people continue to exist after the camera has ceased to dwell upon them.

This is, finally, the highest form of technique, a method which places its emphasis entirely on content. By focusing the observer's attention upon his figures according to the importance of what they are saying, Bergman imposes difficult demands upon his players, but Swedish actors, trained in a repertory system which is probably the best in the world, have little difficulty in meeting these stringent requirements. Bergman is unequaled as a director of actors, and he uses the same players in a variety of roles to admirable effect. Harriet Andersson, the most promising young actress in Europe, figures prominently in five successive films and is completely different in each, shifting with ease from the openly sensual mistress of *Sunset of a Clown* to the pigtailed tomboy of *A Lesson in Love*. Maj-Britt Nilsson, who resembles a young Queen Elizabeth in *Toward Joy*, is remarkable as the fifteen-year-old adolescent who ages into the mature ballerina of *Summerplay*. Eva Dahlbeck, a great actress, is unparalle ed in high comedy, and impressive as the tragic, earthy mother in *Brink of Life*. Birger Malmsten, the protagonist of most of Bergman's early films, follows an appearance as a degenerate alcoholic in *Toward Joy* with an entirely convincing performance as the adolescent lover of *Summerplay*. Gunnar Björnstrand, noted as the Swedish Cary Grant in such films as *A Lesson in Love* and *The Waiting of Women*, also plays the elderly widower in *Smiles of a Summer Night* and the virile squire in *The Seventh Seal*.

The tenor of Bergman's recent films has been increasingly metaphysical, the nature of their subjects clearly indicating that Bergman, who at forty-one is at the peak of his powers, is still searching for new ideas. His

work has already provided a landmark in the history of the intellectual cinema by suggesting the need for critical evaluation according to literary standards as well as by the purely visual and symbolic criteria normally applied to the motion picture. In fifteen years, he has achieved a body of work unprecedented in a medium in which such comparable artists as Dreyer, Bresson, and Chaplin usually take several years between films. Today, with his international reputation predominant in the cinematic world, Bergman's future is apparently unlimited. Even if he accomplishes nothing more, his films have already proved that the motion picture is capable of sustaining intellectual conceptions of the most provocative kind.

ERNEST CALLENBACH

The Understood Antagonist and Other Observations

An exploration of some little-discussed questions about the structure and appeal of documentary films

Although much of traditional documentary's appeal has resided in its admirable social intentions, today documentary is important more because documentaries have been, on the whole, fairly personal films and because we face now the possibility that the cinema will be, at least in America, entirely swallowed up by Organization. It was the documentarists who first broke away, on any sizable scale, from the commercial studio pattern; and it was the documentarists who first showed that film-making even in contemporary, technically expert terms could be an intimate, coöperative process with much of the direct creativity of other art forms. From the documentarists the makers of the independent films of today and tomorrow have much to learn, as to both attitude and craft. In this sense documentary is one of the few real hopes of the film as an art. This is true in spite of the fact that much of what passes today for documentary is merely film put to the unimaginative service of education, government, or salesmanship. For here and there among documentarists are men who insist on turning film to their own expressive ends, and make of the "factual film" works of art.

It is important to look carefully at the documentary tradition, then, not with the idea of diagnosing the ills of present-day production (there are all too many documentary-doctors as it is) but in hopes of understanding the basic strategies open to film-makers who abjure dependence on literary forms, stagy dramatic structure, and the familiar vices of the "entertainment" film. I am not dealing, then, with documentaries as social phenomena, political or educational tools, or anything of that sort, but as works of art which are or ought to be interesting to experience. And I propose to examine, in a rather formal manner, some of their organizing principles.

These principles, oddly enough, have much less to do with the "appeal of reality" and such factors than one would be led to expect by the writings of documentarists. Such slogans aside, film *is* an art; it demands contrivance,

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and it is just as well to admit it.

The nature of any art form is largely influenced by the situations in which it is perceived. Looking at a film is an experience that demands a special kind of participation from the viewer: he must sit and watch while the film, at its own speed and in its own way, unrolls before him. He has only one real choice: to watch or not to watch. He cannot temporarily avert his eyes to meditate, as he might in an art gallery; he cannot come closer or walk away; he cannot refer back to some intriguing detail. He can only follow or not follow.

Most of the devices of film art, thus, are answers to the simple strategic problem of how to keep the spectator following. (Different degrees of following are, evidently, possible: for the lowest types of sponsored or entertainment film, merely keeping the eyes open and focussed may be enough; for compact, difficult films even the greatest alertness may fall short of the filmmaker's wish.) I say "the simple strategic problem" because it can be stated simply; but to anyone who has attempted to write a script for a documentary, it is clear that the solutions have the same complexity and troublesomeness, and require the same type of artistic power, as do solutions in any art.

To many documentarists this fact has, it appears, seemed dismal enough to compel an escape into limited and sometimes self-defeating methods of appeal.

Curiosity, for instance, was for some years the main and most reliable factor, and cinema in the beginning needed only to show trains moving, waves breaking, babies crying: the image of the commonplace was extraordinary by its novelty. In a rather sophisticated form this appeal underlay most of the British documentaries of the 'thirties; and that its spell is still strong may be seen from the reliance placed upon it by the Free Cinema people, who turn to deaf-mutes because they are strange and to jazz clubs because they are (to most Englishmen) alien—as the French turn to Africa or the underseas. In the conversations of would-be documentarists curiosity-value looms very large: they search for subjects that will, in themselves, "get" the audience. And since in this world of dense communications most people know a smattering about a great many things (precisely enough, in fact, to destroy their curiosity value) the search for new subjects leads far afield.

Now several things may be said about the appeal of curiosity. It is not a terribly strong appeal in most cases and weakens, say, along toward the end of the first reel. And it cannot serve as a means of lending *structure* to a film—it implies no beginning, middle, and end, but only an undifferentiated or intermittent set of items. Worst of all, a strange thing is no better material for art than a familiar one, and the appeal to curiosity can thus become a diversion, with film-makers making films about something merely because it is there and nobody has yet "covered" it, as the telling phrase goes.

Certain films like *Rien que les Heures* and *Berlin: Symphony of a City* rely on curiosity-value in a fairly sophisticated and prepossessing sense. Both attempt to deal poetically with the city, Cavalcanti's rather more humanly than Ruttmann's; both take for their organizing principle simple chronology, on the ground that days have beginnings, middles, and ends, and that a reflection of this should give the film coherent structure and—above all!—a conclusion.

John Grierson's DRIFTERS: *how the herring gets to the breakfast table.*

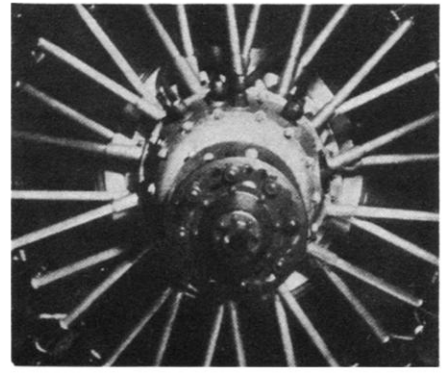
Berlin also attempts to build meaning out of rhythm: one of its appeals is that, *curiously*, the city has a kind of over-all rhythm governing its chaos.

Many of the British documentaries of the 'thirties placed a surprising reliance on curiosity. For, although avowedly propagandistic and educational, films like *Granton Trawler*, *Aero Engine*, or *Telephone Workers* in fact often merely laid events and objects out on display, confident that their inherent interest would suffice. It is odd that film-makers, of all people, should think the simple appearance of reality fascinating, and elevate its straightforward presentation to their major principle. Like that of other revolutionists, the documentary-makers' vision was sometimes only a negative image of what they hoped to displace. If the studios made films with meretricious and slickly "interesting" stories, then, by God, documentary would disdain stories and declare, with Stuart Legg, that documentary was "anti-showman." Which is like a writer saying that he is "anti-style." (In fact writers *do* sometimes say this: Jack Kerouac, for example, in his painful effusion on "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose" in the *Evergreen Review*, vol. 2, no. 5.) Allied to this is the curious aversion from people which characterized British documentary. Grierson disclaimed any "need" for people, and charged that the real subject was the movement of groups representing social forces. But, unfortunately, people were still there, and saying that the whole is more than its parts did not prove sufficient justification for trying to get along without paying any attention to the parts.

Eisenstein, in an imaginative program for an "intellectual cinema," took a position which in a sense nearly excludes the appeal to curiosity entirely. By a thoroughly synthetic process, based upon shots whose origins were not of great importance, films were to become a language in themselves, capable of conveying complex meanings through ingenious and poetic juxtapositions of imagery. Such films were to be expository or at least symphonic, conveying meaning and presumably holding interest (though this detail was never stressed) on a nondramatic basis, through what one might call the microscopic-scale conflicts in the fabric of the film itself. But Eisenstein's *October* shows that even in the hands of the master the hope of sustaining a lengthy film on this basis was a forlorn one, even for audiences respectful of experiment and more than ordinarily alert.

This is perhaps a good place to note that the matter of length is not a mere commonplace detail or a mechanical factor, but one of the basic considerations for film structure. The lyric forms, which in cinema include Eisenstein's "intellectual cinema," dream-films, films of associative imagery, and so on, have a natural although inexact upper length limit, just as do their parallels in poetry—a point at which the viewer or reader becomes conscious of wondering what comes next. This phenomenon imposes on the film-maker an absolutely crucial obligation; if he does not meet it, in some way or other, the spectator will soon stop following. (This is not, of course, to argue the lesser value of the smaller forms: a brief lyric poem may be a greater work than a long narrative one.)

When curiosity value weakens, as it must, film-makers sometimes attempt to bolster their film with *human interest*. If, in some mildly intriguing situation, a recognizable human being with "a problem" is injected (the argument runs), the viewer's incipient boredom will be counteracted. The result is the most dismal species of film known to man: those in which a



AERO ENGINE: *Arthur Elton combined formal beauty with the appeal of the real.*

story-line has been imposed on material that the film-makers cannot otherwise make interesting, with the consequence that both story and material are killed. This was the fate, for example, exemplified by the Flaherty-Murnau *White Shadows in the South Seas,* and it is practically standard practice among sponsored-film producers.

By trying to introduce questions of what-is-going-to-happen, however, even such films point to another major element of documentary structure: that of *conflict.* This term hardly appears at all in the traditional documentary literature, no doubt because of its connotations of studio-made intrigues. In fact, however, the nature of conflicts posed in documentaries is the key to understanding a good deal about the construction of the most successful documentaries. Let me first make clear that conflict here refers to more than the usual dramatic or fictional type. Conflict may also be between the film and the audience, or part of the audience, or part of the personality of the viewer; it may be between the film and a character or group or force in the film; it may be with persons or forces not shown in the film, and conceivably not even mentioned in the dialogue or narration (we shall come to a couple of examples in a moment). Moreover, conflict in documentary does not necessarily imply "resolution" upon the screen or in the narration.

Again oddly, British documentary allowed the conflict lines to remain implicit. By showing the well-organized, the socially useful, the good and the true (railroad, air and communication services, etc.), the British school shirked the real power (and interest!) of confusion and disorganization and corruption and alienation: features of society not accidents but enormous, brute, inertial facts. It displayed successes, so to speak, while the issue was always sharper and always in doubt; and by failing to find means of dramatizing (I do not mean story-izing) the sort of conflict that was at issue, they abandoned hope of making films that would really reach, and perhaps move and teach, substantial portions of the populace. In the end, they allowed the conflicts to remain unspoken except to viewers already sensitized: intellectuals and radicals oriented to the political position of the film-makers. (—Perhaps, of course, no government money would have been forthcoming for documentaries that showed sharp social conflict in human terms; yet as it happened the British traditional documentaries condemned themselves, as much as any effete "avant-garde" works, to a minority audience. Only the acceptable, comfortable conflict of war enabled the school to produce sustained films for a general audience.)

"Where the artist is not pursuing entertainment but purpose, not art but theme, the technique is energized inevitably by the size and scope of the occasion. How much further it reaches and will reach, than the studio leapfrog of impotent and self-conscious art!" Thus wrote Grierson in 1935, and although it may not be terribly sporting to exhume the passage a chilly quarter-century later, we must face the fact that this, as much else written in those brave times, was charming but false and somewhat foolish. Purpose did not, in too many British documentaries, turn out to be a reliably energizing force; and Grierson himself wrote wisely, for instance, of the play of tension in his own *Drifters,* though his references to "montage" never went much beyond saying it was what Wright, Rotha, Elton, Legg and the others did in order to "make fine sequence of what, on the face of it, was plain event." "Reality" was not enough; "montage" was not enough. What was missing was, in fact, real and avowed conflict.

In the Pare Lorentz films for the New Deal administration, overt conflict, though of a special type and in a basically lecture-like framework, did appear. The movement of both *The River* and *The Plow That Broke the Plains* may be described as conventionally dialectical: the thesis being virgin American continent, the antithesis exploitative, carelessly extractive capitalism, and the synthesis New Deal planned conservationism. Such a formula, of course, does nothing to show why anybody would watch such a film, but it provides terms for the proper questions. In *The River* we are first shown the Mis-

sissippi itself, presented with sweep of camera and poetry of narration. It is beautiful, immense, awesome: "carrying all the water that runs off two-thirds the continent." But it is also in conflict with man. It inundates his cities; its tributaries—from the smallest rivulets to huge torrents—erode his farmlands; it destroys his property and sometimes his life. And the dramatic question that animates the film is simple and clear, as the dramatic question should be: who will win? This question provides a foundation for everything in the film; every shot and every cut is somehow relevant to it; and the result is a formally successful film that is nonetheless not "formalist": it is always saying something, every shot is going somewhere.

Of course, in the concluding section, which is often referred to as an epilogue, the question is re-posed, and becomes: will the New Deal program, and particularly the TVA, win—and thus win for man the battle with the river? This descent in generality cheapens the net effect of the film and reminds us of its lecture-like aspects; but it cannot destroy the fundamental force of the film.

Lorentz' *The Plow That Broke the Plains* is practically identical in its strategy. Land not water is the focus of attention—drought not flood is the threat, and the scene is further west ("High winds and sun, high winds and sun: a country without rivers, and with little rain"); but the underlying conflict is the same and the result is virtually as successful.

Joris Ivens' *The New Earth* is another classic statement using the same overt method. The Zuider Zee is to be diked off; great industrial equipment and skillful workers are mustered for the task; finally the quiet extension of the dike reaches a point where the waters of the sea funnel tumultuously through a narrow opening, and the closing of this gap by barges and enormous cranes forms the climax of the film. Like Lorentz, Ivens then added a more directly political epilogue—asserting that under capitalism the products of the new land could not find human use—wheat is burnt or thrown into the sea.

THE RIVER: *The Mississippi in flood.*

The same conflict, but on a scale in a sense more personal, animates Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*. This film, now usually seen in a shortened version to which a "humorous" narration has been added, is also a film with enormous curiosity value, even now; and Flaherty's lifelong and worldwide quest for subjects (he was also, of course, initially an explorer by profession) testifies to his perhaps unconscious deference to this factor. There are portions of *Nanook* which remain mainly ethnographic, as apparently Flaherty's first version more largely was; but the film as a whole, while it has no plot in the ordinary sense, is organized by one basic question: will Nanook and his family survive against the threats of cold and hunger? It is this strong fundamental line that made the film popular in the beginning and has kept it popular ever since.

Since Flaherty worked in a method consciously opposed to the imposition of plots upon material, it is necessary to examine his films at this point somewhat carefully. —Especially because this man, who had an eye and a feel for the cinema that make him, with only a handful of films, one of the great film-makers, is in danger of being romanticized entirely out of the real world.

The first point to notice is that Flaherty did not, in the manner of later documentarists, photograph real contemporary actions as he found them. He did, in fact, *literally* photograph them, as part of his search for material, in which he used the camera eye as a kind of scout; but they

were transformed very considerably before they reached the screen. Nanook re-enacted for Flaherty the way of life of his father; the people of Aran re-enacted shark-fishing practices almost gone from living memory; much of the action of *Louisiana Story* was consciously invented and carefully staged; and no doubt the same is true of *Moana*. What Flaherty did was to re-create, in rather exotic locales, his personal vision of man's fate: man's courage in meeting the world, whether it is the Arctic, the tattoo ritual, the Atlantic, or the disrupting entry of the machine age. He happened to do this using non-actors and real locations. But never, after the preliminary *Nanook*, did he imagine that documentary might exist without conflict to structure it; and it was the search for the proper, the allowable conflict that occupied him in his very leisurely method of filming: he shot and shot, and waited for the images to body forth a conflict that would be strong enough to animate the film.

In the wartime documentaries and quasi-documentaries the problem of the conflict line was solved for the film-makers in a particularly simple way. In the films as in wartime life, military conflict became paramount; the enemy or his actions were shown, sometimes in detail, and particular arenas of conflict were sharply etched.

But in films like Humphrey Jennings' *Listen to Britain* we encounter a far subtler handling. One of the finest documentaries ever made, it verges over into the film of what we might call the understood antagonist. A prologue has been added to point out that the Britain we are to "listen to" is in fact Britain at war with the Nazis; but in the film itself, although we see munitions factories, soldiers, and so on, no overt conflict is introduced; the film presents no "argument" as do the New Deal films; and in fact, a spectator ignorant of the nature of World War II would be nonplussed by it.

Probably the most clearcut example of film conflict involving an unseen antagonist is the Nazi propaganda film, *Triumph of the Will*. This film, on the manifest level a record of a huge Nazi festival at Nuremberg, is a ritual in which no "devil" figure appears on the screen: for the unseen antagonist here is located within the personalities of the film's intended spectators, the German people. Hitler's speeches, although they have hardly any logical coherence, hammer out to the doubters, the undedicated, the disgusted, a steady associative message: "If we are not firm, we will backslide into chaos and guilt; we must put doubts behind us, and march [a very large proportion of the total footage is of determined marching], or all will be lost." There is in the film one set of allusions to objective enemies in Bormann's speech to the SA, which had been bloodily purged just before the rally—lending a certain ironic realism to his remarks about being a faithful party member. But for the film as a whole the enemy is within; and the "triumph of the will" is precisely the triumph of the Führer's will over this internal enemy.

The above examples are necessarily few and brief; but they will perhaps show that the structure of documentary can be thought about in ways useful to the film-maker. Lest the reader think that I am neglecting the relation of these questions to the style and art of the film in general, several additional observations are necessary. The first is that a sound structural scheme may make possible a good film—but it does not guarantee one. A film-maker may be "energized" by his handling of conflict in a way that he is not energized by curiosity, "purpose," and so on—he is led to introduce tension and direction into his film and to turn from the expository method toward the dramatic (whether characters are present in any fullness or not). But, and this is the second point, the nature of the talents that make a man a fine film-maker are fairly mysterious. We talk of a film-maker's "eye," of his plastic sense, of his sensitivity to his material, of his uncanny ability to fuse the seen and unseen in a poetic and indissoluble whole. We can analyze, after the fact, the complex and delicate handling that goes into a good film, but we cannot by that method produce recipes for other good films, any more than we can tell how a painter must

in detail proceed to produce a good painting (much less a great one).

Moreover, one "subject" may move a filmmaker to produce a film that is a work of art, while another subject may lead him to produce only competent hack work, or perhaps not even that. Circumstances bound up with the production process can tend to good or ill. And also, arguably, there are some subjects that are specially apt for the cinema, and others that are specially difficult.

With these reservations in mind, let us look at some of the Free Cinema films, which have been the liveliest development in documentary since World War II. Although their novelty has perhaps been over-estimated in Britain (we have seen a lot of jazz and amusement-park films, at least), they remain some of the most moving and artful of documentaries, and in their treatment of the problems of conflict structure are quite interesting. *Momma Don't Allow* relies, of course, upon the implicit conflict alluded to in the title tune; the film is a record of an activity generally considered deviant in Britain, and it is "for" the young people who take part and "against" the society in which the jazz club subterraneanly exists. It is simply but ingeniously constructed, with its own rhythm (although the cutting breaks down toward the end when the images are confined largely to shots of a single girl doing an especially active dance), and it is a friendly, committed film with no sociological arrogance about it—though no great intensity either. *O Dreamland* is a kind of cry of horror (though not as savage as Buñuel's *Land Without Bread*, which *really* brought horror to documentary) at the cheapening of human experience which the amusement park represents; yet it recognizes and sympathizes with the appeal of the dingiest recreations for people who have little else. Its organization shows what may still be done with the short lyrical film; it is a kind of associative tour of the amusement park, climaxed by a soaring shot (from a ferris wheel) rising above the sordid, if human, scene. With *Together* we move to a film of rather more ambitious nature; its characterizations are full, its

MOMMA DON'T ALLOW

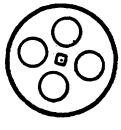
conflict line elaborate—taking the form of open hostility between the deaf-mute protagonists and the boarding-house family, the children, and the neighborhood people. It is a stark conflict, presented with sombre, perhaps somewhat portentous photography, and it ends in death. In it the boundary line between story-film and documentary blurs. . .

From these Free Cinema films we may also, perhaps, gather something about the underlying theme from which conflicts seem nowadays most likely to be taken by documentary-makers. In the 'thirties the enemy was in a general sense disorganization (of capitalist economic patterns, of social life generally) and the documentarists strove to displace with their images this harried state of affairs. The enemy we now face is over-organization; and the impulse of free film-making seems to be largely anarchistic and "anti-Establishment" in nature. In ordinary theatrical films the deviant, sometimes delinquent personality assumes great if often phony allure; in documentary and experimental films the individual, sometimes sharply and irrevocably marked out, like the deaf-mutes, faces a society which is out to crush him to its pattern or eliminate him—whether with good will or with hate. This is a fertile theme, certainly; and there will be no lack of material in this world of ours; and it is a type of conflict where the particular kind of evasion characteristic of British documentary is impossible—one cannot sociologize or depersonalize this type of thing, one is practically forced to deal with persons and feelings and the actual fabric of life.

For the film-maker who does not choose to accept the rather stringent aesthetic and economic limits upon films organized as exposition or lyric imagery, and who wishes to deal with social issues in a more or less nonfictional way, the finding and expounding of the conflict line remains the fundamental problem. Such film-makers must face and solve also the peculiar dilemma posed by the twin urges to record and to create, which are inherently at odds but which must, in documentary, be somehow

TOGETHER

brought to work together: the one faithful, the other ruthless; the one systematic, the other capricious. Yet out of the energy needed to sustain such tensions arise the occasional works of art we need and await.



Periodicals of Interest

After a long lapse, *Film Culture* has resumed publication, on an occasional basis. The current issue is really a small paperback book (without illustrations); it is interesting that another specialized journal, *ETC.*, recently changed to this format also. There is a definite need for a publication like *Film Culture* on the American scene, and we welcome it back with warm hopes of friendly "competitive coexistence." The new issue is on sale at many newsstands and in paperback stores, at $1.25. Three issues may be subscribed to for $3.00 by writing *Film Culture,* G.P.O. Box 1499, New York 1, N.Y.

Echoes From Kittiwah Island

Since George Gershwin's death in Hollywood in 1937, his music has figured prominently in *The Shocking Miss Pilgrim* (1947), *An American in Paris* (1951), and Stanley Donen's extraordinary *Funny Face* (1957). Twenty-two years after Gershwin's death, a film version of his universally successful folk-opera, *Porgy and Bess* has just been completed, produced by Samuel Goldwyn and directed by Otto Preminger.

Gershwin's opera depicts the lives of poverty-stricken, uneducated Negroes in South Carolina during the Depression years, and there was some controversy regarding the film's interpretation of these characters when Goldwyn began casting the leads. Sidney Poitier at first refused to play Porgy, but after several months decided he would take the role. "I was plagued by a dual kind of emotion—meaning on the one hand my interest and excitement over the work as an artist, and on the other hand the areas in which I am sensitive," Poitier told the press. "I have never to my conscious knowledge, done anything that I thought would be injurious to anyone—particularly to my own people. Now this is a personal choice."

Although the major characters are derived from DuBose and Dorothy Heyward's play, *Porgy,* the additional intensity and folk-flavor of the music are really responsible for the story's power. In 1934, Gershwin spent two isolated months near a small island ten miles from

Charleston (James Island—called "Kittiwah" in his opera) observing the population and listening to their spirituals and rhythmic patterns of shout-singing. Since neither Poitier nor Dorothy Dandridge (who enacts Bess) are operatically trained singers, their singing voices have been dubbed-in by Robert McFerrin and Urylee Leonardos, respectively, and both Andre Previn, the musical director for the film, and Ken Darby, the choral arranger, have worked indefatigably on the voluminous score, an extremely complicated one, filled with recitative, chorales, and soaring operatic duets.

However, the racial and musical aspects of filming *Porgy and Bess* present only a portion of the production-problems. In 1959, the milieu of this work is less recognizable and more esoteric than it might have been when the opera opened in 1935, and in the sketches of his settings, Oliver Smith again reveals the virtuosity he displayed in *Guys and Dolls*.

The ramshackle buildings and cobblestoned streets, the shrimp stands and fishing wharves that Gershwin called "Catfish Row" have been transformed into a mythical Carolina settlement, part of a deep-South, American past where song-and-dance might effectively coexist under the shadow of tragedy.

Although most of Smith's sets were constructed in detail on an enormous sound stage, he has been aided in maintaining a sense of style through the costumes of Irene Sharaff, whose idea has been to temper the earthier elements of the characters (particularly Bess, a drug-addicted young prostitute, and Sportin' Life, a dope pusher and symbolic figure of prancing evil) with a strong touch of Edwardian inelegance.

From Miss Sharaff's sketches, one notices the attention given to the period as well as the inherent pathos of Bess. The drawings convey the quality of the fallen woman on the verge of rehabilitation by deliberately avoiding decoration or sexual obviousness in Bess' garments, and in the costumes of Sportin' Life, the uniforms of the Orphan Boys' band and the flounces and flowered apparel of the women, one discerns Miss Sharaff's scholarly attention to the backgrounds of the film.—ALBERT JOHNSON.

WILLIAM L. HEDGES

Classics Revisited: Reaching for the Moon*

a reëxamination of a complex and moving film which, in spite of general critical deference and the devotion of many viewers, has never received the intensive scrutiny demanded by its richness of motive and symbol.

Viewed strictly as motion picture, Marcel Carné's *Les Enfants du Paradis* (1945) is imperfect, as Vernon Young has pointed out.† The camera is too static, too often stationed *en face*, as though aimed in a theater to catch directly and in detail what is going on right in front of it on a stage—which might theoretically suit a film having so much to do with stages, except that the movie audience sits not before a whole proscenium but before a rectangle carved out of it by the screen. Attention wanders to the edges when acting and décor alone aren't brilliant enough to hold it in focus. The camera is largely inarticulate as a commentator on action. Much less does it create action itself. The film's excellences may indeed be largely theatrical.

Yet *Children of Paradise* is surely in one sense profoundly cinematographic. The very subject matter is *seeing*, and the camera continually manages to let the audience see clearly and exclusively what first one character and then another sees, with an irony much more devastating than could be effected with even the most elaborate staging devices in the legitimate theater.

But the heavily symbolic texture of this film has persistent literary overtones. The surface shines intricate, multi-faceted, and suggestive, the meanings as elusive as the unpossessable woman—which is a major theme. But the whole turns out to be held together, at least to this viewer, by a set of consistently developed attitudes which, unlike the escapism or defeatism sometimes read into it, are thoroughly realistic and adult. What *Children of Paradise* requires is a close "reading"—one whose terms, inevitably, will be largely those of dramatic literature.

A view of a stage curtain being lifted at the beginning makes everything that happens in the film an action upon a stage. The scene opens on a street (named, not ironically, as we shall see, the *Boulevard du crime*) jammed with stages of one sort or another. On platforms that jut out from the entrances of theaters strong men, acrobats, dancing girls, clowns, barkers in costume, put on preliminary shows in order to lure customers inside. As the film develops we see actors acting, in one way or another, not only on stage but backstage and offstage altogether; and audience and actors continually exchange roles. A minor character whose symbolic significance is central to the whole film is a beggar who masquerades as a blind man outside in the streets but who becomes a spectator, one of the "children of paradise," in the balcony of the mime theater. Opposites merge and intermingle in a fluid world appropriately presided over by a kind of moon goddess.

Soon after the opening we see Garance (Arletty) as a stripped tease. Advertised as the Naked Truth, she sits in a wooden tub in water almost to her shoulders. The tub rotates, and men who have paid admission walk around it

* This interpretation is indebted to James Kerans and Robert Goldsby for numerous suggestions.
† "The Witness Point," *New World Writing IV* (New York, 1953), 281–82.

Baptiste encounters Garance at Lacenaire's table in the Robin Redbreast cafe, and asks her to dance.

watching her. The Naked Truth contemplates and reflects herself in a hand mirror. The water, the rotation, the reflection, all symbolically suggest the moon. The scene is cold, barren, the men hangdog. Are paying customers almost paralyzed by the Naked Truth, like Acteon watching Diana in her bath? Or is a Diana on display something less than pure? In any case Garance's nakedness is illusory, since the water effectively cuts off vision.

Garance revolves through other phases. We soon see her in the street, fully clothed, playfully parrying the advances of Lemaître (Pierre Brasseur), a perfect stranger (destined to become the leading actor in Paris), not so much rejecting him as putting him off for the moment. Moonlight may be her element—at times she shines (her real name is Claire), virtually bathes, in it. But Garance is in some ways closer to being an Astarte, a fertility goddess, than a Diana. If she appears literally as Diana later in the pantomime (where we again see her on water), oriental associations also hover about her. Of the rag-picker, Jéricho (Pierre Renoir), who tells fortunes, she asks if she is to take a journey "to India." She is not, but on her return from a long stay in Scotland we do see her exotically veiled. Lemaître's performance later in *Othello* and the murder of Garance's protector in a Turkish bath are further oriental notes, and when she first offers herself to Baptiste Deburau, the mime (Jean-Louis Barrault), Garance is robed impromptu like an oriental queen, a houri, or an odalisque.

This scene neatly parallels her earlier public appearance as the Naked Truth. Previously, Garance and Baptiste have walked back to his hotel (it has also just become Lemaître's), from the cafe where he has won her away from the gentleman gangster, Lacenaire (Marcel Herrand). The streets are empty and the moonlight brilliant. Her reminiscence of her mother (Madame Reine) again links Garance with glimmering light, and Baptiste is soon to tell her the moon is his country. The sky clouds over temporarily and a light rain begins to fall. But in the warm summer night the rain comes, for Garance, in a low-cut gown, only as a kind of shower bath. At the hotel—Garance has no home—Baptiste prudishly insists on getting her a separate room. Before he escapes from it, however, she begins to take off her wet gown, once more in bright moonlight. And as he nervously turns away, she wraps herself in a large richly patterned bedspread and tells him she has only one real talent, displaying nakedness. One wonders if Prévert and Carné conceived of this scene as another "Turkish" bath, Garance toweling herself off after the wetting. In any case it strengthens the connection between the two obvious bath scenes, Garance in the wooden tub near the the beginning, and Lacenaire murdering the count de Montray (Louis Salou) in the Turkish bath near the end. Is a naked truth revealed in all three?

Symbolically Garance is not exactly the moon. As the Naked Truth, she turns on her own axis while a world circles around her. She does not reflect light from a sun but radiates herself; her mirror is *her* moon. She is something like earth and moon combined. Our first view of her is emblematic. Central in one respect, giving the sense that men turn around her, or are at least focused on her, she is also in some ways peripheral, relatively detached, moving at the fringes, flirting or being flirted with rather than actually belonging or being held fast.

"You smiled at me, don't deny it," Lemaître says when he first sees her in the street. It is his standard line with women. With Garance it is particularly appropriate. She *is* smiling, though hardly more at Lemaître than at anyone else. She shines perpetually with an am-

biguous smile, both contented and resigned. The smile is for everyone, perhaps at everyone, including herself. She spins into Lemaître's life and out again in a moment. "Paris is small for those who love as we do," she has told him. It is the refrain he greets her with when she turns up at the hotel.

Her brightness, her beauty, she says, come from being happy. And if she likes, as she tells Baptiste, to please those who please her, she seems also willing to like those whom she happens to please. But her pleasures are tinged with sadness. The smile remains ambiguous. (Photographic angles accentuate her likeness to the Mona Lisa.) Garance imposes nothing on others, seems on the whole only to reflect her admirers. Yet her selflessness is a kind of self-containment. To some extent she always, as in the tub, mirrors only herself.

She has neither pretenses nor pretensions—which is why she seems to appeal to Lacenaire. No thief herself, she watches unperturbed as Lacenaire disposes of a set of stolen spoons to Jéricho. Lacenaire is, he thinks, totally without illusion, completely free, without responsibilities to anyone but himself. He permits himself no emotional attachments, is particularly cynical about women, who, he believes, wear pretty masks to conceal their moral ugliness. That Garance claims to be nothing but what she is makes her the one woman who is attractive to him.

But what is she? In the end, Baptiste, the clown, the Pierrot, rushes from his room into the *Boulevard du crime*, trying to overtake Garance. This time he loses her forever in a romping carnival crowd. The scene is nightmarish, a white jamboree; most of the celebrants are dressed as clowns. Usual situations are dramatically reversed (but in a way that is usual for this film). The real Pierrot, minus costume, loses his moon in a whole chorus of men masquerading as clowns. The world has almost literally become a stage on which mankind plays the fool.

The main line of the central action in the film is clear. Baptiste loses Garance through inability to see her clearly for what she is. But the audience risks losing her for the same reason. If we are to catch on to her we must watch closely the circles in which she moves.

The general tenor of the metaphor of acting is deception, and basically the film is a commentary on a variety of disguises and assumed roles, on the purposes they serve and the need for them. Acting, even offstage, need not be a bad thing in itself. Lemaître plays Harlequin to every woman he meets. He is actually so extroverted as to be largely a manner of speaking, a form without real substance. Yet he is good-natured, sympathetic, magnanimous, loyal, and relatively candid. And he is largely conscious of the part he is playing, can deceive only those who want to be deceived.

In contrast to Lemaître, Baptiste is broodingly, hauntedly sincere in his behavior offstage. He insists on being intensely himself and on refusing to compromise or take advantage of others. His likes and dislikes are far sharper than Lemaître's. These two personalities of course represent opposed approaches to the job of being an actor (and perhaps to art in general), but the film as a whole is as much concerned with the way people act in real life a with acting on a stage.

The commonest form of acting is hypocrisy. The various representatives of authority we see —the police, the *patronne* of the hotel, a respectable bourgeois whose pocket is picked, Baptiste's father, the count—are all implicated in duplicities of one sort or another, forced by the offices they hold, or the classes they belong to, to keep up certain appearances which their behind-the-scenes behavior betrays. Stage-managing, in addition to acting, becomes a means of exposing this kind of deception, and we find the characters just referred to frequently engaged in behind-the-scenes manipulations. Perhaps significantly, the count comes directly backstage to the dressing room to propose his liaison with Garance. And the ragpicker, the most patent hypocrite in the film, and obviously a symbolic equivalent of Baptiste's father, haunts the stage door waiting to buy and sell information.

Preceded by the enormous display of flowers, the count arrives backstage at the Funambules; he is greeted sarcastically by Garance and Baptiste shortly smashes the flowers.

The cleverest manipulator of all is Lacenaire, his best job of stage-managing the drawing of a curtain to reveal Garance in Baptiste's arms at the climax of the film. But Lacenaire's willingness to deceive and exploit people passes far beyond hypocrisy into dogmatic cynicism. He does not pose as an honest man but immensely enjoys his reputation for absolute unscrupulosity. His hypocrisy consists only of transparent euphemisms, as when he intimidates the manager of the Robin Redbreast Cafe (perforce himself a hypocrite) into tolerating a brawl by shouting, "What's the matter? Can't we have any fun at the *Redbreast* Cafe?" and drawing his finger across his throat. Lacenaire's misanthropy amounts to a kind of sincerity. Like Baptiste, whose naïve idealism is a foil to his own calculated contempt for the world, Lacenaire does not really deceive anyone but himself as to the kind of person he is.

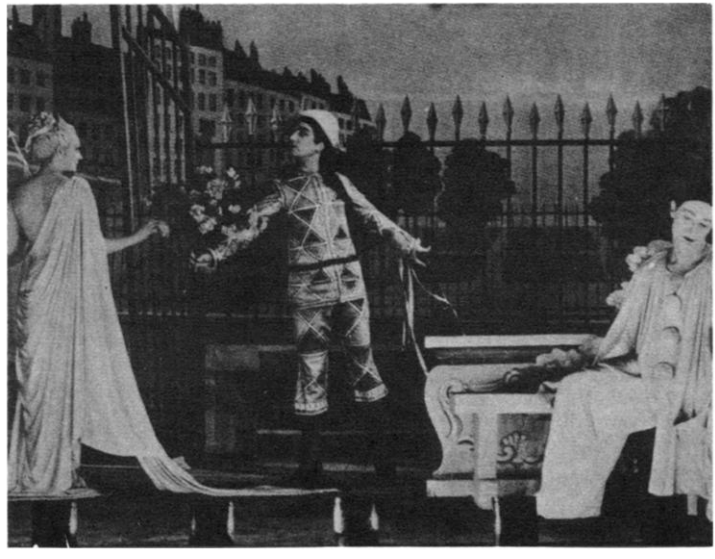
Intensity brings both Baptiste and Lacenaire closer to Garance than Lemaître ever gets, even though he casually sleeps with her. Lemaître simply asks her, and she accepts. The other two complicate the process of asking. Lacenaire is too proud to ask anything, but in effect, as Garance is about to go off with Baptiste, he asks her to ask him. Baptiste, clown that he is, asks for the moon and neglects, until it is too late for anything but a single night, to ask for the woman. Intensity, however, eventually enables Baptiste and Lacenaire to recognize their mistakes, from which they grow in awareness or disillusionment. For contrast, the significant effect that Garance has on Lemaître is achieved partly at second hand, although he too changes (only the count remains static). Whereas Baptiste's latent ability as a mime is immediately realized by contact with Garance, Lemaître remains a second-rate actor until the Othello in him is aroused by realization of the depth of Garance's love for Baptiste. Like his approach to love, Lemaître's attitude toward the theater is portrayed for much of the film as too casual. He studies his roles in books rather than from life. Baptiste, on the other hand, looks for his inspiration in the streets—which is where he finds Garance.

Lacenaire's blackness is consistently a disturbance, but the whiteness of Baptiste also has an unpleasant cast to it, at least in broad daylight. When we (and Garance) first see him, he is sitting on an outdoor stage in clown costume. On his forlorn face, the make-up, under a stringy white wig, appears as a sickly pallor. There is an unhealthiness in his naïvete, related to his attitude toward his profession. For Baptiste constantly risks confusing art and life. He can't keep the two phases of his experience separate. At times he seems to assume that life follows the plot of the *commedia dell' arte*. He jumps to the conclusion that because up to a point Garance's behavior resembles Columbine's, she cannot be in love with him. He arranges for Garance to play a small part in the pantomime, and the show roughly reënacts what has actually happened between them: in the face of his mooning idolatry she remains for him a statue of Diana, remote and unattainable. But she readily steps down into the common world when his back is turned, and goes off with a man (Lemaître as Harlequin) who recognizes her as simply a woman, *comme les autres*. Baptiste's discovery that Garance and Lemaître are lovers makes him falter as Pierrot and virtually stops the show. The interaction of stage and world here is more obvious than anywhere in the film. His innocence, his belief in goodness (purity, beauty) is appealing, but it is at the same time appalling.

The first encounter of the two lovers is spectacular, dramatic. Baptiste, playing the dunce, sadly alone in the corner, is laughed at and

ridiculed by his father, barker for the mime show which is about to begin inside. But as the show on the platform breaks up and the performers, all but Baptiste, retire into the *Funambules*, a drama begins in the street. The fat burgher, who has stood next to Garance in the audience and occasionally ogled her, misses his watch and accuses her of lifting it from his pocket. A ruckus starts. Police are summoned. But Baptiste intervenes and in pantomime *acts* out the truth, which he alone (in addition to the movie audience) has witnessed—the actual thief is Lacenaire, who stood on the other side of the burgher and easily took advantage of the latter's interest in Garance to pick his pocket.

The ironies of the scene are crucial. The alleged idiot son sees the truth. The actor momentarily becomes spectator, only to turn actor again immediately, and an enormously successful one—the sight of Garance springs him into acting; his ability to hold an audience here wins him soon afterwards a leading role on the stage inside. The truth is that Garance is innocent of the crime she is accused of But Baptiste by the end of the scene is well on his way to idealizing her as totally innocent. The crowd disperses, leaving Baptiste and Garance alone, staring at each other, he still up on the platform and she in the street. Again the particular image symbolizes an entire relationship. In order for this man and woman to be together, the rest of the world has somehow to dissolve or be lost. Characteristically as the film advances we see them getting away from crowds, taking refuge in dark narrow streets, in a drab garret room. Together they exist on moonlight, long looks, and silence—the staples of romantic love, constantly verging for Baptiste on sentimentality. We see Garance frequently as a spectator of dramas in which he acts. His scrutiny brings him closer to her than anyone else comes. But as its intensity causes him to overlook her worldliness at first, so it makes him miss her divine-ness later. At the end of the pickpocket scene he is seeing a truth about Garance, but not the naked truth. His idealism is a kind of lust. When later he turns away from his chance to see her undressed, his mod-



Arletty, Pierre Brasseur, and Jean-Louis Barrault in the Diana pantomime.

esty, on the surface, contrasts sharply with the urge of the men who paid to see her in the tub. But underneath both he and they seem afraid of the truth of stark nakedness.

The intricacy of motive in the latter part of *The Children of Paradise* almost defies analysis. Garance has returned to Paris with the count. She had become his mistress at the end of Part I (several years earlier) to escape efforts of the police to implicate her with Lacenaire in a robbery and assault of which he was innocent. Lemaître, now a celebrated actor, rediscovers her in the box she occupies secretly and privately at the mime theater. He recognizes that she is still in love with Baptiste. What he recognizes about himself is not clear, but his look, for once, is grave, concerned. Perhaps, after all, Lemaître, who has always taken women casually, finds himself really in love. Or perhaps it is an inability to love the way he sees Garance loving that confronts him. In either case he learns something that will make him a better Othello, the part he is now actually rehearsing.

For several other characters the return of Garance is crucial. Baptiste tries to throw over his career and desert his family for her. Lacenaire, whose connection with Garance had forced her to invoke the count's protection, is now startled to discover that she has not been ruined, has not lost her dignity and independence and turned simply into a kept woman. From now on this *soi-disant* disinterested observer of the affairs of others actively engages himself in Garance's affair. It becomes his one real interest. He has been in hiding in the provinces but, perhaps through boredom, has returned to Paris. And the count, after his return to Paris with Garance, discovers that after all he wants her to love him—which was not a part of the bargain, as she now reminds him. When they go to see the production of *Othello*, in something of a parody of the earlier scene between Garance and Lemaître in the box at the *Funambules*, the count thinks he sees that she is in love with the actor. It takes Lacenaire to reveal the truth to him later, pulling back a large curtain from the windows in the foyer, while the count is arranging a duel with Lemaître, and revealing Garance and Baptiste embracing on the balcony.

All is recognition scene and reversal. Characters virtually exchange roles and confront themselves in alter ego—as, for instance, Jéricho, who discovers that Baptiste's father is playing a rag-picker on stage, dressed just like himself. (He is outraged at the stolen identity.) The count, aristocratically sensitive to slight offenses, challenges Lacenaire to a duel, but Lacenaire, equally proud, rejects dueling along with various other meaningless conventions against which his underworld life is something of a rebellion. Later the count challenges Lemaître, who though he has nothing to answer to the count for, out of his own jealousy vies with him in being punctilious about the arrangements. As an actor, he has his own sense of good form. In the end, however, it is Lacenaire who in effect keeps the engagement for Lemaître. He stabs the count in cold blood and then calmly sits down in the Turkish bath and waits for the police to take him. Hatred (or is it love?) ironically leads him to gestures and acts of heroism. He is a devil (his dark complexion and black apparel) won over to the side of the angels, or at least of the mortals, the children of paradise. What he seems to see finally in Garance is the possibility of living like a human being in a corrupt world.

Motives and the functions of characters may be clarified (though by no means rendered less complicated) if we try to relate to each other the two myths which dominate the various stages of the film, the plot of the pantomime and the Othello story. They formalize human relationships so fundamental that the film perforce turns on them—love, jealousy, and betrayal. Both deal with naïvete, innocence, or moral blindness. They neatly parallel and contrast with each other. The central figure in each is a jealous man, but Pierrot is a clown and Othello a tragic hero. Pierrot has good reason to be jealous, Othello only thinks he has. The heroine in *Othello* is completely chaste;

the pantomime Columbine is no better than she should be.

In the key scene in the foyer the comic myth gives way to the tragic. The count and Garance go to the play when his jealousy is most aroused. He plays the jealous lover in the foyer, and Lacenaire out-Iago's Iago by showing the count not a mere handkerchief but Garance in Baptiste's arms. It would be pedantic to tabulate the ambiguities or systematize the analogies that suggest themselves. But we can note that all the men, with the possible exception of Lemaître, who actually plays Othello, are jealous lovers, and the count is something like an Othello transformed into a tragic Pierrot (made a fool of, shown as betrayed), and killed. Baptiste is Pierrot momentarily turned Harlequin, which is a role we earlier saw Lemaître in. Lacenaire, whose delight in malice seems equal to Iago's, murders in cold blood a man whose willingness to exploit human beings rivals in coldness and calculation Lacenaire's own misanthropy. It is as though Iago were testifying to a pure love of Desdemona. The whole arrangement is *Othello* with everything reversed: Desdemona is unfaithful to Othello, who is not deserving of fidelity anyway; Iago becomes a hero by murdering Othello and bravely awaiting his own punishment; Desdemona and her lover escape together—at least briefly. Perhaps most significant, Garance is at once Columbine and Desdemona, both fickle and true.

The beggar who accosts Baptiste in the street late one evening and takes him to the Robin Redbreast Cafe, where he finds Garance, is a convenient measure of values in *Children of Paradise*. The key to his significance is that he pretends to be blind but actually sees. If the deception is at first an affront to narrow-minded morality, the beggar's real worth soon proves itself. Baptiste is shocked when he discovers the truth about the man, but after all, the beggar has just caught Baptiste trying to sneak by him on tip-toe. Again there is a parallelism: the beggar in the course of putting on his act (pretended blindness) sees Baptiste in a suspicious posture, just as Baptiste (pretending idiocy) has seen Garance near the pickpocket.

The beggar accosts Baptiste who has tried to sneak by him as he chants "Ayez pitié d'un pauvre aveugle!"

But the beggar doesn't make a fetish of innocence, or of guilt. He simply accepts Baptiste's explanation that he was embarrassed to confront him and have to confess that he was out of money. The beggar befriends Baptiste. Actually he knows him already, since he has seen him and applauded his performances on stage. The beggar is the one child of paradise (occupant of the balcony) positively identified for us. And the identification is important. The children of paradise—people in the audience, people in general—are somehow like the beggar. They too have their dishonest sides, are involved in deceptions, even if these are comparatively harmless. The beggar engages in petty dishonesty, but the film suggests that one has to be something of a fool to avoid duplicity altogether—a Dostoievskeyan fool, a virtual clown for Christ. The beggar may be a child of paradise, but he lives in a fallen world, in the *Boulevard du crime*. His home seems to be the cafe.

The contrast between the beggar and the ragpicker embraces many of the film's antinomies. Both are wastrels of the streets, living on handouts or petty thievery. But Jéricho has no genuine side to him. He pretends sincerity with everyone, reaches out to clutch at people with his grimy paws, shoves his fat shaggy face and squinting eyes close to other faces, posing as a friend offering to do favors or tell secrets, but actually trying to sell his services as dear as possible. He has no friends, no loyalties; he

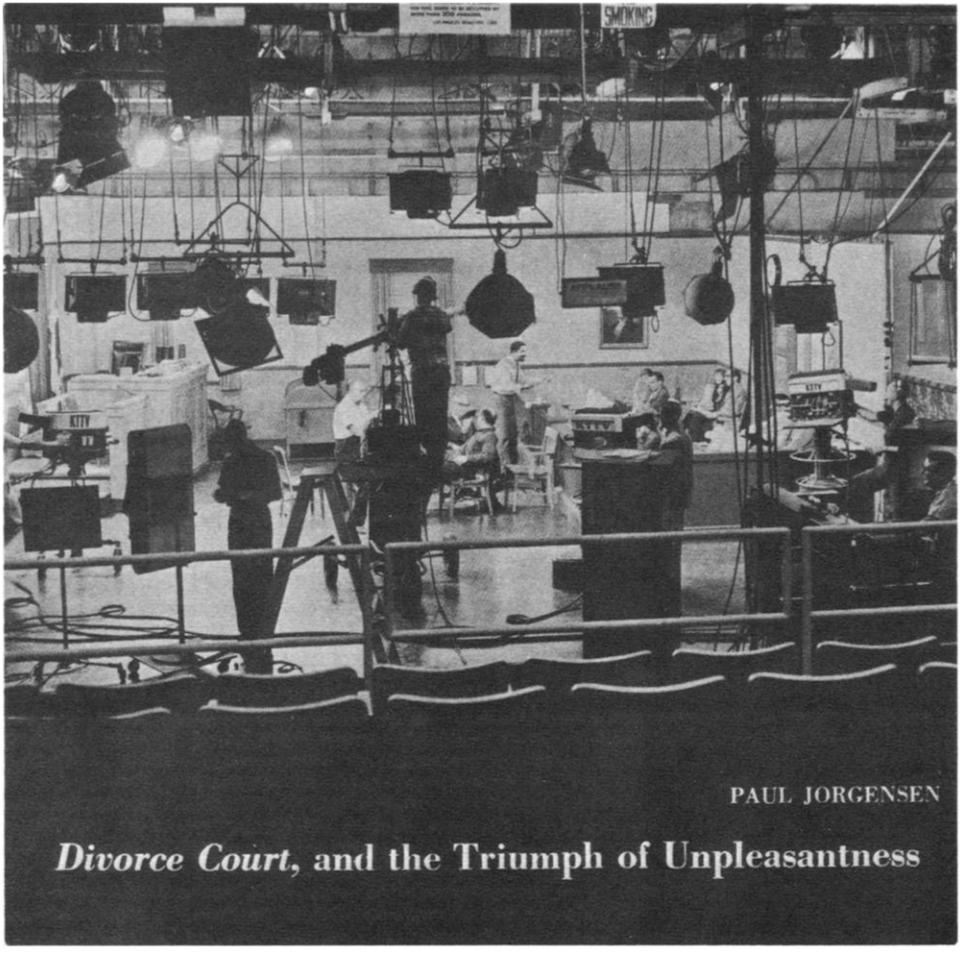
specializes in betrayals. Yet he constantly complains that no one loves him. He calls himself "Sleep-Alone"—which makes him foil to both Garance and Lemaître. There is no really private side to either Lemaître or the rag-picker. But the former is an actor and the latter a hypocrite. There is a big difference. Lemaître never sleeps alone. He as least enjoys himself with other people. The rag-picker simply wallows in self-pity.

Garance, who also never sleeps alone, is an actress, but a consummate person as well. She has a capacity for a private life in the midst of all the publicity that surrounds her—the actor's most difficult job. Outwardly she gives herself so openly to her public (using the words broadly), is so compliant, so willing to "act up" to any situation, that only the closest scrutiny could reveal her individual integrity locked away somewhere safe from the world's corruptions. It is her personal tragedy that Baptiste and Lacenaire do not subject her to this scrutiny until too late. But of course it is her willingness to accept her public, the world in all its foulness, that secures for her her integrity and privacy.

We come back to the beggar as the complement to Garance. He pretends blindness but sees inside. And he sees clearly, truly. The rag-picker pretends to see, tells fortunes in the cafe, but inside or outside, he is the same. His seeing is spying. His fortune-telling is a front for gaining confidences. He sells what he sees. The beggar, however, has friends inside who come to drink with him, and for them, free of charge, he tells real gold from counterfeit.

The contrast between outer and inner, public and private, runs throughout the film. It starts when, following the view of the crowded street, we go inside to see Garance in her tub, mirror in hand. Later what Lacenaire reveals when he draws the curtain is a private scene between Garance and Baptiste. And the next morning Lacenaire and the count enjoy the seclusion of a cubicle in a Turkish bath—the inner life they have achieved is sepulchral. We cut to the street; the carnival hilarity is gathering momentum. Nathalie, Baptiste's wife (Maria Casarès), enters the hotel and climbs to the garret room where Garance and Baptiste have spent the night. The inevitable knock on the door is the world intruding on the vertiginous privacy of the final realization of Baptiste's dream. Waking up is agony; for a moment he cannot act. He stands paralyzed as he did earlier in a similar confrontation (just before Garance was forced to accept the protection of the count), while Nathalie melodramatically proclaims a love between herself and him which doesn't exist. Quietly, unpossessively, Garance asserts her own love and leaves. By the time Baptiste can break the hold of Nathalie, the moiling crowd outside—simply life itself—has carried Garance beyond his reach. The fatal pattern of his hesitation in the same room years earlier repeats itself. Garance enters a carriage, a small coffin-like box, and the final close-up of her face turns it into a tragic mask, immutable in grief. All traces of the smile have vanished.

As Baptiste thrashes in the human sea, Jéricho, clutching his arm, nearly pulls him under. Freudian implications apart (the rag-picker as Baptiste's father; the maternal aspect so obvious in the attraction Garance holds for Baptiste), it is the rag-picker who is the force of positive evil left. Lacenaire has been in a way redeemed. The rag-picker is blackness now against the white clown costumes. He is dressed, as usual, in a shabby top hat and frock coat, ludicrous in his efforts to disguise himself as a respectable man. But as his presence in the swarming mass suggests, his ingrained hypocrisy is an extension of something that is close to being instinctive in his fellow men. A love of, indeed a need of, playing parts and putting on disguises may on occasion, make clowns of all of us. Deceit, however, is, after all, in the inevitable order of things. What threatens real tragedy and destruction is the pretension or pretense of being above deceit. Garance, far from being an unpossessable woman, a goddess in distant orbit around us, is in the last analysis, very much a woman of the world. If she remains unpossessed—her carriage seeming to float above the turmoil at the end—it is because clownish man is afraid to accept himself.



PAUL JORGENSEN

Divorce Court, and the Triumph of Unpleasantness

The movie-going public, that monster celebrated in many a bitter tribute, is famous above all else for not attending the right pictures. The monster is, however, more easily pilloried than understood; and understanding is particularly wanting in respect to one question: To what extent does aversion to unpleasantness keep people from the best pictures? *Unpleasantness* is a term which the serious producer might not prefer as a label for his ware. But no other word more conveniently expresses what is thought to be a major reason for popular resistance to serious cinema, with its demand for audience participation, however painful, in the full range and rhythm of human experience.

Before the serious producer abandons the public as hopeless, I would suggest that he observe a puzzling sign of popular taste in tele-

vision programs. Here, on the modern scene, the producer would find an audience willing to abide not only the most joyless of realism, but perfect naturalness of story line and characterization. Entertainment shows there are, of course, aplenty. But more and more of the enduring programs are taking on the unpleasant manner of *Dragnet* and other police shows. In the Fall 1958 issue of *Film Quarterly* I argued that any program which succeeds, as does *Dragnet,* in holding a captive audience for a long period should be respectfully scrutinized for concealed strategies. These of course have sociological significance; but they also could inform our better film artists of stubbornly rooted needs in the popular mind, needs which can possibly be exploited by ethical producers as well as by the money-makers.

At present the television program which best typifies successful ministration to the popular taste for pain is *Divorce Court,* a weekly one-hour show simulating the actual proceedings in the Los Angeles Domestic Relations Court. I single out this program for discussion because it has become both extremely popular and widely commended for its dramatic qualities by television critics. It is decidedly not, however, a lonely pioneer in the field. It competes with a horde of courtroom shows, most of which have sprung into existence within a year. They are all thriving and, since individual distinction is not apparently needed in the genre, they are all remarkably similar in their reporting of the dreary courtroom drama of human conflict, failure, and guilt.

Yesterday in Los Angeles, the day before my weekly ordeal with *Divorce Court,* I had a veritable feast of these programs—four in all—two of which dealt with divorce cases, while a third featured cases of wife-beating and nonsupport. Today, if I choose, I may see two of these again, since they are daily half-hour shows; and tonight, if I husband my emotions carefully, I may watch *Court of Small Claims* in preparation for my big hour with *Divorce Court.* Later in the week I shall enjoy both *Youth Court* and the semi-comic spectacle of my fellow man trying to weasel himself out of trouble in *Traffic Court.*

In looking forward to *Divorce Court* tonight, I anticipate a kind of unstudied realism and unpredictability, not too different in kind from what I enjoy in serious foreign films. I shall first see, to the accompaniment of plaintive, dissonant music, the insignia of the show: the placard which is actually found in the Los Angeles court. This is the picture of a child trying to pray for his two divided parents. I am diffident about entering a scene charged with private and intimate misery. But then I hear the hushed voice of Bill Welch, my escort for the proceedings, telling me that I have a rightful place in this court. Everyone, I am told, is certain to be touched by divorce. If I have not been, I will be. Thus reassured, I enter the courtroom while a case is in session and near conclusion. The voices about me are earnest but indistinct. No poetry is being spoken, but there is almost always a poignant human quality in this fragment; and it is disconcerting to find it quickly, legally disposed of by the judge. Perhaps it is a young mother, too ill to work, who is pleading for child support from a well-to-do husband who has deserted her to attend college in the East. The court's action involves a legal transaction, which neither I nor the plaintiff understands, with the court in the Eastern state. The young woman is quickly ushered out with the assurance that she may, if legalities permit, lay claim to seventy-five dollars a month child support.

Then a full-dress case is brought before me, with plaintiff and defendant entering separately, each accompanied by a lawyer. Though this reflects actual practice, there is an artistry in the filming of it. It brings to mind the picture of a wedding ceremony with the bloom gone. In the wedding, too, the couple had entered separately, accompanied by father or best-man. Now, however, they remain separate, on either side of the courtroom, insulated from each other by courtroom etiquette, attorneys, and the judge, but not so thoroughly insulated but that unprocedural cries of protest and flashing or averted glances may bring them occasionally together. The progress of the case tends further to recapture for the couple, as for me, the earlier communion of the two. Now, usually,

they are middle-aged, but the disappointments arising from their younger ideals flare up during moments of tension. One wonders if the producers of this program have not recognized, however imperfectly, that divorce court is the appropriate scene today for telling the great American love story.

On *Divorce Court* the principals and witnesses in this love story are not the usual Hollywood type. Only on first view and during the early interrogation do they fit the comfortable stereotypes of dutiful son, tender and long-suffering wife, or shrewd, kindly in-law. Cross-examination invariably brings out the ignoble aspects of every participant. But because these are never acknowledged, or probably even realized, by the witnesses themselves, there is no clear allocation of right and wrong. Herein, according to most viewers of the program, lies its drama; it is signalized by the cracking of the mask of respectability and pure motive with which every person begins his testimony. Yet even here the dénouement lacks the carefully plotted rightness, the satisfying awareness of black and white, which characterizes the traditional Hollywood version of crime. "Plot" simply does not exist; hidden character comes directly to the light, with only the artifice of lawyer-cunning or uncontrollable tension prompting the break-through. Significantly, too, the judge's reasoned verdict on the case is often followed by highly effective displays of true feeling, once the participants are on their own. A husband is seen vainly trying to approach the wife who has just won her divorce from him; a child, whose custody has been under debate, runs from the mother to the guilty father; a woman in a quadrille of lovers viciously slaps the face of the other man who approaches her.

In this drama of unplotted grief and separation, the only performers who seem to work more from the head than from the heart are the lawyers and the judge. These behave more nearly the way one would expect actors to behave. Except for the obviously legalistic emotionalism of rising to object to a question, their conduct seems well planned. Actually, this is not the result of careful work by the director but simply the lawyers' own tactics—just what one would expect from seasoned trial lawyers.

And, in fact, this is what they are. For one of the distinctions of *Divorce Court* is that it allows its actors to be themselves and not necessarily follow a prepared script. The lawyers who appear on the program are not actors but lawyers who consent to re-enact the proceedings of divorce cases. The judge is a retired lawyer. The other parts are played by professional actors, but they too are not confined by a fully scripted dialogue. The producer's intent seems to be that of many of our best moviemakers: to involve the group in a kind of role-playing, getting them emotionally interested in the situation and holding them to a minimum of prepared dialogue. Everyone is told what he should know about the case—*from his point of view*. Lawyers, for example, are sometimes individually given information potentially damaging to their side, and it becomes a challenge for them to conceal or cushion the impact of this information. Witnesses are similarly briefed, but sometimes they either forget what they are supposed to know or refuse to crack when it becomes crucial to the case for them to do so. In such instances the drama, to the uninformed viewer, is actually heightened, for the lawyers must doubly exert themselves. Often the lawyer's role becomes similar to that of a director,

The court clerk (Ted Kurtz) swears in witness (Chana Coubert) before the judge (Voltaire Perkins).

The witness alone on the stand (Jan Burrell).

for he tries to persuade the witness to remember what he is supposed to know. If a witness proves to be indestructible, there yet remains the chance for the lawyers or the judge to create a diversion—which unfailingly leads to one of the rich stock of commercials held in reserve. It is perhaps a tribute to the naturalness of the program that none of the numerous commercials is ever presented unless a situation of confusion or stalemate arises in the courtroom. Moreover, the content of these "messages" might easily have been designed to provide a brief sanctuary from the grimness of the courtroom. Not so in Los Angeles. Here the sanctuary takes the form of a large rug warehouse, with rolls of colorless carpets stacked all about and with a woman's clarion voice describing the bargains. Divorce is never allowed to leave the minds of male listeners.

Beyond the dramatic values already mentioned, the program is praiseworthy for the excellence and variety of the actors, most of whom prove to be remarkably at home in their roles. Some of them provide comic relief. On two separate occasions the judge has reduced big, manly witnesses to schoolboy size by ordering an officer to relieve them of their gum. In general, actors and actresses acquit themselves brilliantly in the naturalness and intensity of their change from a pose of haughty virtue to sputtering defensiveness.

Admittedly, then, the program owes it strong audience appeal partly to dramatic moments, occasional comedy, and good acting. But, as with *Dragnet* and the crime shows, I suspect a more potent and subtle source of compulsion. This source is inseparably related to the basic unpleasantness of the program. Much of this, to be sure, is an eternal and perhaps morbid interest in the termination rather than the inception of love stories, an interest that can be as readily aroused by divorce cases as by the traditional forms of tragic love drama.

More important, however, much of the unpleasant appeal may be due to popular interest in those who minister to human misery of the body or the mind. Doctors and lawyers are currently vying for dominance as heroes in comic strips, and it is reasonable that they should do so in other large media. It is significant that even the Western hero, who hitherto has provided the purest milieu for resolving the human predicament, should recently have become tainted by legal and psychological aptitudes.

What the public seems to be looking for, in this miserable era, is some responsible person, usually representative of a profession, to whom it can look for help. In *Dragnet* it is the police officer. In *Divorce Court* it is the lawyer or, better still, the lawyer purged of his combativeness and elevated to paternal sternness as a judge. Now that ignorance of science has become associated with man's plight, the scientist might conceivably become the hero; and to a certain extent he temporarily became so on the quiz programs, which for a long time enthralled viewers by the realization of how little they know about geographical minutiae.

Beyond the responsible hero, however, lies a deeper need—the need to disburden one's soul of guilt. In none of the programs mentioned, and especially not in *Divorce Court*, is the viewer likely to identify with the hero (who in these cases would be anyone embodying the authority of law). One *admires* the cleverness of the lawyers, the wisdom and power of the judge, but his uneasy fascination is with the culprits on the stand. The action which both horrifies and relieves him is the cracking of the mask of respectability. Ideally the confession that this represents would be made to someone who could grant absolution; and the perpetu-

ally maddening quality about both the police and the courtroom shows is that they *seem* to offer sanctuary with confession. If they did, we would have the Hollywood type of ending. But they do not. Lieutenant Friday in *Dragnet* invites the criminal who is about to crack to come clean. Then he snaps the handcuffs on him and leads him off to prison. In the courtroom programs we have the sequel to this action. Here the lawyers plead with the defendant to tell all. Then perhaps he does—at least he "breaks" —and once more there is a shockingly inadequate legal response to a human need.

Like more pretentious drama, then, these programs keep telling the people that no really human source of happy endings exists. The courtroom becomes merely another scene in which man can express the painful emotions of which divorce is only a symptom. Here, week after week, he can watch persons like himself confess, with both ludicrousness and dignity, that there is no health in them. Perhaps the more gross the ministration to human guilt, the more fascination these programs will have. Apparently the modern story that will most excite —and yet satisfy—the human need for irrational judgment is one like Macleish's *J. B.* or, even better, Kafka's *The Trial.* In neither of these works is the culprit made adequately aware of what he has done wrong. But seemingly we know that our sin is great enough to justify the most nightmarish court of judgment.

We are, I should say, retreating in popular media to the inhuman, irrational moral order of the early morality plays. If so, film producers will have to relearn an almost lost, but never forgettable craft. It is a craft which must wring the fullest meaning from what well may be our primal source of unpleasantness: the awareness that we are always vulnerable to arrest and conviction. Until film producers relearn this ancient craft, *Divorce Court* and all its grim-featured kindred may well prove to be the poor man's art theater.

Film Reviews

Look Back in Anger

"Will *Mummy* like it?" When Jimmy Porter says this through gritted teeth to his wife Alison —who's left a "nice" upper-middle-class country home to live with him in a squalid flat in the East End of London—he summarizes the class tensions that disturb their marriage. For Mummy is a kind of female British bulldog symbol, sitting guard in her chintzy kennel over those staunch complacencies on which the lives of Mummies and their litters are based.

The most damning thing one can say about most British films is that they're made for Mummy (they even made *The Horse's Mouth* into something for her) and she likes them. However, she won't like *Look Back in Anger.* She'll hate it as much as she hates Jimmy Porter and all he stands for. Ordinarily, she'd have nothing to do with Jimmy and his kind—and it seems dreadfully unfair that *this* Jimmy has taken away her lovely daughter. Mummy can't understand it. How *could* Alison—she always seemed such a sensible girl—how could she go off and marry a common, shiftless, bitter young man like that? And what sort of a life can they *possibly* look forward to? There's no future for Jimmy, he'll end his days running down everybody and everything, boasting and whining that the world owes him a living. (Oh, I know England's *changed*—unfortunately. Too many people around with more money than breeding, so little respect for class, girls just don't *want* to go into domestic service any more. We've thrown away our Empire, too—you can thank the Labor Government for that. But what some people

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LOOK BACK IN ANGER: *Richard Burton as Jimmy visits Claire Bloom (Helena) in her theatrical dressing-room.*

don't realize is that it's our duty to *hang on*, try to live as we used to, and thank God for Mr. Macmillan. At least *he* doesn't tax the rich to feed the poor—if there *are* any poor—and he won't let *them* go on twisting the lion's tail. Look at Suez—eh?) Finally, Mummy says: If Jimmy Porter's so fed up with England, so unpatriotic and carping, why does he stay in it? *We* don't want him. He'd probably like Russia better.

F—— you is Jimmy Porter's very simple answer to Mummy. He is presented in John Osborne's play as a mouthpiece for a disappointed, drifting postwar generation, and in the context of the London theater he was as explosive as that four-letter word in Mummy's drawing room. But the play, I felt, failed to develop him satisfactorily. It is true that Jimmy *doesn't* develop —there he is, stuck with his rage and frustration, seeking refuge in Alison and turning on her when he doesn't find it, or finds too many traces of Mummy still in her. But the portrait was unfinished; it lacked a point of view beyond Jimmy's. There were too many moments when Osborne, identifying too closely with Jimmy's self-pity, Jimmy's self-admiration, seemed merely to be shoving him down our throats and forgetting the why and how of him.

The film—directed by Tony Richardson, who created the play on the stage, but adapted by a TV and short story writer, Nigel Kneale—not only corrects this fault but goes on imaginatively to extend and heighten Osborne's original study. The action now ranges over a wide sad stretch of suburban London, and Oswald Morris' photography wonderfully evokes those tidal flats of sprawling urban growth. Kensal Rise, Romford, Dalston . . . these places have, to a Londoner, a kind of incantatory Orwellian magic, depressing and challenging, like the scarlet mailboxes and suet pudding that Orwell once said an Englishman never quite gets out of his blood, no matter how long he leaves them. They seep into the characters' lives like ink spilt on blotting paper. Talking disconsolately, wondering what's to become of them, Jimmy and Alison stroll through a park; and from the benches, shabby old derelicts gaze at them with a kind of impassive glaucoma, and a piece of hideous Victorian statuary pretentiously cele-

brates nothing. One long shot of the cemetery by the railway line where Jimmy's foster-mother is buried—and the mass of headstones, rigid and anonymous while the trains clatter by, remind you of the hundreds of lives lost in a slum of no-man's-land. Jimmy sets up his sweet-stall in a busy street market with winter in the air and a frosty, officious government inspector who tries to find an excuse to deprive another trader of his license, because he happens to be a West Indian.

This sensitive, ruthless use of background makes it powerfully clear that Jimmy Porter finds himself in a desolate and unjust world. And this is the film's major advance on the play; it "places" Jimmy, takes his anger out of the vacuum of a bed-sitting room, and shows it in relation to what he finds outside. At the end, you feel—as I couldn't in the play—that there is truly nothing left for Jimmy and Alison but each other. The experience is complete; two people are lost in more than a city—in a world which, Jimmy Porter cries, he doesn't want and didn't make.

This is Tony Richardson's first feature film (he collaborated with Karel Reisz on a Free Cinema short about a London jazz club, *Momma Don't Allow*), and it shows a stunning authority. The style he's chosen is bold, intimate; most of the drama is shot in close-ups. Watch these faces, the camera seems to say, and they'll tell you about themselves. They are as minutely revealing as the backgrounds packed with detail. A hard, sharp, caustic, style—but it doesn't miss the note of ironic affection, especially with the character of Jimmy's foster-mother. An offstage character in the play, she is brought in to illuminate a good deal about Jimmy, and Edith Evans creates a rich portrait of this broken-down indomitable cockney. Richard Burton, in what is probably his best film part, is an electrifying Jimmy Porter; the cruelty and helplessness are all there, but also the charm which explains why Alison fell under his spell. Mary Ure, in this difficult because passive part, is exactly right. Touching because she wants to please Jimmy on his terms, she relapses at times into a baffled coldness typical of the background he detests. And Claire Bloom as Alison's actress girl-friend, ultra-feminine, fastidious but ruthless, is wholly believable.

The only false note comes in the scene with Alison's parents. Osborne is for some reason sentimental about the Edwardian twilight—about Father, anyway. In his portrait of the bewildered, tired ex-Army officer, everything goes soft. Mummy, however, remains a remote, splendid glimpse, monstrous and dog-obsessed.

Look Back in Anger took a while to reach the screen; various British producers apparently hesitated, and then an American, Harry Salzmann, set it up with Warners. It represents the first venture of a new company in which Salzmann, Richardson, and Osborne are partners, and their next will be *The Entertainer*, with the same director and adaptor, and Olivier repeating his stage performance. Things seem to be happending in the British cinema. With the Free Cinema productions, the advance reports of *Room at the Top*, and this brilliant film, there are real signs of a crack in that formidable ice.

—Gavin Lambert

The Diary of Anne Frank

Films about human courage and indomitability during the Nazi occupation of European countries have always been uniquely effective in America. In many ways, the spectacle of terror in the form of Gestapo agents and the still almost inconceivable horror of the concentration camps form the basis of a certain uneasiness on the part of an entire generation in this country. The cinema has intensified this feeling in those who have never personally felt the effects of World War II. Litvak's *Decision Before Dawn*, Pabst's *The Last Ten Days*, and Dmytryk's *The Young Lions* only confused the German military temperament, and the Nazis' genocidal treatment of the Jews has been treated most adequately in only two European films seen briefly in America (*The Last Stop* from Poland, and *Ghetto Terezin* from Czechoslovakia).

With the publication of a young Dutch-Jewish girl's diary, and the subsequent staging of

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The Diary of Anne Frank

Films about human courage and indomitability during the Nazi occupation of European countries have always been uniquely effective in America. In many ways, the spectacle of terror in the form of Gestapo agents and the still almost inconceivable horror of the concentration camps form the basis of a certain uneasiness on the part of an entire generation in this country. The cinema has intensified this feeling in those who have never personally felt the effects of World War II. Litvak's *Decision Before Dawn*, Pabst's *The Last Ten Days*, and Dmytryk's *The Young Lions* only confused the German military temperament, and the Nazis' genocidal treatment of the Jews has been treated most adequately in only two European films seen briefly in America (*The Last Stop* from Poland, and *Ghetto Terezin* from Czechoslovakia).

With the publication of a young Dutch-Jewish girl's diary, and the subsequent staging of

a play based upon her experiences, Americans have come closer to understanding the effect of the war upon Jewish families during the purges, and now, George Stevens' production of *The Diary of Anne Frank* evokes that era of torment in a film of great compassion and artistry.

The screenplay, by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, is, for the most part, as effective as their stageplay; it is a keen portrayal of the eight people who lived in a hidden part of an office building in Amsterdam, from 1942 to 1945.

Constantly turning the spectator back and forth from this secret annex to the world outside, this film would be triumphant simply as a piece of visual art alone, for William Mellor's black and white CinemaScope photography is extraordinary. An air raid is excitingly re-created by sound and camera; in a dream sequence Anne's slumber is tortured by a symphony of Hitlerian cries and faces of the doomed; and a grunting, nocturnal burglar is symbolically presented as a shadowy phantom of death. The Amsterdam exteriors were directed by George Stevens, Jr. and photographed by Jack Cardiff. One's glimpses of a German band marching briskly past the canals, the soldiers patroling the streets with boredom or violence, and once, through the Franks' embroidered curtains, a grim processional of Jews moving to wintry death—all come together to form a pattern of sorrow and despair.

To George Stevens, the story of Anne Frank is not only an indictment but a revelation of the gentler side of the human spirit. If his film at times hovers dangerously on the edge of sentimentality, it is because he suspects that many may not wish to be reminded of the grimmer side of Anne's story. (One is never told in the film *how* Anne died.)

As a whole, *The Diary of Anne Frank* is an uneven, massive work, with more excellences than flaws, but the latter are irritating. The first

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK:
Above: Fear beyond the dark.
Below: Attic idyll and innocence.

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK:
. . . *"through embroidered curtains, a march to wintry death."*

half of the film is the best, although it begins shakily: the initial sound of an American-accented voice, an unsubtle and intrusive musical score and the flashback, bringing Anne's voice to our ears too quickly and harshly, somehow tends to break the magic of one's earlier response to the striking images of Otto Frank's dispirited figure musing dazedly among remnants of the past. The immediate presentation of reality (in the shots of the Prinsengracht canal, with lazy seagulls fluttering above the waters) is lost for quite a few scenes as one gradually gets acquainted with the characters. What finally restores total involvement with the film are two sequences of suspense emphasizing the presence of fear: an emotion established and held throughout the remainder of the work. In the role of Otto Frank, Joseph Schildkraut is perfect; an actor of depth and inner conviction, he is able to permeate the entire film with the essence of Europe in turmoil. In the sequence in which he jocularly gives Anne her new diary, for example, he speaks lightly of their enforced seclusion, but his face reflects both paternal love and a resigned awareness of doom.

As Anne, Millie Perkins is mercurial, with an ingenious charm and nubile naiveté; she remains a child to the end, poignant and sensitive. In her reflection of adolescence, there are moments when Perkins achieves an exciting effect, a wilful, uncalculated stroke of brilliance, as when she taunts Mr. Van Daan, or in the first love scene with Peter, awaiting her first kiss. She is a unique personality in a paradoxical role, leaving one with the same sense of half-fulfillment that the diary created. The chief note of humor is contributed by Ed Wynn who ingeniously gives his best screen portrayal. His perceptive enactment of Dussel, the allergy-prone dentist, is a masterstroke of crotchety senility and anxious loneliness.

Shelley Winters and Lou Jacobi sketch complementary portraits of the Van Daans with

shrewd attention paid to the subtleties of character at their disposal. Their work is essentially comic, too, but Winters brings occasional pathos to her nostalgic termagant. As their son, Peter, Richard Beymer is entirely successful. A wistful yet truculent face gives this young actor a wide range with which to convey Peter's rather hostile personality and eventual love for Anne. One experiences the growth of Anne's inner self by watching Peter, who, like Mr. Frank, senses death on the other side of the dark.

The Diary of Anne Frank is Stevens' best work since *A Place in the Sun*; it is an unforgettable cinematic memorial ode.

—ALBERT JOHNSON.

The Crucible

The Salem witch hunt of 1692, one of the myriad manifestations of human stupidity and nastiness, provided obvious material for a camouflaged study of hunters and hunted nearer home in 1952. Arthur Miller's play of that year presented the welter of fear, hatred and doubt through which a few honest characters and many human ones move toward doom of one sort or another. Much of this still flickers through Sartre's monologue like candles through a rather disjointed *collage*. And, certainly, none could more credibly sustain the complicated soul-searchings and self-tortures of existentialist rite than these Massachusetts calvinists, perched over hell so long that the flames had entered their souls. But their very amenableness has led Sartre into temptation. Farmer Proctor's final decision, when wrongly accused of being a witch, is to die on the gallows rather than confess a lie. In Sartre's version this becomes an act of social commitment and the occasion for a grand finale in which the people, slow in its wrath but terrible when aroused, avenges its wrongs and his upon the minions of theocratic (and petty bourgeois?) privilege.

Miller had properly ignored the supine people of Salem, now roaring for blood, now praying for respite and for escape from suspicion, since his purpose was to concentrate on Proctor's own quest for salvation. Sartre, however, cannot resist the temptation to develop Miller's juxtaposition of Privileged and Underprivileged—ranging the narrow cant and shiftiness of the former against the rugged honesty and soul-searching of the others. In Miller's version, when Proctor dies rather than confess, he does so because a public lie is harder to take than a hanging. He dies in order to preserve his self-respect and not, as in Sartre's version, to preserve a public image—the people's faith in him, hence in itself and in its cause.

Social commitment has taken the place of the individual conscience, and the new interpretation serves neither historical likelihood nor the original purpose of the play, which had been interested rather in private motives than in public duties. In this respect the script reflects Sartre's own beliefs rather than the contemporary tendencies of French thought which, in literature as in film, pays more attention to private problems than to public ones. Certainly public hysteria too often makes nonsense of private morality; and by now the problems of *The Crucible* affect Frenchmen more closely than they do Americans. Thus, Sartre's points were well worth making. Unfortunately, in the process, Miller's original material has been stretched beyond its endurance. The drama is often poorly contrived—gods pop out of the machine all over the place, individuals and situations develop in unexpected ways to catch the spectator unprepared. And, in the end, the adaptor's facile schematization of characters and issues is hardly sufficient for a convincing presentation of a situation where the real problem is posed not by the Establishment, but by public endorsement of the most obscurantist and brutal notions, whether they concern witches, Algerians, Communists . . . or non-Communists.

"*Sex, Sin, Seduction and Sorcery*" promise the posters, and the film provides them all. It also provides yet another instance of the script twisted away from the original point: the private plots and tragedies of men and women caught unwittingly in the clerico-political struggles of their time become a chapter in the History of the Working Class in Salem, Mass.

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THE CRUCIBLE: *Elisabeth Proctor (Simone Signoret) has just discovered her husband (Yves Montand) making love to Abigail (Mylène Demongeot).*

Clerical problems become social ones and, contrary to history and likelihood, a drama of stupidity and cant is turned into a Shay's Rebellion before its time, a stage in the necessary development of class-consciousness. As George Auric's music out-tiomkins Tiomkin, so Sartre's script vies with the more dedicated products of social realism. The symbolism (so light under Miller's touch) grows solicitous with elephantine explicitness. "Have you missed the point?" it says, "Let me make it again, just in case."

In all this, Yves Montand upstanding as John Proctor, and Simone Signoret homespun and dumpy as Elisabeth his wife, worthily represent the fumbling farmers, at once humble and proud; Jean Debucourt as Reverend Parris is as cowardly and neurotic as you please though rather bouncier, perhaps, than such a mixed-up servant of the Lord would warrant; and Mylène Demongeot as Abigail, the cause of all the trouble, makes a designing hussy of whom one would gladly see more—much more, indeed, than the Salem sackcloth that swathes her lissom shape permits most of the time. Salem itself is never other than grim, with little hint of those fashions and social graces which even late-seventeenth-century Massachusetts tried to copy from the mother country, and no hint at all of the busy little port at the meeting of three rivers where the diabolic powers of change were better represented by fisherman and sailors with their drinking and their alien ideas, than by back-country farmers busy with chapel and crops and the threat of papist Frenchmen close by in Canada. Certainly the play does no better here, but a film may be expected to range more widely and draw more heavily on possibilities beyond the immediate setting, and to do so without misleading the audience. In this case, the camera is so aware of fields and clapboard houses that the Salem of the film might as well have been in Ohio. As it is, there can be no doubt that seventeenth-century New England must have been a grim place, and the overwhelming dreariness of the settings lends its own mood to a story which, even misued, retains great dramatic power.—EUGEN WEBER

Aparajito

One of the most heartening recent developments in the cinematic world has been the success of Satyajit Ray. A commercial artist by profession, he became interested in filming quite by chance. Influenced by impressions left by the films of Eisenstein and Pudovkin, he could not help being tempted by the drama of India's villages and cities in cinematic terms. Since, in India, the motion picture is the chief form of mass entertainment, it was not difficult for Ray to find technicians and actors, most of them nonprofessional, who could think and perform with images of completed sequences in their minds, at merely the briefest sugggestions and explanations from the amateur director.

Ray's cameraman, Subrata Mitra, had never touched a movie camera in his life, and was strictly an amateur photographer, but he found

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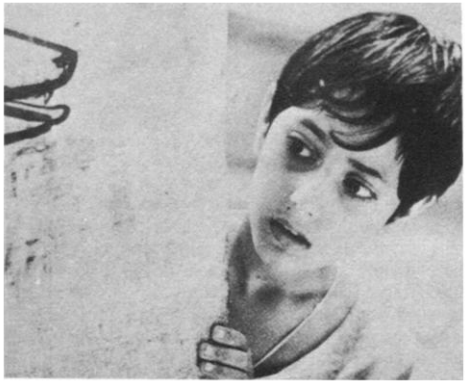

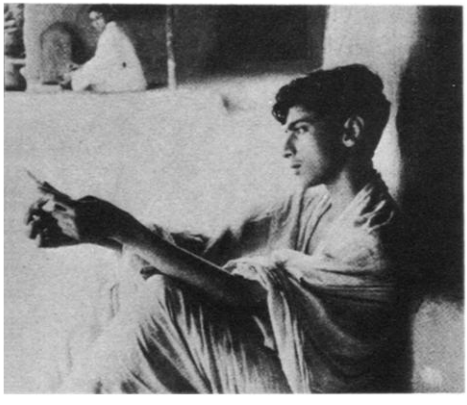

APARAJITO:
The growing world of Apu.
Above: Mischief in Benares (Pinacki Sen Gupta).
Below: Reverie in Bengal (Smaren Kumar Ghosh).

it simple to work from Ray's pen-and-ink sketches of each scene, drawn from the camera's viewpoint, with merely a few descriptive lines of comment written in Bengali. Working chiefly by instinct and imagination, Ray and his associates began filming *Pather Panchali*. It took them almost four years from the first treatment of the script to the première, although the actual shooting time was really only 85 days. Despite the years of financial slumps and temporary delays, constantly enervating and disillusioning, Ray persevered. *Pather Panchali*, the first in a trilogy of films about Bengali life, was awarded a prize at Cannes in 1955, received its American premiere in the same year on the Berkeley campus of the University of California (without subtitles), and in 1957 won prizes for best film and director at the San Francisco International Film Festival. The poetic quality of the film has, little by little, overcome the recalcitrances of American exhibitors, and audiences have responded to the deeply-felt emotions of the film, which transcend both language barriers and the exoticism that Western minds always seem to expect of Indian life.

Ray's *Pather Panchali* revealed itself as an Asian work of art, instructive and compassionate at the same time; its sequel, *Aparajito*, is an even greater masterpiece.

Aparajito (or "The Unvanquished," as it has been called in England) continues the story of the Bengali family after they leave their home to travel to the holy city of Benares, on the banks of the Ganges. Once again, the photography by Mitra is remarkable. The Benares sequences are initially impressive, but when seen several times they become a summation of the Indian temperament, one which recognizes and accepts the coexistence of the timeless and the transitory. Ornate temples rising from the river, the bathers, the steps leading to the ghats, the sounds of festivals and chanted prayers – for once, the East is open to Western eyes with a fresh, unobtrusively documentary effectiveness. Images of Benares and its damp, stone streets, narrow, stench-filled alleyways, and wandering cows introduce the film. There is little dialogue, for Ray forces the spectator to use the language of his eyes, and makes one realize how far the American cinema has retreated from this basic conception of film-making. Imperceptibly one learns more about the character of the mother (Karuna Bannerjee), who is tormented by her repressed sensualities and by anxiety about her

ascetic, sickly husband (Karu Bannerjee) and mischievous 10-year-old son, Apu (Pinacki Sen Gupta).

Aparajito is primarily the story of Apu's adolescent encounter with education, and of the deaths of his parents. Ray's performers are again brilliant, and the shots of young Apu, leaping carelessly along the walls of the ghats, listening to his ailing father pray with the Brahmins, or watching an athlete work out with some oddly-shaped weights, are part of this visual tone-poem in which the ritual of life is merged perceptively with the illimitability of death. In the sequences of death, Ray's attention is focused, as always, upon a contrasting image of nature: in the humid night, as the father suffers his final attack, his wife pours water into his mouth; his head falls back, eyelids aflutter, and instantly the camera cuts to a flock of birds in a wingburst upward above the temple tops. By the time Apu and his mother leave Benares, the sad atmosphere of that city, with its ancient statues and hordes of wild monkeys, has thrown over the film an elegiac and strangely compelling nobility of mood.

Ray's sense of humor is, as before, focused on the village school system of India, with its pompous principals and excitable pupils. The exhilarating discovery of books is charmingly enacted by young Gupta, especially when he clothes himself in what he considers African costume and races across the fields, screaming wildly. In the latter half of the picture, when Apu leaves his mother to attend the University of Calcutta, the role of Apu is taken over by Smaren Kumar Ghosh, a youth of superb sensitivity. The Calcutta sequences, notably some shots of a monsoon, with the varied faces of that turbulent city caught for an instant, gazing skyward, are especially memorable, but the performance of Ghosh—inarticulate, dedicated, yet brooding, torn between sentimental love for his mother and simple village life and the intellectual pull of Calcutta—this characterization lies at the heart of modern India. Notice in particular the sequence in which Apu is interviewed for a job by the editor of the decrepit New Royal Press. The student's shy shrugs and completely ingratiating helplessness form responses that are in a universal vocabulary.

Aparajito ends on a note of promise. The mother, broken by her loneliness, becomes ill and dies alone, with only fireflies in the night to bring her hallucinations of Apu's return; afterward Apu, remorseful because of his negligence, moves off alone toward Calcutta again, after visiting the village for the last time. A storm is brewing above his retreating figure, and one senses that in the final part of Ray's trilogy this symbolic turmoil will become the contemporary joys and frustrations of India, visually poetic and as evocative as the twanging of sitars.

—Albert Johnson.

The Sound and the Fury

"New edition, corrected of divers faults that weren't there, and augmented by many others entirely new." Written three centuries before the latest attempt to put Faulkner on the screen, this line can serve as a description without accounting for what went wrong, as something certainly has. More to the point, perhaps, is a quotation from *Variety*:

> Twentieth-Fox, theorizing the screen is its own special art form and that merely recreating a novel does not satisfy its requirements, has told writers to be faithful to the spirit and intentions of the authors but not at the expense of cinematic values. Executive studio story editor David Brown emphasized that the approach "does not mean we will change a story for the sake of changing it. Specific changes will be suggested when the need for dramatization demands it. We don't want people to moan, 'Why did they change the book?' when there is not a defensible answer to that question."

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has been taken so to heart, and yet with such disheartening results. The screen play by Irving Ravetch and Harriet Frank, Jr., is a remarkably adroit piece of work. Time after time you're brought up short by lines taken word for word from the book or by scenes, however telescoped, equally faithful to the original. Many of the changes justify themselves, however drastic they may seem. One character has been invented out of whole cloth, a Compson brother who combines the father's drinking, some of Jason's thievery, and a few of the dead Quentin's lines. Contrived as it is, the role is played well by John Beal, particularly in one scene with Caddy. A few new scenes are legitimate extensions of Faulkner, and the girl Quentin has been given some dialogue that makes her more interesting than she was in the book. In terms of film, probably no other choice was possible than confining the action to a few days, ignoring Faulkner's ability to make past events keep happening in the present. The result is a coherent story line that takes in a great deal of the book and adds very little of its own. But that little is fatal.

What appears to have happened here is that Fox bought what it considered a daring work, taking note of the references to incest, promiscuity, castration, and feeble-mindedness, and then found that once these were eliminated or softened, very little was left. The fact is that *The Sound and the Fury* is not a dramatic book. Much of its excitement stems from the very juxtapositions of time that have been eliminated in translating it to the screen. There is little real conflict and almost no action once the story begins, the vital events having happened years before. To remedy this lack, and to get a picture that would conform to current standards of the "adult," two things have been done. One is to blow up the affair between the girl and the carnival man out of all proportion to its importance, or its interest. There is much heavy breathing, giggling, and grappling, but it all comes to nothing, whereas the book, which gave almost no space to the love-making, made Quentin's escape final. The other change, and the disastrous one, it to completely alter the character of Jason.

It may be uncharitable to suggest that this was done solely to permit Yul Brynner to play the role, for, as written now, it couldn't be played by anyone. Jason exists in a vacuum. The Compson family is diminished. The brother Quentin is referred to once, but not as a member of the family. The parents are both dead, the fabricated brother Howard has come into the picture, the imbecile Ben remains, and Caddy is back, having left her natural home in a Tennessee Williams play. But Jason is gone, and this softly accented, falsely wigged person is clearly an impostor. Great pains are taken to make it plain that this Jason is not a Compson by blood, and he has been given a Cajun mother to account for his accent, but he doesn't belong there, and Quentin says as much. There is no motivation for his appropriation of the money Caddy pays, as there was in the Faulkner Jason's cotton speculations, and even less for his treatment of Quentin. Everything is bent toward softening, polishing, and tidying up his character, for the sake of making him an acceptable romantic figure, tolerable in an embrace with Quentin and fit for the relationship implied within minutes of the final fadeout. His girl in Memphis is gone, and his description of how he treats her has been taken from the book bodily and given to the storekeeper Earl Snopes. He treats Caddy cruelly but she's a pathetic wreck who deserves no better. He's kinder to Ben,

THE SOUND AND THE FURY: *Yul Brynner, Joanne Woodward, Margaret Leighton.*

good to his mother, and may not be a thief after all. And so it goes, the picture going with it.

It's a pity, for there are some good performances, a script excellent within its limits, and a scene or two in which the imbecile brother figures. This character, while deprived of much of the weight he had in the book, is affectingly handled and beautifully played by Jack Warden. The best scene in the picture has him driven through town to advertise the carnival, a legitimate touch of horror. Another is Jason's racing past the square to give Caddy the promised look at her daughter. The film is at its best when it stays in town. The scenes at the house suffer from the rigidity of Cinemascope and from the chromatose color, prettying everything up and opening up the landscape. There is no sense of people bound to each other, or even that they're related to each other, in any sense. Joanne Woodward, though hampered by having no one to play against, gives a Standard Southern performance of a high order, though it might do as well, and has, in other stories. Margaret Leighton's largely successful attempt at a Southern accent makes her frequently unintelligible, and the role of Caddy has been conceived as such a thorough ruin that conviction is understandably beyond her. Ethel Waters is a good Dilsey, and Françoise Rosay is fine in the manufactured role of Jason's mother. The rest is silence, or should be, but Alex North's intrusive score, full of clumps and rattles, sexy brasses and dewy-eyed strings, labors mightily but fruitlessly to whip up some excitement.

The verdict would seem to be that this is a creditable try at an impossible job, but the accusing finger, pointing from an unlikely direction, won't leave it at that. Several years ago, on a television program called "Playwrights '56," Fred Coe produced a 60-minute version of *The Sound and the Fury* that omitted many of the same things, and yet had everything this film lacks: tension, mood, a strong sense of family, darkness enough, and a recognizable Jason in Franchot Tone. The last word should belong to Mr. Brown of Twentieth Century-Fox. "There were no complaints about it, not even from Faulkner, because the film did not violate the spirit of Faulkner nor the rules of good screenwriting." But that was another picture.

—JOSEPH KOSTOLEFSKY

I Soliti Ignoti

The Big Deal, which seems to be the latest title of this Italian film, is *neorealismo* at a comic angle, turned on end and parodying itself. The standard material of the tough realistic film is here: the scarred environments, the hard poses, and the experienced faces shielding innocent hearts. But all is treated with a delightful sense of fun and spoof.

The opening quickly states the central joke which is then retold in a rich set of variations. Late at night on a dark street a thief is preparing to steal a car. On the sound track is insistent jazz, or perhaps it is Italian-style rock 'n' roll, creating an atmosphere of the "beat" life, moral laxity, suspense. Suddenly the job blows sky high when the thief, trying to jimmy the ignition, shortcircuits the horn. At once the deserted street is alive with cops—very degrading for the criminal who fancies himself a leader in his field. A quick cut to a chorus line of marching convicts completes the initial statement.

The joke derives from the solemn and pretentious efforts of some petty thieves which consistently end in ludicrous failure. Their humorless dedication to the job, their pompous sense of vocation, their intense professional outlook, their glibness in the jargon of thievery and the police code are in hilarious contrast to their basic ineptness—all natural, unschooled life conspires to frustrate their grandiose efforts.

The joke is enriched by the air of middle-class propriety of attitude and behavior assumed by the thieves; they never acknowledge the immorality of their situation and insist, in fact, on bourgeois correctness in courtship, in care of children, in social relations, and so on.

The main body of the story deals with the plans to crack a safe. This is to be no ordinary

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job, for it involves breaking through the wall of an adjoining apartment. Every step of the way, in and out, is meticulously and scientifically planned. There are elaborately equipped stakeouts on the target and two studious sessions with an ace safe-cracker who conducts a short course in the use of the trade tools. One of the men pays court to the pretty maid who works in the apartment, hoping thereby to assure access to the rooms. In spite of numerous obstacles the assault is finally mounted in a beautifully sustained parody of Dassin's *Rififi*. Pursued with the same intensity and solemnity of the safe-cracking sequence in that earlier film, the big deal ends in a monumental fiasco.

Director Mario Monicelli controls his variations on the main joke with artfulness, managing always to come up with a surprise or a fresh turn to an inevitable outcome. He maintains a firm hold on the sobriety of his characters in the midst of extreme absurdities. They never suspect their foolishness. Clichés of movie melodrama are played straight-faced, as if the characters had learned their trade at the movies. A temperamental, fiery-eyed Sicilian, for example, in protecting his sister's honor, throws a knife at her lover; in any other film the knife would stick in the wood a hairsbreadth from the victim's face, but here it clatters foolishly to the floor. In another instance a tense chase scene is played in toy cars at an amusement park, throwing the whole convention of the chase into preposterous disrepute.

But Monicelli, whether as director or as one of the writers of the screenplay, shrewdly inserts two or three shifts to serious tone and one shocking moment of tragedy. These, which conform to the pattern of surprise that he has established, save the film from a too insistent and repetitious comic tone; they serve, ironically, as "tragic relief" and keep the story in touch with its realistic sources.

The performances are uniformly expert, from a cast headed by Vittorio Gassman as an untalented prizefighter turned incompetent thief; Renato Salvatore as a young drifter reformed by love; Marcello Mastroianni as a criminal whose career is severly handicapped by the baby-sitting duties forced on him while his wife serves a jail term. The long-faced Toto, one of Italy's most famous clowns, appears as the expert safecracker who professorially teaches the boys his craft. No one performance dominates the film, but each, rather, contributes to the feeling of ensemble.

The Big Deal, under its earlier and stilted title *The Usual Unidentified Thieves,* was nominated by the Academy for a Best Foreign Language Film award but lost out to *Mon Uncle* in the voting. Too bad there was not a special prize for the Best Foreign Language Sleeper of the year. This has many wonderful surprises.—HENRY GOODMAN

Compulsion

The Loeb-Leopold murder case represents a piece of dark Americana, a symbolic memory of human sickness in the midst of our country's most pampered decade. The Chicago of the 1920's has become a sort of gin-soaked legend, part phony, part Fitzgerald, and yet, the willful murder committed by two precocious youths remains the single unshakable reality of that period.

Compulsion is a semi-authentic re-creation of the era and the crime, and in his screenplay Richard Murphy has collaborated closely with cameraman William Mellor to make the visual style of the film impress itself subtly and inextricably upon the spectator. The often-used technique of dramatic prologue, before the titles appear, is ingeniously conceived: the demonic image appears at once as the murderers drive toward a lonely hitchhiker with homicidal intentions and this immediate cohesion of characterization and cinematic style is dazzling—one is drawn into the film and held throughout. The direction by Richard Fleischer, aware of the camera's importance, is extremely sensitive and recalls his previous skill with suspenseful drama (*The Narrow Margin, Violent Saturday*), but *Compulsion* is his best work so far. There are innumerable cinematic touches that remain in the mind—the incriminating eyeglasses on a

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table, reflecting the faces of the interrogator and the damned; one of the murderers, euphorically pacing-out a Charleston while his cohort quietly discusses philosophy with a girl, or the unsuspecting youth, about to be exposed, confidently humming the *Dies Irae* as he looks over nighttime Chicago.

Compulsion is, finally, a showcase for brilliant performers. If one's film memory is not too inured to Hollywood's conception of the upper-class invert with a Nietzschean complex, the presentation of the killers, Judd (Dean Stockwell) and Artie (Bradford Dillman) may appear unique. However, their similarity to the two villains in Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948) cannot be dismissed, and Dillman's characterization (in this film more obviously insane) cannot entirely escape nuances of John Dall's earlier performance. But Dillman's lustrous talent still shines, despite the censorial leavening of his role.

Dean Stockwell, however, is superb, a truly tortured figure who moves from terror to pathos with great conviction, particularly in an episode of psychic love-agony with Diane Varsi.

As the spirit of Clarence Darrow, renamed "Jonathan Wilk," Orson Welles adds another fine portrait to his already burgeoning gallery of cinema eccentrics. His rumpled, Augustan jurisprudent is a compassionate agnostic—a tired but unquiet man who looks at both society and his schizoid defendants as Laocoön might have observed his sons. Welles lumbers through the latter half of the film, and in his courtroom oration, pulls *Compulsion* to a remarkable level of excitement.

If the film simply remains there, it is because its purposes are too limited—its obvious complexities avoided in the name of "entertainment." That much art survives in this film, as undefined as its conclusions are, is something to be thankful for.—ALBERT JOHNSON.

COMPULSION: *The demonic image. Bradford Dillman and Dean Stockwell.*

Rio Bravo

Melodramas come and go. So do westerns. Now and then a western melodrama like *High Noon* comes along and restores a little of our faith in the old forms. The only flaw in *High Noon's* release was that people took it so seri-

RIO BRAVO: *John Wayne (right, with eyes closed) and Ricky Nelson have just shot down three outlaws, while the horse, unmoved, looks on.*

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In sharp contrast to the tele-Freudian horse opera, *Rio Bravo* offers the now novel and anachronistic appeal of Entertainment—that quality which some suspect may yet keep the film industry out of receivership. A masterpiece of comic brutality, it tells of a sheriff (John Wayne) who arrests an erring citizen for murder. The murderer's associates lay siege to the town, and the rest of the fast-moving, two-hour film shows Wayne's attempts to bring the prisoner to trial. Pretty well forsaken by the townspeople, he is aided only by Dean Martin as a drunken ex-deputy-sheriff, Walter Brennan as a seedy jailkeeper, Miss Angie Dickinson as an itinerant con-girl, and rounding out this otherwise excellent cast, rock 'n' roll singer Ricky Nelson.

Playing "Colorado," a cleancut teenage killer, Nelson manages to infuse his not very demanding role with real ennui. His teenage mannerisms and suburban dialect are so fully exploited as to destroy any possible relationship between himself and the western setting. Like a character out of Steig's *Dreams of Glory*, he wanders through the sets, shooting people and talking modest-like. Very wisely, Wayne and Martin ignore him most of the time.

The violent hand of director Howard (*Scarface*) Hawks is apparent in every scene and John Wayne emerges as a sort of sagebrush Mike Hammer. Of the at least two dozen villains who oppose him, a dozen shatter on-screen. They die by the revolver and the rifle. They die by the shotgun and the club. And in the end those who are left die by dynamite. It's a wry little drama, full of the zest and movement that used to make bearbaiting what it was.

It the film a parody? Of course it is, but not self-consciously so. Furthman and Brackett's script gives the picture a life and style of its own, enhanced by quality production work throughout. It is all nonsense, but exceedingly showmanlike nonsense; and it will refresh many a discriminating film patron weary of the amateurish, underbudgeted films of substance that pass for cinema today.—RAYMOND FIELDING.

New Images: Documentary

[The last issue of *Film Quarterly* presented a group of reviews of recent experimental films. Below, we offer a similar set of reviews of films that are basically documentary in nature. The term "documentary" is sometimes thought to be a reproach; but as an article elsewhere in this issue asserts, the tradition that is roughly meant by the word is one of the most viable in the cinema as a whole. And though the social impetus that once largely sustained the documentary movement no longer exists, we can continue to look to the documentary-maker for films that come to terms directly with the world we know. Indeed, the study of documentary, past and present, is a necessity for anyone who wishes to understand the directions in which creative film-making is likely to move in the coming years; and we hope to subject many films that may be designated documentaries or quasi-documentaries to intensive scrutiny in these columns.—ED.]

N.Y., N.Y. and *Highway*

It is strange to discover, after all the "city symphony" experiments by avant-gardists of the 'twenties, that there are still fresh and imaginative ways of looking at a teeming metropolis. Francis Thompson in his *N.Y., N.Y.* and Hilary Harris in *Highway* have done just that, creating patterns of rare visual beauty and tremendous kinetic excitement. Despite the contemporaneity of their architecture, their techniques, and their scores, however, both films are firmly rooted in such works as *Berlin, the Symphony of a Great City* and *Rien Que Les Heures*. Like their predecessors, neither Mr. Thompson nor Mr. Harris is particularly interested in making any significant statement about the nature of their cities, whether sociological, anthropological, psychological, or even aesthetic. Their concern is wholly for the forms and rhythms that they can capture on celluloid and give back in vivid images. Indeed, Mr. Thompson has actu-

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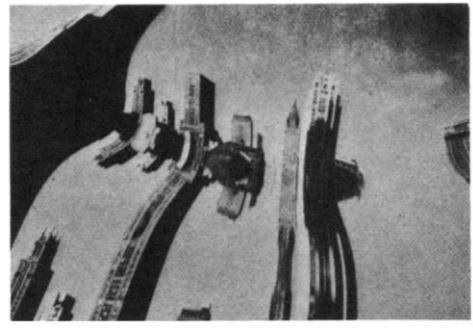
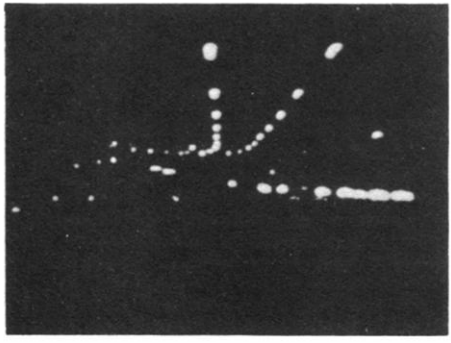


ally returned to the classic structure for such works, as evolved by Ruttman and Cavalcanti, to create a gay, kaleidoscopic impression of the changing moods of New York as a single day sweeps over it.

For Francis Thompson, *N.Y., N.Y.* represents a sort of homecoming. A noted director and photographer of documentaries, he began his professional motion picture career with *The Evolution of the Skyscraper,* made in 1939 for the Museum of Modern Art and for years one of the few films available on modern architecture. Skyscrapers, bridges, the façades of apartment houses, the ornate neon lights and blinking electric bulbs adorning stores and theaters dominate his current film. But where in *Evolution* his interest was in structure and the development of a functional architectural style, here the interest is primarily in form and design. People, when they appear at all, are barely incidental. The buildings in which, and against which, they move become the raw material for myriad patterns made possible by special lenses, prisms, and distort mirrors known only to Mr. Thompson. They whirl, they blur, they stretch. Details repeat themselves over and over, as if reflected in a hundred tiny mirrors. A Venetian blind is hauled up at a single window, and the prismed reflections make it seem as if all New York has risen simultaneously. By yet another optical device, an elevator ride up the side of a skeletal skyscraper is made to seem like a flight into infinity. Throughout, Mr. Thompson uses his tricks to multiply the multiplicity of a big city, to heighten its heights and broaden its vistas.

And the effect is delightful, exhilarating. Dawn coming up over the bridges of Manhattan casts a misty, magical light over the sleeping metropolis; the bridges and the shadowy river traffic beneath them are seen as dark ghosts, flat and somber with unearthly tints. The city wakes up in a series of shots—morning exercises, brushing teeth, the subway crush—which, through multi-eyed prism lenses, suggest that millions of people are doing the identical thing at the identical instant. The forenoon hours pass in feverish activity. Typewriters pour out masses of meaningless (but calligraphically beautiful) correspondence. Buildings shoot up to the sky. Traffic moves restlessly to and fro, the colorful busses and taxi cabs often flowing in two directions at once, like vast caterpillars with both ends working against the middle—an effect achieved by shooting into curved or irregular mirrors. Although Mr. Thompson avoids the lunchtime clichés, the long afternoon hours seem to have given him the same trouble that they have presented all "city symphonists." They are like a distressing stage wait until night takes over; in *N.Y., N.Y.* they are filled by some extraordinarily handsome glimpses of architectural details against a clear blue sky, by more traffic shots, and scenes of the gathering dusk taken from on high. But soon night blares forth in a burst of jazz, a hint of dance, and a dazzling play of lights. From the top of a skyscraper, the smouldering reds and greens of traffic standards far below seem strung together on the delicate golden strands of auto lamps streaking through the blue-black darkness as a day in New York comes to a close.

The initial reaction to the film is one of pure delight. The colors are so clean, so silvery, the images so imaginative and evocative, the original score by Gene Forrell so apposite. And there is humor, so rare in films of this kind. Inevitably, however, the question arises, how much of this imagery was purely adventitious, the result of a happy accident? The answer, given both by Mr. Thompson himself and by the internal evidence of his film, is: very little, if any. He stresses the element of control in his photog-



HIGHWAY

raphy; and indeed, it is inconceivable that shot could follow shot with such cool precision of effect if each set-up were left to chance—or even to a royal selection from thousands of chances. It is true that Mr. Thompson spent almost ten years in the creation of his picture, working on it in intervals between (and sometimes during) his commercial assignments. But, as in all art, the time went for perfection. As early as 1952, he screened a version of *N.Y., N.Y.* at the Museum of Modern Art to a thunderous ovation. He was not satisfied in his own mind, however. Elements that were successful then suggested new possibilities, new techniques—and these in turn suggested others. It was a process of growth, of shifts in balance, coloration, and emphasis, an ever-increasing complexity that finally compressed into fifteen minutes an intensely personal, refreshingly individual and, in the truest sense, refined vision of a great metropolis at work and play. The film, shot on 16mm, has recently been acquired for theatrical distribution by United Artists; nontheatrical distribution plans are being held in abeyance for another year or so.

Hilary Harris's *Highway,* photographed and edited by Mr. Harris, is a far simpler film, but one that achieves its own exhilaration through a happy congruence of sound and image. The visuals are, for the most part, glimpses of the highways and superhighways that gird New York, taken from a moving car—and generally a *fast*-moving car. Cut to a jazz score provided by David Hollister, the effect is perhaps less a "city symphony" than a "city jam session." Mr. Hollister's music, alternating between rock 'n' roll and a light, swinging blues, provides both the impetus and the cohesion for this five-minute film; his tight, brightly colored orchestrations, sounding startlingly like the old John Kirby band, neatly complement the swift movement and low-keyed color of Mr. Harris's camera, and the nervous, jerky rhythms of his cutting. *Highway* is but a brief sketch of a film, but its impact is enormous.

Visually, it consists of three main sections, a swift dash along the elevated highways set to the blare of rock 'n' roll; a more temperate drive in the growing shadows, punctuated by signs and colored signals, and set to a swingy blues; and, as rock 'n' roll cuts in again, a final headlong chase over and under the viaducts that carry the driveways around the city. There is little of camera trickery here; some skillful work with zoomar lenses is the sole departure from standard shooting techniques. Nor are the images in themselves especially notable; the camera generally rides beside the driver, seeing little more than one would see at the wheel. It is the assembly that brings the whole to life, the editing rhythms and the synchronization of the right visual to the right sound. Underviews of the sinuous viaducts, for example, are cut together as they veer off to the right or to the left, creating designs as abstract and exciting as the forms in a Len Lye film. A zooming close-up of a flashing yellow traffic signal brings a musical phrase to a visual climax. Dedicated to the speed and spirit of the modern highway, it captures kinetically, filmically, all the heady thrill of an open road ahead and a powerful motor under the hood. Photographed in 16mm, *Highway* is available through Film Images, 1860 Broadway, New York 23; there is also a 35mm blow-up from the original.

Power Among Men

Even unintelligent works deserve careful scrutiny when the reasons for their failure are significant. In the case of *Power Among Men,* indeed, they are far more important than the film itself.

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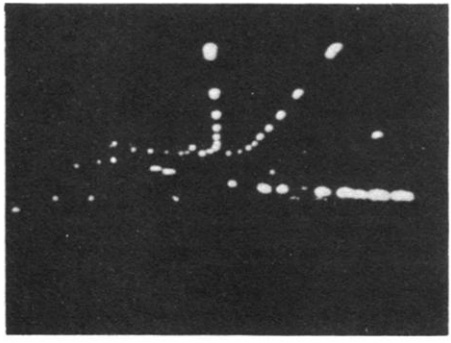

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gent. It is a feature-length documentary on the idea and purposes of the United Nations, and its thesis is a potent one, although familiar as fate: that as man builds, so he is tempted to destroy. Four episodes in four widely scattered corners of the world dramatize this idea. With UN aid villagers rebuild the war-destroyed town of Sant'Ambrogio in Italy, only to face again the problems of conscription in a war-haunted world. Gaunt farmers in Fermathe, Haiti, learn with the help of a UN agricultural expert how to reap plentiful harvests from stony, famished soil, but they must battle constantly with vested interests and brutish ignorance among their own people. A company town in Kitimat, Canada tries to find ways of uniting a score of excitable national groups. And in Kjeller, Norway, an atom-fearful beekeeper learns about the beneficial uses of atomic energy. These sequences are connected with reportage footage designed to establish moods which will act as transitions: between the Canadian and Norwegian episodes, for instance, we have newsreel shots of atomic explosions intercut with shots of treatment of cancer by radiation, and of Japanese radiation victims.

This is the first truly ambitious film enterprise by the UN. Using different directors for the various episodes, it was put together under the over-all direction of Thorold Dickinson.

Its big names, however, have done better elsewhere. Virgil Thomson's score, which swept along in perfect accord with the powerfully rhythmic images of *The River*, has here been subordinated into the most helpless kind of mood-music. Alexander Hammid's eye and camera—the lustrous frames of countryside and peasant hands and faces in *The Forgotten Village* and his tender close-ups for *Private Life of a Cat*—are perhaps detectable in a few sublimely beautiful panoramic shots of the British Columbian mountains in the Canadian sequence, but any relationship between them and the sequence itself is purely coincidental.

Indeed, herein lies one of the two root faults of the film. It would seem that the choice of such disparate subject matter would necessitate a very closely woven script. But it was decided that "A script would be no use—we would have to go to the countries that seemed likely to offer some expression of our ideas, talk the thing over with the people there, and let them act it out." (Dickinson in an interview for *The New Yorker.*) Which is still fine if the director has a clear vision of his ultimate goal and enough imagination to achieve it.

The result, however, was the tired documentary procedure which appears here to be as outdated and bankrupt as the conception of the most standard Hollywood movie. Hammid's mountain peaks unroll meaninglessly above the heads of Alcan workers squabbling dangerously (?) over a soccer score. (Everyone knows it was *really* a soccer fight that started World War II.) A bored camera travels back and forth over the mundane features of the village wife in Sant'Ambrogio, its manipulator apparently under the illusion, too common among documentarians, that as a member of The People she must have an interesting face. (It's all right, but there's probably not a character actress in Rome who doesn't have a better one.) As a matter of fact, the entire Italian sequence —the rebuilding of Sant'Ambrogio, the explosion of a mine in a field which is being plowed, and the departure for the army of the young protagonist a decade later—has been easily surpassed in force by even the most sentimental of the Italian neo-realist films. *Power Among Men* concludes with a long chat in agonizingly halting English between a humble citizen of Norway and a Norwegian scientist, the latter seeking to convince the former that we must learn to use the atom for peace.—A point of view deserving our most urgent support but ill-advanced by this falsely staged, patronizing conversation, another cliché of the documentary-maker. Sixty seconds of atom/hydrogen bomb explosion suffice to carry the point in an infinitely more dramatic fashion. And indeed such a series of shots did precede this sequence, to be received in startled and startling silence by a restless preview audience.

So far we have discussed a failure of form—the use of stereotypes which reveal the documentary to be in as great a danger of starving

POWER AMONG MEN. *Top: One of the closing images—Olmec stone head, believed to have been carved about the time of Christ. Bottom: Georges Mouton, UN agricultural expert, shows the farmers of Fermathe, Haiti, the use of the pitchfork, a tool wholly new to them.*

from lack of imagination as anything out of the great, glittering studios. But form and content are inseparable: the reasons for this failure lie deeper than a dearth of inventiveness among the directors. The makers of this film obviously had no clear idea of what they wanted to say, or they would not have tried to say so many different things. The use of modern agricultural methods in Haiti and the control of atomic power both pose valid problems, but they demand enormously different solutions and the attempt to treat them under one rubric is misleading and messy. What has the explosion of a land-mine in an Italian field during peacetime to do with a hydrogen bomb explosion in the Bikinis? Both are detonations brought about by man's destructive impulses, but their ultimate significance is so vastly different that comparison becomes absurd and dangerous. For the sad fact is that we could probably have gone on fighting our old-fashioned wars indefinitely without decimating populations. Suddenly this is no longer possible, and the old rationale will not work, that it is better to kill than be killed. Now we all go up together, and we will have to develop our science and our morality so that we can avoid this. *Power Among Men*, essentially an educational film, suffers devastatingly the chief curse of modern education: in order to simplify it makes no distinctions and ends by losing its way in its own diffusion.—THALIA SELZ.

La Tête contre les Murs

Georges Franju's first feature-length film has been awaited here in Paris with considerable expectation, for he is generally considered, along with Bresson and Resnais, to be one of the really great French directors and in a class apart. His gift for striking camera work and his preoccupation with startling subject matter were announced in *Blood of the Beasts* and have continually reappeared in all of his shorts. Here we have an hour and a half of memorable shots in virtually every one of which there is a little "explosion" of unusual content. But unfortunately the stylishness very rarely expresses the real potential of Franju's material, and instead of a film which demonstrates his passionate anarchism, denouncing society as seen in the microcosm of an insane asylum, we have only elegant Guignol.

The fault is in the script which, however internally consistent, fails to provide Franju with an opportunity to get close to the emotional center of his material. In place of genuine involvement with the characters and their pre-

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dicament, and thoughtful study of mental illness as a reflection of society, the scenario feeds on classic horrors as an excuse for a series of brilliant technical strategies with which to chill the audience. The camera mastery and inventiveness are there, even the poetry, but very little of Franju's unique, intense dissatisfaction with the polite, conventional world and his need to reveal the hidden side of it.

The story (derived from a novel by Hervé Bazin) concerns a young motorcycle enthusiast who tries to borrow money from his rich and delinquent friends in order to repay a debt. Finding no help from them, he sneaks into his father's house and steals the needed money from a desk drawer—and also, gratuitously, burns part of one of his father's law briefs. The father enters, shocked, and after an argument in which the son slaps his father's face, the father holds the boy at gun point and telephones an insane asylum to which he proceeds to commit the boy. The rest of the film is spent showing the boy's life there and his unsuccessful attempts to escape. Given the fact that the boy is obviously not insane and that the asylum is pictured almost solely in terms of grotesques, we are far from the descent into Hell which Franju's career had led us to expect. The film takes place on a level of melodramatic machination, unjust and malevolent punishment is the theme, and the bombs which Franju sets off only titillate the audience and do not rock the society he distrusts. Nevertheless, the images are so rich and compelling, the business so carefully planned to reveal the unexpected forces lying in wait within or behind the most ordinary experience, that one must again acknowledge the great originality and power of Franju's gift and hope that his second feature, shooting of which is just completed, will have given him greater opportunity to realize his vision. If he once gets this opportunity, the result should be the most electrifying, devastating film ever made —JOHN ADAMS

En Dag I Staden

It is difficult to gainsay the Grand Prize given by the Brussels jury last year to *Dom*, since it *seems* wildly experimental and also respectable (i.e., dadaist, surreal, almost classically 1930 avant-garde). But I cannot help thinking that if Mack Sennett had been on the board of judges in place of Man Ray (or beside him) *his* sense of anarchy might have been more excited by Hulten-Nordstrom's *En Dag I Staden* (*A Day in Town*).

The film is, in brief, a parody of all the things a Fitzpatrick travelogue takes seriously. It begins bravely, the narration promising much more than the camera seems able to deliver, with badly composed and ill-chosen shots of Stockholm's least rewarding side-streets. Then the films begins its first steps toward abstraction. A paper cut-out pleasure boat sails across one of Stockholm's lakes and then, in the style of a child's drawing, is up-ended and sinks.

What follows is film comedy and parody of the most inventive kind. The first unusual use of sound appears in a sequence which incorporates another device, used more than once in the film, of making, in effect, a continuous loop of a short piece of action, arranged so that there is a slight, but perceptible jump cut when the ends are joined. This appears first as the palace band is performing in the grounds. The part which is looped shows the band-master (conducting with a baton) and suggestions of two or three of the performers, including the end of a slide trombone from time to time. The loop is cut in such a way that at the splice the conductor appears to give a little jump. Since the loop is continued (almost) endlessly, this action falls into a pattern. Contributing to the effect is the audience's gradual realization that the music being played by the band could not have been the music on the sound track, since they are slightly out of time with each other. Thus, the conductor's little jump comes to have the meaning that he is trying, hopelessly, to get his band into time with the music.

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young, sad, and inchoate) who presents himself to a minor bureaucrat with some petition. The two are photographed blandly in profile, facing each other across a table, sometimes in two-shot, sometimes in close-up. The action is shown several times throughout the picture, on each occasion unchanged. The young man makes a request, presents a document; the civil servant squints at it, sniffs, and hands it back; the young man listens to the refusal and pockets the document. In successive appearances, however, it appears that the sound track is altered, until in the end the dialogue is removed altogether and *musique concrète* is substituted. Thus we get the impression that no matter what the characters say, and who plays the roles, the end result will be the same. This, with an audience, is hugely funny, and at the same time it is a thoroughly satisfactory example of a film establishing its own conventions as it goes along—the reduction of dialogue, not into nonsense phrases and grunts as in Ionesco's *Bald Soprano,* but one stage farther—to a purely abstract sound. This seems to have more *application* than *Dom's* use of abstract sound, which, it is true, starts with *musique concrète,* but neither reveals (within the film) how it got there, nor promises any advance.

The other example of a looped action is even simpler than the first and suggests that an actor's style of movement can sometimes be created for him by the camera and by editing, rather than by rehearsal and performance, as for example in the films of Jacques Tati. *En Dag I Staden* produces a characteristic way of walking and turning corners by repeating, again seemingly ad infinitum, a shot (undercranked) of someone walking briskly along a sidewalk. (He has just "escaped" from a "pursuer".) The camera pans with him, and again there is a jump-cut at the splice, so that the actor appears to give a jump. This, by repetition, becomes "characteristic." There is no reason why this should be limited to a repetition of the same shot. By careful shooting it could be arranged, paradoxically and contrary to regular practice, that there would always be a jump at each cut to another angle.

The film ends with a brisk chase through the streets of Stockholm, leading imperceptibly, unaccountably, but quite acceptably to the total destruction of the city by fire. (This it does in part with shots of burning paper houses superimposed on actual locales). This sequence contains a variety of effects, the chase itself using footage from an undercranked camera with a sound track of racing cars to further the illusion, and, for good measure, an occasional cutaway to a dirt-track rider spraying the air with cinders. In the middle of the conflagration there are cuts away to dive bombers, and once a crowded fire-engine runs into the scene—on fire. The occupants leap hurriedly off, there is a dissolve to the ashes of the machine, and then the film continues.

All this happens without a Fatty Arbuckle or a Buster Keaton—without in fact building up any single personality, except the personality of the film itself. Liked at Brussels, but not rewarded, it nonetheless received an American prize in the same year—a 1958 Creative Film Foundation award for exceptional merit. It will be interesting to see what its producers make next.—COLIN YOUNG

Ingrid Bergman: An Intimate Portrait, by Joseph Henry Steele. New York: David McKay Company, 1959. $3.95

"Brother, she is bullet-proof. There never has been another figure like her before a camera; you can shoot her any angle, any position. It doesn't make any difference; you don't have to protect her. You can bother about other actors on the set. But Ingrid's like a Notre Dame quarterback. An onlooker can't take his eyes off her!"—VICTOR FLEMING

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Ingrid Bergman in INN OF THE SIXTH HAPPINESS

Few actresses of our day fulfill the great tradition of a Sara Bernhardt, Isadora Duncan, or Greta Garbo, as remarkable performers or in their controversial "private lives." These artists had to fight their way through jungles of scandal and theater politics. Stripped of everything but their own amazing talents, each emerged triumphant in the hearts of their fickle publics.

To retain a fair balance between artistic achievement and the private story is a problem that might defeat any biographer (especially with such fair prey as Ingrid Bergman) and Steele is no exception. He has been closely associated with Ingrid from 1943 as her personal public relations man and has access to a remarkable wealth of personal material, a great deal from his own experience. The book relates her early life and training in Sweden, her film successes in Stockholm, Berlin, and Hollywood. The first half of the book is in a brief, anecdotal style that is neither complete nor chronological—as Steele warns.

He may have felt his star's Hollywood achievements of the '40s are well enough known, for no clear detailed picture of them emerges. Steele says, "Ingrid placed more value on the quality of the director than any other element in the making of a picture . . ." And it was during the '40s that she worked under Gregory Ratoff, Victor Fleming, Michael Curtiz, Sam Wood, George Cukor, and Hitchcock. Instead of more detail on these important years we have a good deal about her junkets to entertain the troops and other trivia. The author does, however, attempt to delineate Bergman's character through all this and she comes off Steele's pen as physically large, very womanly and beautiful in a peasant way; totally unaffected, kind and often impatient (he calls this a "deeply ingrained restlessness") but always an obedient and faithful wife, lover, and mother, in her own fashion.

About midway in the book the writing becomes much keener. Bergman's great stage triumph in Anderson's *Joan of Lorraine* (1946) is fully treated from the author's own experiences. Following the actress's U.S. boxoffice failures (*Arch of Triumph, Joan of Arc* and *Under Capricorn*) comes the real heart of the book as we find Bergman drawn to Rossellini through his great neorealist films, *Open City* and *Paisan*. The Stromboli scandal begins and is most carefully treated in all its amazing detail.

Steele's sympathetic handling of this difficult phase not only shows what a good "official" biographer he is, but also how objective he is often able to be. Until now he has described some gentle disagreements with Ingrid as he becomes her mentor, a role that seems to include being her poison-tester, publicity troubleshooter, mediator, messenger, strategist and ambassador. But he remains throughout a close, adoring friend to Ingrid. To illuminate the Bergman-Rossellini scandal the author presents a remarkable fund of evidence: personal letters, cables, gossip-column quotes, news releases, documents (the Lindstrom divorce proceedings) and encounters which help show quite a complete progression of events. This is impressive indeed, but when the author surprisingly reproduces ("as closely as I can remember it") a long, detailed letter that Ingrid "wrote"—but which evidently was not available to him—he risks some distrust from his readers. On the whole the author is forthright enough; he does not seem to edit away the truth even when it is unflattering to himself.

Rossellini comes off as a spoiled and pouting egoist who ignores the suggestions of his colleagues and overlooks the feelings of nearly everyone. Lindstrom appears as both cool and suspicious. On the other hand, Steele seems a little wont to always explain Ingrid's motivations as anything but selfish; it would seem that her heartfelt deplorations never involve her own ego. There is chivalry in his loyalty.

The sympathy developed for Ingrid is reasonable enough, and perhaps this book is an apology. By looking in, as intimately as we do, on many of her private affairs we are led to understand how she revolted, quite humanly, against the disharmony of her first and second marriages and the image of herself as publicity portrayed her: the simple, artless, and virginal apparition "made in Hollywood, USA." Her quiet and pleasant relationship with Lars Schmidt ends the book just prior to her recent reappearance in Hollywood to present the Academy Awards.

A dedicated biography such as this could be even more valuable were greater attention paid to Ingrid Bergman's artistic successes (many of which are merely passed over with a mention), even to the exclusion of some of the tantalizing scandal. Thanks to Mr. Steele, we are reminded of many little-known aspects of her work—her stage performances in *Anna Christie, Liliom, Joan of Lorraine, Tea and Sympathy,* the opera *Joan at the Stake.* But we might gladly have exchanged many of Mr. Steele's anecdotes for a more detailed analysis of her recent films, and indeed of her work as a whole.

—C. CAMERON MACAULEY

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Doubtless this biography is full of errors that will shortly be pointed out by Seymour Stern. Though it is a readable record, its superficiality is nearly appalling, alike in the cooked-up dialogue ("Acting in the flickers!" said David with a shudder. "I'll never do it in the world"), the lack of either a social or aesthetic perspective on the cinema, the avoidance of the technical historical problems raised by Griffith's work, and a strangely distant quality about the portrait of Griffith himself. Perhaps this last deficiency will be inherent in any biography of Griffith, who was an elusive and indeed secretive person. Perhaps, also, a certain rather nineteenth-century air, with pronounced bathetic tendencies, will always hover around this sad man who, probably without knowing what he was really about, shaped the film's narrative method into the form that has persisted for forty years.—E. C.

Studies in the Arab Theater and Cinema. By Jacob M. Landau. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958.

From this prodigiously footnoted volume—which is also based on direct experience—we learn that the history of the cinema in Arab countries has been brief and ignoble. Drama in the Arab culture is an art derivative from late European roots, the shadow play being the chief native forms; and the story of the Arab film (which means mainly the Egyptian film) is a sad one of shallow commercialism, technical disorganization and incompetence, and wholesale "adaptations" amounting more or less to theft. There are well-known stars; the directors and scriptwriters exist in the obscurity they deserve.

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Correspondence & Controversy

Why a Prize to Dom?

It is hard for anyone who has seen even a fairly representative selection of the films shown in Brussels to understand or approve of this choice. My own feeling is that the jury's motives stemmed from a kind of political sentimentality, which is understandable if not excusable. Obviously it *is* rather sympathetic to see an anarchistic, insolent little film like this, reminiscent of Dada and Surrealism, coming out of a Communist-dominated country. And *Dom* was certainly the most polished (if not the most interesting) film in the Polish selection.

Not that *Dom* is entirely without merit or interest for the attentive student of film technique and aesthetics. It is just that it is a very slender piece of work, very slender indeed! . . . . Unfortunately the episodes themselves, though for the most part quite handsome and neat, are uncommonly indigent and, above all, terribly anachronistic. The most amusing is probably the one in which an omnivorous animated wig devours a kind of still life. The realistic sound effects accompanying this scene produce an undeniably comical effect. Quite brilliant, too, is a demonstration of *savate* given by two animated silhouettes that look rather like old-fashioned dictionary illustrations.

But the other episodes, meant to constitute a kind of anticinema (a notion not to be condemned in itself, and which has been developed along very interesting lines by Bresson and more obscure avant-garde directors like P. Gilson) fall awfully flat: a man comes into a room, hangs his hat on a rack, goes out of the shot, the hat vanishes, he comes in again as before, hangs up his hat, goes out, etc., ad infinitum, while a pianist practices ever-ascending scales. This gag is hardly worthy of Méliès, and Messrs. Richter and Man Ray had gotten beyond that sort of thing long before sound came in.

Why was this rather slick piece of tom-foolery awarded the Grand Prize at Brussels? My guess is that neither art nor experimentation had anything to do with a choice which seems to be a nostalgic attempt to rehabilitate an irresponsible form of film fun which has been dead and buried for more than thirty years.—Noel Burch.

Film: Book 1 vs. *Film Quarterly* (*Round Two*)

I was most affected by the Editor's confession of despair, if not impotence, before the "terrible state of chassis" in which all of us critics (and editors) presumably find ourselves these days. And even the clarion call at the end of the Editor's Notebook, in which "we critics" are called upon to "get tougher" on film-makers, somehow failed to make me feel much better about "our" fate. For this get-tough policy, at least as exemplified in Mr. Callenbach's summary dealings with *Film: Book 1* and practically every other film publication seen in Berkeley recently, strikes me as less tough than grisly; and the groanings about "film periodicals . . . display[ing] no sense of direction," as less objective reporting than self-indictment, or what might even be identified as projection.

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As for *Film: Book 1:* first of all, it is a shame that Mr. Callenbach read it so hastily; and secondly, that he rushed into print on the subject

before he had even had the chance to see some 20% of it at all. Perhaps if he had read it more carefully and in its entirety, he might have discovered the book's structure, and also my point of view (and that of my contributors) about some of the more urgent matters of film theory and practice today.

First let it be said, as it surely will be said with and without venom in other reviews (Mr. Callenbach's review appeared some six weeks before any others), that *Film: Book 1* is overwhelmingly concerned with the nature of today's audience, particularly for serious films; with a kind of film-making called realist, neo-realist, poetic realist; and with the situation of this kind of genuinely cinematic film-maker—"how he works and what he is up against." If that is a "mixed approach," make the most of it.

The first section, "The Audience," contains a psychological analysis of the movie spectator, the first chapter to be pre-published from *Theory of Film* by Siegfried Kracauer, an author whom Mr. Callenbach dismisses as one "whose virtues and defects are both well enough known to require no comment here." (This is criticism? the "tough" policy?) Mr. Callenbach, who spent some time in his latest Notebook mooning over the good old days back when Arnheim and Rotha first began writing, may have been startled to learn of the existence of Dr. Kracauer's revolutionary work-in-progress; obviously an editor who can write that "no major new viewpoints have been propounded recently" will be astonished to discover that both Arnheim and Rotha consider it the most important work in "straight-forward theoretical writing" in a couple of decades.

In his review Mr. Callenbach adequately noted the other contribution to "The Audience" section, Arthur Knight's piece on the art house and film society audience. But his "pugnacious" (and fashionable) dismissal of Mr. Knight's judicious introduction to film history, *The Liveliest Art*, as being "a general introduction"—exactly what is was intended to be—deserves to be recognized for what it is. And if Knight's work is "bland" (read thorough, cautious, scholarly), I for one prefer it to the wrong-headed "fervor" of some of its picayune detractors.

The second section, "The Film-maker and the Audience," consisting of replies by eleven outstanding directors to a questionnaire (which seems to have served as a model for Mr. Callenbach's in his Spring Notebook) gets just four sentences. In one of these, he mistakenly identifies Satyajit Ray as a director who has "no particular complaint about audience restrictions" when in fact Ray simply remarked in this connection that because his first two films were made "independently of the commercial set-up," he had been "enabled . . . to ignore the conventional attitude toward the audience"; surely "enabled" is the key word here. The reviewer goes on to say that "in many other respects the replies are, as the saying goes, very revealing"; of what, he does not say, though the implication is clearly that several of the respondents are deceiving themselves. Certainly a few of them are being cautious, as expected (one director who did not reply explained that he was "the only one of the bunch under contract to a major studio"); but apparently Mr. Callenbach missed the sentence in which I expressed the hope that "future answers will be at least as candid as these."

Notably the reviewer ignores any directors whose remarks could not possibly strike anyone as time-serving. (A sample of Buñuel: "The producer limits himself merely to throwing to the beasts the food they demand of him.") And an immensely important point raised by Lindsay Anderson ("the failure of the intelligent minority [among film-goers, film-makers, distributors, exhibitors] to combine to form a system which might still make the production of serious work, reasonably budgeted, an economic proposition")—a situation which everyone seriously interested in film should set about ameliorating now—this too is ignored by the reviewer; very possibly he is too concerned with "the larger cultural paralysis" to notice the need for commitment to this kind of lowly, but practical therapy.

Following this section is one called "Flaherty's Way," in which both his widow and Dr. Charles Siepmann discuss the central characteristics of the film-maker who succeeded better than anyone to date in making films the way he wanted to make them, and in damned well reaching his audience as well. The relationship of this section to the previous one is ignored also, needless to say. And the Editor who can say that "in fact, nobody is paying much attention to anybody else" should check with one of his Advisory Editors, Hugh Gray, to discover how much communication between film-makers,

critics, etc., takes place at the Flaherty Seminars each summer.

One complete section, "The Process of Filmmaking," amounting to almost a fifth of the book, is ignored entirely. This consists of a piece by George Stoney describing the background of his documentary masterpiece, *All My Babies*; and an extremely revealing (in its better sense) interview with Federico Fellini.

The whole point of the section, "Two Unproduced Films," comprising excerpts from James Agee's scenario *Noa-Noa* and the outline of Cesare Zavattini's dream film *Italia Mia*, is missed as well. Here are two of the most provocative works by two of the most imaginative men to work in cinema in recent times; and neither script has found a taker in the world of film commerce. There is a "central concern" that is worth talking about.

And speaking of central concerns, another in this book is that for young film-makers, and a fund that would help make their early efforts feasible, as expressed in the introduction to the final section, "Perspectives on 'Progress'." That introduction and the structure and tone of *Book 1* should also make clear the extent to which this editor dissents from Jonas Mekas' enthusiasm for certain of the works of the more "mythic," navel-gazing experimentalists. But Mr. Mekas and I do share a concern for the support of young American film-makers—who just might produce work of interest equal to the "Free Cinema" films and *Two Men and a Wardrobe* given anything approximating the encouragement, and financial assistance, these efforts received. But this concern is distorted and dismissed by the reviewer in his out-of-context quotation from Mr. Mekas' article. (What is this "curious malaise," and who's suffering from it?)

Of the drawings and text of "Who Cut the Comedy," by Robert and Elodie Osborn, and the stills and portraits section with its windup quotes exemplifying the approaches of the various film-maker contributors, Mr. Callenbach says nothing because he had not even seen them before he wrote his review. In that review he said that *Film: Book 1* "shows no overriding tendency, no coherent school of thought, and no great fervor." I trust that readers will judge for themselves. And also I hope that Mr. Callenbach takes his own words to heart.

—ROBERT HUGHES [Editor, *Film: Book 1*]

[*Editor's reply:*] In his cooler moments, Mr. Hughes is both an intelligent and a goodnatured man; and he undoubtedly knows perfectly well that what I said in my review is true and that no amount of bluster on his part is going to change that fact. Unless we adopt enthusiasm-for-enthusiasm's-sake as a critical policy (and this is a hobbyhorse on which Mr. Hughes must be content to ride off alone, wool tight over his eyes and mumbling about "projection") we must also face the fact that what I said about the general state of film criticism is likewise true—unfortunate as it is for Mr. Hughes and all of us.

As illustration I see I must return again to *Film: Book 1*, which I was perhaps too gentle with in my review, out of consideration for its admirable auspices and purpose. Mr. Hughes is perhaps entitled to a somewhat higher opinion of its unity and overall quality than most informed readers will have. My personal view is, as my review indicated, that as criticism it is thin and as program it is uncertain. I do not blame Mr. Hughes for this, as he evidently felt. But I think he cannot blink the fact that if a man of his energy and intelligence spends rather more than a year at work and comes up with a book of this nature, then we are not exactly living in a land of critical plenty. (I'm sure this is really his private opinion also, as it is that of every person who has recently tried to assemble quantities of good critical writing on film; and I do not see what purpose, except perhaps that of publicity, is gained by pretending otherwise.)

To deal with Mr. Hughes' rather scattered arguments in order: I have no idea why he is so hurt at my calling the approach of *Film: Book 1* a "mixed" one; to my Aristotelian soul this conveys no grievous slight. The world is mixed, indeed, and a mixed method for dealing with it is appropriate. Mr. Hughes' defense of his contributors is a fine and generous one, but again I suspect it will not be shared by all of his readers. Siegfried Kracauer's work-in-progress, of which we have known for some years, is a valuable enterprise surely; but I did

not find this part of it very new, substantial, or even very readable; and it is by no conceivable stretch of imagination "revolutionary," as Mr. Hughes asserts, unless one has a sadly feeble sense of that term. Arthur Knight's book, which Mr. Hughes brings in from the Editor's Notebook, is with certain reservations a valuable one in its kind; but everyone who had read much film history (*not*, regrettably, a "fashionable" enterprise!) knows that another kind is what we direly need. My statement about Satyajit Ray, far from being "mistaken," still seems to me perfectly justified; I wish it were justified in the same way for many more film-makers—as does Mr. Hughes. Perhaps, as he suggests, some of the respondents to his questionnaire *were* deceiving themselves; he is in a better position to judge than I am. What I meant, of course, was that the replies revealed more about the film-makers than Mr. Hughes' questions (which I do not find very astutely phrased, I'm afraid, and would hardly have plagiarized) sought to know. As to the section on Flaherty, this comprises material with which we are rather too familiar, with due respect to Mrs. Flaherty; and the alleged fertilizing effects of the Seminars have yet to overwhelm us with manuscripts. My opinion of *Italia Mia* and *Noa-Noa* is simply lower than that of Mr. Hughes, whom I conceive to have been bitten by the Big Name bug on both counts.

Finally, I am astounded to find Mr. Hughes now very upset that we "rushed into print" with a review that had to be done from page proofs. Since the delays in publishing *Film: Book 1* had already been great, we were anxious to review it on its appearance, which was then scheduled for the same date as our last issue. Mr. Hughes abetted us in this undertaking, and seemed to think then that it was generosity, not foul play. I'm sorry I didn't get to see the amusing "Who Cut the Comedy" and the photographs; in fact I have just now received the complete book, as we go to press months later. But these missing portions were hardly the keystone to Mr. Hughes' archway.

—ERNEST CALLENBACH

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Readers lucky enough to have seen *Ivan the Terrible Part 2* have pointed out our error in the caption on page 19 of our spring issue. The photograph shows Ivan (Cherkasov) placing his crown on Vladimir (Kadochnikov), who is dressed in Ivan's robes, in the color sequence of the film. We also erred in saying that Sophia Loren won the best-actress award at Cannes, when it was in fact at Venice.—ED.

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