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Editor's Notebook

The Critical Question: Another View

In the Autumn issue of *Sight & Sound* editor Penelope Houston has done film and film criticism a signal service by bringing into the full view of her large and international audience some questions about film thought which have not received much public attention, and to which hardly any new answers have lately been forthcoming. Where, in short, is film criticism going? Another major article in the same issue of *Sight & Sound* is a discussion of what is so far the only serious Western alternative to the dominant school of film writing: the work of the *Cahiers du Cinéma* "gang." As Richard Roud convincingly shows, this is no real alternative. To turn from what now may seem the stodgy or literary approach of *Sight & Sound* or other "official" journals to the wildly inaccurate and sometimes crypto-fascist approach of *Cahiers* would be change but certainly not progress.

Perhaps, however, we can hope for more—for the growth of what we might without embarrassment call a new film criticism.

Miss Houston's long article seems to us excellent in many respects. Above all (for this is a point on which grave misunderstandings might arise) we must admire the concern for human beings, for human life, which underlies her desire to have critics deal primarily with what she terms the "motive force" of films. The phrase may be a bad one: the motive forces of artists are often inscrutable, and what appears in one decade to be the driving force of a film later may pale into irrelevance. Nonetheless: film *is* a social art, one we take to be of direct personal importance to large masses of men. It exists as an industry in an elaborate social context; its creators are men living and acting, culturally and politically, in a world whose reality is so insistent no one need insist upon it. Any critic who attempted to write about films without a consciousness of the *seriousness* of the medium, in this sense, we should indeed dismiss as an irresponsible critic. And there are few critics who would, as a matter of fact, pass up the chance to say whether they think the tenor or tendency of a film is "good" or "bad," according to their lights.

So this is not really the question.

Miss Houston's article is also good in its firm sense of being situated in a particular historical tradition. Her generation, as she says, is that which created *Sequence* at Oxford and later turned *Sight & Sound* from the all too official organ of the British Film Institute into the finest journal of film criticism in the world (which it still is, in our opinion). But that generation, "whose attitudes toward the cinema were being formulated at the time of the neo-realist experiment," now finds itself under attack by younger people in England, and a certain dissatisfaction with *Sight & Sound* may be encountered in the United States as well. In this issue Miss Houston takes up the cudgels, which is, surely, all to the good; there is, sadly, little tradition of serious debate in film criticism.

—Not that the attacks she is answering are entirely serious. (It is weird to hear the unmistakably querulous "beat" note emerging from the new journal she quotes, *Oxford Opinion.*) The sturdy ship of S&S, afloat on a sea of literary and intellectual tradition that has been running for some centuries now, is not likely to be blasted out of the water by such sniping. But it is worth considering the alternatives proposed there, and in *Cahiers*, and in some circles in this country: the cult of the worthless story, the jazzed-up gangster film, and sometimes Leni Riefenstahl. It is tempting to dub this juvenile-delinquent film criticism, and the phrase is not entirely inaccurate: the critical stance arises from the same impulse—to destroy the smug and hypocritical cant of the "square" adults, to adopt as idols things the elders despise. One person's sophisticate is another's square; so odd sympathies may spring up in this kind of game. It is an interesting attitude; but we doubt whether it is criticism.

Miss Houston's article is also admirable in pointing out that "Film criticism is in search

of an aesthetic, which will not be found in the narrower issues of committed versus anti-committed attitudes . . . the unattractive truth, of course, is that there is plenty of reviewing and not nearly enough criticism (and a magazine such as this one must accept its share of the guilt); that the film, because it cannot be taken home and studied like a novel or a play, invites reactions and impressions rather than sustained analysis; that there has never really been an aesthetics of the sound cinema, and that most of the standard textbooks are useful only for those who still believe that cinema history virtually stops with *Blackmail* and *The Blue Angel.*" This is both a gracious and an accurate statement. And it is valuable as a reminder that, in searching for a new criticism, we are not trying to invent some miraculous machine, into which one puts films and out of which spews criticism. (There *are* people who would welcome such a contraption.) "In the long run," Miss Houston writes, "the critic is still on his own, confronted with the work of art. His tools: his sensibility, his knowledge, his judgment, and his apparatus of values."

This is very true, but not simple. For any critic also operates, consciously and unconsciously, in a tradition. Some of this tradition he perceives as "knowledge," some as "values"; the most dangerous, in the long run, is the part he perceives as "sensibility" or "judgment." What many film writers seem to be feeling at this juncture is that the traditional constellation of these factors has become unsatisfactory.

It must be made perfectly clear that no one yet knows precisely why. But we do know that some of the obvious "ways out" are insufficient. One might, for example, take the "technical" way out—arguing, as do some of the madder young French critics, that it is fine *trouvailles* that make a film. (It is a rare film in which one may not find some shots or scenes to be enthusiastic about.) Or one might take Miss Houston's own way out, which proves to be a reaffirmation of the "liberal" tradition in criticism as in politics. "Primarily," she writes, "I would suggest that the critical duty is to examine the cinema in terms of its ideas, to submit these to the test of comment and discussion." But this, surely, is the province of politics, broadly conceived, or of a special kind of sociology highly developed in this country, with its elaborate techniques of content analysis and so on. The main concern of critics cannot be with the rhetoric of films, in this sense—or with their "ends"—any more than it can be with their grammar alone—with their "means."

Films do advocate and promote and oppose. But a film, if it *is* a film and not merely a commercial product, cannot be dealt with as if it were an animated tract. A good film is good precisely because it is an indissoluble whole, a tightly knit, incredibly complex, artistically unified organism.

Perhaps, therefore, what is needed to enable us to push through the present impasse is a kind of "textual" criticism: criticism which sticks much closer to the actual work itself than is usual. (There is hardly a published critic alive who could not do a chilling parody of the usual film review.) For the ordinary treatment given films in *Sight & Sound,* this journal, and most other film publications, does not get down in enough detail to what we need to know about how, exactly, the new films are being made, and where they are going. Such questions are grubby and difficult; they demand that critics know what they mean by art in screen terms.

Such analysis would, of course, make short work of the "masterworks" of the *Cahiers* school. Moreover, even *je-m'en-foutisme* can be subjected to scrutiny, if one is really interested in the films and not in the pose of the critic. (The *Cahiers* pose is the most dramatic yet devised, no one will deny; and it should not be dismissed lightly—where are the young English or American critics who are likely to make a *400 Blows, Les Cousins, Hiroshima, Mon Amour*? If it be madness, it is evidently a productive one.)

We do not need some new doctrine instantly, which will sweep all critics into its net by sheer force of logic; perhaps we do not even need new textbooks. (See, elsewhere in this issue, a review of Kracauer's *Theory of Film.*) But we

obviously and direly need critics who will cope with films in new ways, who will deal with the fabric of the work in less literary terms than is customary.

It is hard to do this, of course. There are objective obstacles such as those mentioned by Miss Houston. (Though we need, in this connection, critics willing to look over and over again at the films which *are* available for patient study—really a vast corpus since it includes thousands of fine films available on 16mm rental.) There is the lack of precedent. There is the suspicion that "the readers" prefer a general, mish-mash approach. There is the feeling that too much concern with craft or technique is dull or—perhaps—ungentlemanly. There is the distrust of analysis which fears that understanding a work in its own detailed, concrete terms will somehow destroy its "appeal," its magic.

But tighter, more closely reasoned criticism *can* happen. The temperature of the little world of film criticism seems to be rising. And since film criticism, like serious thought of any kind, operates at its own pace, by a kind of mysterious Brownian motion of ideas, perhaps we will soon see really remarkable new developments. But they cannot be forced. Even making the unhealthy assumption that the editors of all the film journals in the world agreed on what the new criticism should be, it would not produce a single lasting work. The writers themselves must feel their way toward what is to be said, and the editors, if they are doing their jobs, will be willing and able to bring their work to the public. Little by little, then, the new excitements of new films made in new places in new ways will give added dimensions to critical thought. (It is lucky that *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* has appeared at precisely this time, for instance.) By this odd process the increasing number of film books and periodicals may bring us the new thought we all seek.

The Future of the San Francisco Film Festival

It will doubtless seem strange to our readers in other areas of the country and abroad that we cannot take a simple local pride in the San Francisco International Film Festival, which is the nearest thing to a major film festival ever put on in the United States. Instead, we regrettably find ourselves joining in the general ill-will toward the Festival generated among film people by the strange policies of Irving Levin, its organizer; and we must lay out in the plainest terms what is wrong with his festival and what he must do if he hopes to make it a genuine cultural event of the international significance we would all like it to have.

Levin, who is an exhibitor, has been able in the past four years to organize two-week-long

showings of films. These have included many we, like film people throughout the country, have been anxious to see and report on. This year, for the first time, he also managed to produce a certain aura of glamor which got the Festival more attention than it has ever had before; and this glamor was not all of the usual meretricious festival variety, either, since guests included Soviet director Grigori Tchoukrai and critic A. Karaganov, the young stars of *Ballad of a Soldier,* director Edward Dmytryk, and several distributors. Mary Pickford helped kick off the opening night, and from time to time Elsa Lanchester, Sterling Hayden, Rupert Crosse (of *Shadows*) and other film personages were in attendance. The judges were Karaganov, Herman G. Weinberg, and Darius Milhaud. It began to seem, for the first time, that the provincial pall that has hung over the Festival in previous years, convincing many that Levin's objective was merely to impress San Francisco high society, was to be replaced by a genuine air of cinematic internationalism. This happy possibility was strengthened by a speech Jean Renoir gave on opening night. Levin introduced him for a brief "hello," it seemed; but Renoir launched into one of his amusing but deadly serious pep-talks on the art of the film. And so, for the first time, the Festival began as what it should be: a festive event centered on film as an exciting art, not on the number of minks that can be cozened through the lobby of the Metro Theater.

It did not remain so; after the interest generated by the surprise withdrawal of *La Dolce Vita* (apparently because of distribution cautiousness) and the showing of *Ballad of a Soldier* (after which the Russians received a standing ovation from the San Francisco audience) the heart went out of things. And not, it must be realized, because good films were not on the schedule [see reviews in this issue]. *The Festival died because it does not receive satisfactory local publicity.* And it does not receive this publicity because Levin, though he employs a "public relations" firm, does not understand press relations and has not employed a press secretary with real authority who does. With a skilled person who knows films in this post for two months before the event, to obtain, digest, and prepare press materials, the Festival would receive untold reams of really intriguing publicity both before and during its two-week period; for the background stories involved in the case of most of the films shown *are* news, and the personalities who attended the festival are also.

There are many other things that should be done to make the San Francisco Festival the success it should be. Like the "Art in Cinema" series of years past, it should include as central features of its programs talks by *directors*—the men who actually make the films. In spite of Hollywood's aversion to the Festival (since it isn't a Hollywood festival) many talented directors would be pleased to address a genuine film festival audience.

The coöperation of other film institutions in the Bay Area should be sought to help generate interest in the medium during the Festival period. The San Francisco Museum of Art, for example, should be asked to help provide exhibitions related to film. The coöperation of universities would be helpful. Art theater operators in the area should be shown that the success of the Festival would redound to their own advantage also, by augmenting serious interest in the film.

Such developments are perfectly possible. But to carry them out will require a clear direction and purpose for the Festival. And it seems to us obvious what this direction should be. This festival, in the city whose officials are proud to claim it "knows how," ought to be *the director's festival: its focus should be on the films and the makers of the films.* No other festival really succeeds in this, as far as we can see. Venice and Cannes are glamorous commercial dog-fights. Karlovy Vary and Berlin are ideological dog-fights. London is a summation and an opportunity to see the upshots of the preceding festivals. San Francisco can claim a unique and necessary function in all this, and perhaps reclaim the very idea of film festivals from a certain uneasiness that has set in during the past several years.

There are also, of course, less important changes that should be made.

Festival showings should be held in a theater that is centrally located. The Metro, which belongs to Levin's chain, is a neighborhood house with entrance and lobby arrangements totally unsuited to the handling of large crowds, and is abominably decorated inside. (The Opera House would be an ideal setting: it is large, elegant, and convenient to public transit and a monster underground parking-lot.) The films should be selected with more care, it goes without saying—for this as for virtually any festival (Levin's luck and performance in this area has improved much, though not enough).

But most of all, the Festival must be put forward in the public eye, locally through the newspapers, and nationally and internationally through the serious and not-so-serious film press, as a genuine festival focused on the films to be shown, and not primarily as some kind of society bash. (The society page of one San Francisco paper ran photographs of Levin kissing actress Zhanna Prokhorenko at the awards ball; there was practically no notice of the awards in any other part of the paper.) Huge excitement could be generated on this basis; for in movies and the making of movies there is still a great interest on the part of large masses of people. Indeed, with a proper press office the Festival could probably lure crowds large enough to warrant use (at lower admissions) of the giant Fox Theater on Market Street, whose 4800 seats make it the second largest house in the country. Its red plush, gilt, and marble would lend a smashingly festive air to the Festival and show that films still mean something more exciting than attending another program on a typical neighborhood street.

To help carry out such changes, we suggest that Levin establish an advisory committee which he would really use for advice. (At present his "advisory committee" consists of eminent names; it never meets; and only one of its members could by any conceivable stretch be said to know anything whatsoever about films.) He faces, whether he realizes it or not, the absolute necessity of broadening the support of the Festival in the Bay Area community. He does not have the government or municipal support enjoyed by the European festivals. (And it is hard to see who would recommend he get any, on the basis of the existing event.) He needs, therefore, the unqualified support of film people and of the press generally. An exhibitor since boyhood, Levin naturally operates in terms of the box office and his immediate audience. Thus he creates a social occasion on which upper-crust San Franciscans may congratulate themselves for their support of the arts; he mobilizes the many local nationality groups to attend the films from their native lands. But in the long run he cannot make the Festival a really first-rate one without the people who attend the Art in Cinema showings at the Museum of Art; the people who attend the many special showings at the University of California and San Francisco State College; the people who support the repertory Cinema Guild and the other art houses of the Bay Area. These are the people who love films, and who will turn out in thousands if the newspapers tell them of films that are interesting. These are also the people whose word-of-mouth communication will, if anything does, spread the fame of the Festival in their circles, many of which are nation-wide or international.

The San Francisco International Film Festival can be a focus of American attention to new films. It can be a place for serious public discussion of the film and its potentialities and problems. It can be a place where film-makers from America and abroad meet and discuss the trends and hopes and plans that agitate them. It can be a place where critics can see the best of new films, and talk with film-makers of what is past, or passing, or to come.

We are grateful to Irving Levin for bringing the Festival into existence. Without him it would not be; and it is an institution whose importance can be immense. The child is born; but now it must be allowed to grow up. Levin should immediately set about providing proper godfathers.

Crowther's Folly

Bosley Crowther's article in the *New York Times*, "Subtitles Must Go!" provoked a loud outcry, but the danger that his proposal will be taken up by all distributors of foreign films remains a real one. We are as anxious as the distributors that foreign films should secure larger audiences in the United States, but not at the cost of the artistic integrity of the films. (There may be some films in which the language is not an integral part of the tone and structure of the work, but their number is small.) The heart of the matter is that while bad subtitles may harm a picture, they leave it intact—but bad dubbing may destroy it utterly. We have already seen that almost all dubbing, which is done *post hoc* and by shoestring operators, is very bad dubbing indeed. Unless the distributors are able to secure versions prepared by the original director and writer, they will gain nothing but ill will from informed audiences. And even if they did secure such versions (which no one seriously thinks they can) they would be guilty of yet another acquiescence in the process by which works of screen art are converted into mere commodities. Nor can we conceive of distributors with the time, energy, and money to prepare and distribute two versions—one dubbed and one subtitled—so that at least our metropolitan audiences could have a choice. For all practical purposes, dubbing is a Bad Thing, and it is sad that Crowther has lent his columns to the campaign for extending it.

About Our Contributors

GIDEON BACHMANN is the editor of *Cinemages* and conducts a radio program on films heard on KPFA, KPFK, WBAI, and other stations.

CHRISTOPHER BISHOP, who was formerly on the staff of the Museum of Modern Art, is now Curator of Films at the San Francisco Museum of Art and director of the new Art in Cinema series.

PETER BOGDANOVICH has been a professional actor, directed an off-Broadway production of Odets' *The Big Knife*, and has published film articles in *Frontier* and other periodicals. He is now planning to make a feature film.

PHILIP CHAMBERLIN is working for his doctorate in education and philosophy at UCLA while at the same time planning film programs for University Extension.

DOUGLAS COX is a film-maker with most of his experience in directing abroad in difficult and often primitive locations. His first feature is being prepared for release.

ARLENE CROCE has reviewed many films for this journal and other periodicals.

JAMES KERANS teaches drama and film and is a director on the drama faculty at Stanford University; he has written previously for this journal.

JOSEPH KOSTOLEFSKY has written many reviews in previous issues, and has contributed criticism to other journals.

KENNETH J. LETNER is Managing Director of the Ensemble Theater in San Francisco.

LETIZIA CIOTTI MILLER is an Italian film journalist who lives in Berkeley.

NORMAN C. MOSER is a poet and has written previously for this journal.

HARRIET R. POLT has written several reviews in previous issues.

ROGER SANDALL is a student of film and anthropology at Columbia University.

ROBERTA SCHULDENFREI was Jean Renoir's personal secretary during his tenure on the Berkeley campus.

R. H. TURNER is a writer and editor at the University of California, Berkeley.

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ERNEST CALLENBACH AND ROBERTA SCHULDENFREI

The Presence of Jean Renoir

For much of the past year the portly, Gallic, sometimes uncannily Khrushchev-like figure of Jean Renoir has been a familiar one in the San Francisco Bay Area. Renoir came to the Berkeley campus of the University of California for a semester as a Regents Professor, but he has returned on other occasions, too. Film people in the Bay Area have come to feel toward him some of the filial attitude of writers in *Cahiers du Cinéma*. At 66, Jean Renoir remains an inspirational force and a great man. He is overwhelmingly energetic, with an endlessly intelligent volubility. Even more astounding is his personal warmth, his enthusiasm for life.

In his public speeches and in his informal conversations, with students or with others, Renoir has hit steadily at a main theme directly related to his own way of living and working. He stresses the need for personal communication, for the "author" of a film (or of a story—he proclaims himself a storyteller not committed solely to one medium, and has recently done a play, a TV film, and a book) to reveal *himself*. It is this, not the creation of ever-living masterpieces, he continually reminds us, that must be the objective of the film artist. And Renoir insists on the role of the conscious, prickly artist in an industry most of whose directors are resigned to being "foremen on the set."

He serves, thus, as a focus for an attitude toward film as an art: a role of immense importance in a medium whose apprenticeships are too often warped by commercialism or dilettantism. It would make a formidable difference in the atmosphere of the industry if there were a couple of other directors who were capable of exercising this kind of influence: if, say, Zinnemann and Huston could find the time to speak seriously of their art to young people concerned with it. (And perhaps, as Renoir feels he does, they might learn something from the exchange.)

Renoir's main project while on the Berkeley campus was production of his play, *Carola*. In the rehearsals for *Carola*'s world première, we came to understand something of the Renoir method. A key to it lies in a gesture: he often rubs his thumb against his other fingers, as if trying to feel the real substance of what he is saying, thinking, or seeing. With it goes the word "perhaps." It is as though he were thinking aloud. Nothing is absolute or absolutely settled; everything is "perhaps." Yet in his work with actors there is a firmness not necessarily predictable from his interviews and talks.

Carola was produced under severe limitations. The actors, all students, were younger than the characters; the stage facilities were scant. Nonetheless, the play took shape. As students read for the casting, Renoir rubbing his thumb against fingers would say, "Perhaps he could be Henri, or perhaps Josette would be good for her." Then sometimes to the eager student for whom he saw no part, "Perhaps you could help with sets."

The nightly rehearsals were one great "perhaps": this is how a work grows, in Renoir's hands, by a kind of experimental method. First he tried one thing with his actor, then perhaps another, and another; and when the feel was right, when the actor and Renoir had found the right way, he would change from his crouched-over position to one of a satisfied director, leaning back in his chair.

Also, during rehearsals the script itself (adapted into English by Renoir with Angela and Robert Goldsby) changed considerably through rewriting arising both from Renoir and the actors. Sets, make-up, and the like were all done by students. Renoir criticizes and suggests alterations, in this area as in that of interpretation, only after something has been tried: there must be a start, a germ which can be helped to


DAILY
PROGRAM

grow. The costume that looked inappropriate on the hanger was first tried on the stage before any change was attempted. Such a method gives rein to inspiration and instinct, rather than relying on logic: its compound of openness to change and professional experience characterizes Renoir's directorial method.

And this is the method that resulted in *La Grande Illusion* and *La Règle du Jeu*. *Carola* is a strange play, which many have found not really satisfactory. And there are some of us who do not like *Elena and the Men*, or *French Can-Can*; some, indeed, do not find the loveliness of *The Golden Coach* to their taste, or wish *The River* were more genuinely profound. We must, obviously, speak our minds on these recent works. Yet we are grateful to Renoir for continuing to make films at a time when he could with good grace simply retire from the follies of the film world to his olive trees and grandchildren. In all his films, Renoir himself *does* come through, as he wishes. In the crowded forest of film production his particular trees have a personal verve and grace and humanity of which we have far too little.

For them, and for his uncontested masterpieces, we are in his debt, as those who love the film will always be.

Renoir's views on film-making have in recent years been set forth fairly often in the press and through interviews, most recently and accessibly in an interview with Gideon Bachmann published in *Contact* magazine (Sausalito, Calif., $1.45), No. 4. *Cahiers du Cinéma* (146, Champs-Elysées, Paris 8e, 3.5 NF) devoted its entire issue of Christmas 1957 (No. 78) to Renoir; it includes a talk by Renoir, "Ce Bougre de Monde Nouveau," an interview by J. Rivette and François Truffaut, excerpts from *Carola*, and a biofilmography by André Bazin. Instead of duplicating such admirable materials, therefore, we present, as our homage to Jean Renoir, an analysis of *La Grande Illusion*. This film was voted fifth among the great films of all time at the Brussels Exposition. Its reputation is immense and genuinely world-wide. (Moreover, it was a great popular success, unlike *La Règle du Jeu*, and a revival of it in a definitive version specially prepared by Renoir was a smash hit in Paris several years back.) Yet, like many great films, it has received too little serious analysis and too much superficial praise. The following reappraisal, then, aims to show some of the reasons why *La Grande Illusion* is a lasting work of art.

JAMES KERANS

Classics Revisited: "La Grande Illusion"

Above all, in *La Grande Illusion*, we find lucidity and innocence. We find these qualities everywhere in Renoir, but never under such stress, for here they are not only signs of a style, but maneuvers in a gathering war. Are they the right maneuvers? We are bound to ask the question, regardless of our aesthetics, because we are being asked to agree and to act, as well as to admire: "Because I am a pacifist," Renoir wrote in a postscript to the film in 1938, "I made *La Grande Illusion*." I see no reason to disarm the film of this central motive, or to turn its dramatic energies out to graze in the pastures of "film art." It is a persuasion: it tries to turn us away from Z and toward A, and from this turning proceed the real excitement, tact, and beauty it offers.

Certain difficulties always latent in pacifist persuasion appear in acute form in *La Grande Illusion*. There can be none of the familiar

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Certain difficulties always latent in pacifist persuasion appear in acute form in *La Grande Illusion*. There can be none of the familiar

coercions based upon organized honor or dogma —these are irrecoverably the property of the militant man. Appeals to the impulse toward "betterment" in any form, economic or moral, eventually work around to systems of striving, of competition, of sacrifice, which betray the disguised logic of disregard for personal peace. Worst of all (and most common) are films in the "but-can't-you-see-how-horrible-it-all-is?" tradition—sexual fantasies masquerading as anti-war films, which combine panoramic violence with twitching close-ups, shuddering landscapes with blasted meat, all done in an atmosphere of "grimly exposing the empty heroics of war." (It would be comforting to suppose that half a century of education to the psychological facts of life would have rid our more thoughtful film audiences of the rudimentary gullibility involved here. But consider *Paths of Glory*. This tidy bit of rough-toughery might sound "realistic" in a high-school valedictorian, but who would have mistaken it for a protest against war if he had not heard it approved as such by "enlightened" audiences?) I suppose one of the reasons *La Grande Illusion* is not always consciously and immediately recognizable as a pacifist film is that it avoids all this noise and as a result actually *works* as one. It does not "fight the war for peace" with any of the overt strategies that provoke opposition, or even excited agreement: the customary response to the film is a kind of inarticulate acceptance, a profound, disarmed approval. I feel this, too, and think it exactly the right response.

One view of the film finds it a demonstration of the essential sympathy which binds men and which is perverted by the unnatural conditions of war into complementary killing and sacrifice. The affection and respect between de Boeldieu and von Rauffenstein cannot prevent one's killing the other, once they are factors in the war equation. Captor and captive are alike unwilling, war finds its metaphor in a crumbling fortress in which the elite of a culture die or kill by rules which misuse their capacities for loyalty and love. The solution is escape—literally from the fortress, metaphorically from the military compulsion and constrictions (on German and French alike) for which the fortress stands. This view is capable of considerable refinement, and on its terms the film is a masterpiece.

I find this reading insufficient in that it does not follow the film carefully enough to distinguish one kind of fraternity from another, one kind of escape or eloquence from another. It is all too easy to enter upon the exquisite pain and traditional nobility which dictate our response to the Boeldieu–Rauffenstein drama. Few films, if any, can execute as beautifully as this one does the ready oratory of heroic resignation. The death scene—with its snow and ticking watches and cut flower (to say nothing of von Stroheim and Fresnay)—is moving, but the skills and apparatus it uses are the stock in trade of the apologist for heroes in their essential guise—dying the beautiful death. Renoir takes this scene in stride; but he goes on to prove he is even a greater master than he is usually thought by transcending this material and leading us to another value: a life almost without name, of bread, wife, child, work, and survival. How can such material compete with the exaltations of ritual sacrifice? Any praise falsifies it, any intensification or highlighting spoils it, even abbreviation misrepresents it. One thinks of the gorgeous, hectic celebrations of "natural life" in Dylan Thomas. This is all very well, but suppose you don't want to celebrate, or appropriate the rhetoric of religious fire to speak for daily bread? Suppose you don't want people to *thrill* to daily bread, but to eat it? Thrill leads only to thrill, and nothing better shows the seriousness and integrity of Renoir's film than the risk it takes in refusing to "combat" the glorifications of heroic suicide with irrelevant seductions to pacifist survival. The farm, as we shall see later, is clearly the alternate to the fortress, and it is dangerously near to exaltation in the near-miraculous ease with which it offers plain food and love, but it is a metaphor, as is the fortress, and only the sentimental would feel that Renoir is promising it to Maréchal. We see it plainly and at its best—but so do we see Rauffenstein; and the lucidity and innocence of which I spoke earlier, once they have faced both "sides," speak

irresistibly for their equivalent in life: the farm. This is a major triumph in the film—the political victory of a style which features candor, balance, antithrill. (Revisiting the film in the context of present-day Bergmanism, with its mystifications and general goosing of all possible effects, one is struck by the wonderful clarity and dignity of Renoir's masterpiece.

The essential action of *La Grande Illusion*, that which organizes nearly all its material, is a dialectic, as we would expect in a persuasive strategy. The tendencies involved are hard to name, because they attach to a tremendous amount of detail, from rudimentary psychological gesture to the complexities of national honor. One tendency I call ceremony; the other, instinct. Under ceremony I range the impulse toward rules and order, reserve, sacrifice, honor, suicide, brotherhood by exclusion; under instinct: relaxation, conviviality, drift, disorganized emotion, survival, brotherhood by inclusion. Presumably, any person includes both tendencies, and a possible problem-play approach to the material would be to have a hero confronted with a series of choices which lead him one way or the other. The trouble with this approach is that it forces upon the deciding character a form of consciousness and clarity, of reflection, which both simplifies his character and eliminates alternatives to his choices. Renoir's solution is the "double"—a dialectical resource most familiar to us from the nineteenth-century novel (*La Grande Illusion* is very like *War and Peace* in many respects). From the moment they set out together on the aerial mission which opens the film, Maréchal and de Boeldieu are linked by common circumstances, and from this community proceeds the dialectic which says that they move toward opposite poles. They are further linked by the ironies involved in their "escapes," each of which is dependent upon the other. The irony of de Boeldieu's escape through honorable death is obvious; as for Maréchal—can one really escape at the expense of accepting (to say nothing of forgetting) another man's life? Escape to what?

Because the film is an address to the people of Germany and France, we must finally examine its cultural attitude, but a more modest beginning would be to examine how the differentiations between Maréchal and de Boeldieu introduce the larger appeals. At their meeting, in the first episode, the lines are drawn. Everything about Maréchal is negligent, easy—his uniform, the nostalgia with which he listens to an old record, his anticipation of a night with one "Jenny," whom he dismisses from the film with an offhand "She'll wait for me." The mission comes to him as a slightly bothersome reminder of the present. De Boeldieu, on the other hand, is meticulous and intent. We first see him studying an aerial photograph through his monocle, very much the staff officer, stopping tactfully short of urgency or officiousness, tying up a loose end at the front. A marvelous little stroke in the dialogue gives away the connection between his own psychology and the system of military responsibilities he represents. He holds out the photograph and accounts for the mission: "It's this little gray smudge that disturbs me." No one can say just what the smudge is, so a plane is called out, and the consequences of Boeldieu's curiosity begin to tick.

This is military scrupulousness, of course, but the reader must pardon me if I refuse to ignore the overtones of neurosis in the fussiness. Throughout the film white-glove militarism is given plenty of literal play and symbolic weight. At one point Rauffenstein wonders ruefully whether the two pairs remaining to him will last out the war; in their last conversation Maréchal and Boeldieu are talking about the fundamental differences between them, and the background business to the scene is Boeldieu's washing a pair of white gloves so that his large gesture shall be in high parade style; and the hand with which Rauffenstein shoots Boeldieu and closes so tenderly his dead eyes also wears a white glove. In the film these details do not seem like trifles embarrassingly inflated into opportunistic symbols; rather they are, as in music, passages through the major key in the midst of a series of modulations. In themselves and in their variants they speak everywhere for the ritualized distrust of and withdrawal from whatever puts a smudge on the immaculate

LA GRANDE ILLUSION: *Arrival at the first prison camp.*

glove, photograph, or honor of the career officer. They have the look of manliness and the reality of suicidal courage; nowhere does Renoir disgrace them, as Zola would have done, with blunt, impatient "disclosures" of their dark side; and the watcher with a taste for soap-opera (or Hemingway) sentiment will see only beautiful reserve in the last words of Boeldieu and Rauffenstein. But through these words we can also see the dead end of a way of life which gives men nothing more to say to each other than small talk about marksmanship and agreement that death is "a good solution." To those who are outraged by my discounting of the eloquence of the deathbed scene I can only say that I, too, have tried to find in it an argument against war based on the sense of waste we feel when we see the flower of a nation's honor inextricably trapped into killing each other. However, I prefer to agree with Boeldieu, rather than cry for him: the "good solution" he reaches he has prepared, like the mathematician of behavior he is, with all but conscious accuracy. To cancel his death is to cancel the other side of his equation—his life; and the impulse to do this comes from what he calls the "shop-girl soul."

If we have come a long way from the smudged reconnaissance photo, it is by a logic which finds in honor a ritual suicide only slightly more disguised than Russian roulette, and in this "dignified" suicide a disguise for the perfectionist's fastidious rejection of life along with other messes. The logic, retraced, brings us to the end of the first episode and de Boeldieu's amusing, suavely sarcastic indifference to which sort of flying clothes he will wear: the goatskin suits smell bad, while the fur suits shed hairs on his uniform.

The polarity of Maréchal and Boeldieu might have become clumsy and loud if its extremes had not been assigned to characters more remote from each other. The next two episodes introduce these surrogate figures in a beautifully subdued and suggestive sequence. First, Boeldieu's surrogate, von Rauffenstein. Immediately after we leave Boeldieu about to dress for flight, we meet Rauffenstein just taking off his flying clothes in *his* canteen—practically a replica of the French canteen—after the flight during which he shot down Boeldieu and Maréchal. The ease of this transition from freedom to captivity is one of the brilliant strokes of the film. It lets us know directly that we are not to be bothered by a rehash of patriotic hostilities and heroics, that except for the one great circumstance which makes some men captors and others captives, life and motives are pretty much the same on either side of the line. The central event of the episode is the dinner—a model of Hohenzollern gallantry—to which Rauffenstein treats his enemy. It is a courtly, almost formal affair, despite the operation-shack surroundings, resolutely above any cheap triumph or rancor, and Maréchal, the "officer by accident," as the script describes him, seems almost imperceptibly out of place. Decidedly *in* place, however, and perhaps definitively so, is the unfortunate entry of a black wreath of mourning about to be delivered as a memorial to a fallen French pilot. The grace of Rauffenstein's apology for the incident, like the grace of his apology to Boeldieu later, cannot quite disguise the fact that the fraternity of honor includes among its other courtesies that of mutual extinction, and the party is spared the stress of proving its ability to respect this condition by the arrival of the civilian police, who lead the prisoners off.

Very different is the dinner to which Rosenthal—Maréchal's surrogate—treats them. Just as the expected hostility of the conqueror fails to materialize at the front, so at the prison camp the cliché brutalities and deprivations are replaced by conviviality and, thanks to Rosenthal, abundance. There is a slap-dash, gossipy familiarity immediately set up, from which de Boeldieu seems slightly distinct, as did Maréchal on the preceding occasion. The quiet, bracketed exchange at the front, in which Maréchal and Broller, one of the German officers, discover that they have a trade in common, here becomes the tone of the occasion, open, eager, relaxed. These men are a civilian army, apparently more concerned with comfort and rapport than with the practice of war. They do not brace themselves with any pretensions, their motives for escape are as vague as their motives for fighting, and as various, while those of the career officers are single and clear. Their war is not the daytime chivalry of the air, but surreptitious nightly burrowing in the earth; and their reward is not a funeral wreath, but, as the engineer among them puns, "*une salade de pissenlits.*"* They too have a "death's-head" at the banquet, but appropriately lacking in glamour—the dull, cuckolded, square teacher, the epitome of petit-bourgeois failure.

The polarity of Rauffenstein and Rosenthal is too obvious to call for much explication. Junker and Jew were as relevant in 1938 as they could ever be, and there is not time here to explore all the varieties which keep the polarity alive but not obtrusive. More interesting than their personal differences are the clusters of ideas which gather around them. Each is representative of a brotherhood, an international elite. Rauffenstein is the spokesman for the European corps of military aristocracy left over from the French Revolution, Rosenthal for the international fraternity (French jargon for Jewry) of the chosen people. The one is jealous, exclusive, moribund, and in the process of being dispossessed; the other aspires to belong anywhere and everywhere (Rosenthal was born in Vienna of a Danish mother and a French-naturalized Pole), is ingratiating, flourishing, and assuming the places—in one sense, at least—of the first.

Renoir redeems this banal motif by the quality of the association between Rosenthal and Maréchal. In the postscript to the film, to which I referred earlier, Renoir speaks of a ground of understanding (*un terrain d'entente*) to be discovered by men of good will, the true pacifists, whom he identifies as "authentic" Frenchmen, Americans, Germans, etc. This *terrain* appears in the film as Switzerland, the land whose frontiers are man-made, unnatural, as Rosenthal tells us at the end of the film—the refuge from enmities, the symbol of international sanctuary. Maréchal is an "authentic" Frenchman, and he does cross over into the land of understanding in a gesture of hope—not unmixed with irony, as we have seen, but still hope, and even encouragement. But what of Rosenthal? We have been carefully told that his Frenchness, like the food which reaches him in prison, is by special favor, whatever may be his legal status. And yet it is Rosenthal who has the map of how to get to Switzerland, the map for which Maréchal once thought him as mad as the translator of Pindar or the Senegalese with his drawing of Justice prosecuting Crime. The point would seem to be that it is the mark of the authentic Frenchman (or German, etc.) that he will put humanity—not some "other" nation, but humanity as detached as possible from specific national loyalties—before Frenchness, and that when Maréchal identifies himself with Rosenthal he finds "Switzerland." (Boeldieu's part in the escape I shall take up later.)

The faint resonance of "salvation" here is supported by Rosenthal's joking reference to Jesus as "my racial brother" during the Christmas Eve party at the farm, and by the obvious value of some form of Christian reference in a pacifist appeal. Here, as always, Rosenthal and Rauffenstein are arranged as opposites. To

* A crucial pun. *Pissenlits* are a kind of poor man's radish; but also, "*manger des pissenlits*" (to eat pissabeds) is slang for "to die," about equivalent to our "pushing up daisies."

Rauffenstein belong all the vestiges of Christian faith. His bedroom at the fortress is the ruined chapel, and we are introduced to it and to him in his new capacity as jailer by a pan which begins at a crucifix in stained glass. The death of Boeldieu, in that same chapel, is introduced by the priest closing the case over his missal, after administering extreme unction. To the despised Rosenthal, on the other hand, occurs the idea of celebrating—not a death, but the Nativity, and of carving the Holy Family out of food—potatoes!

A vague cultural corollary to the religious placement of the two men appears in the properties we find in their cinematic portraits. Rosenthal is typically filmed against a background of Botticelli reproductions and musical instruments, though he never *talks* about any interest in these arts. The typical background for Rauffenstein includes the photographic portrait of the Kaiser and Empress (these are generally relevant to the German side of the film, of course—one thinks of the huge photos at the German drinking hall in the first prison, and of Elsa's family portrait at the farm), and the mélange of weapons, toilet articles, and souvenirs of the chic bachelor.

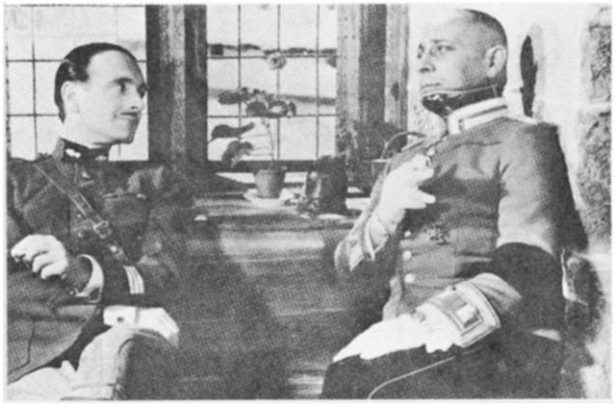
As we move farther away from both the Maréchal–Boeldieu axis and its complement, we meet more abstract versions of the split. Language, for example, is a key tool for discriminating between "sides." Again and again we find the language barrier is only superficially a barrier. We see a Russian trying in vain to teach Russian to a Frenchman; Maréchal tries unsuccessfully to tell an English officer just arriving about the nearly-completed escape tunnel at the prison camp he is leaving; he goes nearly frantic with frustration at not hearing French while he is in solitary confinement; he can hardly say a word to Elsa. But the "entente" in most such cases is there, even if the vocabulary is not—an entente depending finally on national authenticity rather than language. The facility in language of Rauffenstein and Boeldieu tends critically to emphasize their privacy—thus, the exchange leading up to the shooting of Boeldieu is in English, which puts it beyond the listening soldiers, in a world of cosmopolitan isolation. And there is a touch of almost real regret in Rauffenstein's voice when he deplores the coming translation of "poor old Pindar."

If we accept the polarity of ceremony and instinct as the scene, so to speak, of the action, we can see how much of the film is devoted to establishing the scene and the place of the various figures within it. But we have not said much about the action itself. In its simplest form, *La Grande Illusion* is the story of an escape from prison. With certain scenic and narrative embellishments the prison develops metaphorical qualities. The prisoners go farther and farther into a world of rock and snow and heights and age, where nothing can grow except one carefully tended flower. The sculpture, the commandant, the guards—everything is old, useless for anything except to constrict. In this sense the fortress—its name is Wintersborn—is really a state of mind as well as a prison. To escape from it, if you really have been in it, in the psychological sense, you must leave behind that part of you which is identified with it, and in doing so you sacrifice part of yourself. It is in this way, I think, that we are to understand the "sacrifice" of Boeldieu. To think of Boeldieu as a man who sacrifices himself "for" Maréchal and Rosenthal is to misunderstand and perhaps to belittle him. We must remember that when the time was approaching for the first escape, and Maréchal was in solitary confinement, Boeldieu showed no compunction at leaving Maréchal behind. Only Rosenthal felt that. And when Maréchal tried to express some thanks for what de Boeldieu was about to do at Wintersborn, de Boeldieu cut him off—partly, no doubt, because there is something distasteful in any such attempt, but partly, also, because Boeldieu was in fact not doing it for Maréchal and Rosenthal at all, but doing it in line with his attitude earlier: "What is a golf course for? To play golf. What is a tennis court for? To play tennis. What is a prison for? To escape from." This is not precisely a man executing an assignment; rather, a man putting his life into practice. Fundamentally there is nothing accidental in his death, any more than there is any

real military exigency behind Rauffenstein's plea—"[Stop or] I'll have to shoot you." The death of one and dereliction of the other are built into their morale, and the fortress prison is the scenic metaphor of their destiny. Boeldieu is sacrificed, but not so much by himself as by the moral imagination that created him.

The escape is a confusion of trials, sufferings, anger, insults, and affection for Maréchal and Rosenthal, whose uninhibited releasings of emotion vividly contrast with the polite, unchanging (and fatal) relations of their opposites. The German farm to which they finally win is the metaphorical opposite to Wintersborn. It, also, is on a mountain-top, with the same horizon, but here Renoir writes freedom upon everything, with a stream of lovely frames in which open windows and doors spilling sunlight and the sense of distance combine with food and love unhesitatingly offered to make a kind of dream of gratification. It is only when the time has come to leave for the Swiss border that we realize with Maréchal the profundity and impossibility of the peace he has been offered, and, beyond him, its place in the dialectical action of the film. In this anonymous, irretrievable life we are given the terms of the pacifist's peace, not that we may have them, but that we may know them. The scene onto which the "authentic" man or pacifist steps is defined by conflict. There is no farm, nor its national equivalent—"Switzerland"—to which he may here and now "cross over"; the war stretches before and after the action of the film. But to think of the action as an ironic dialectic is to settle for a futile tease under the name of tragedy, or at best a vague rousing of ourselves to prevent such a waste. The film is quieter, more explicit than that.

LA GRANDE ILLUSION: *Wintersborn—stone walls, white gloves, and the geranium, possibly the most famous flower in screen history.*



One of the many motifs we must leave unexamined is that of theatricality. Customary as the motif is in Renoir, it is especially suggestive here. The insistence war brings upon fixed functions or ranks or sides or roles prompts a counterplay of confusion or switch, and both vocabulary and device in the film deal constantly with these possibilities, in an attempt to sort out, after various stages of confusion and resettlement, at least *some* realities. As we might expect, the devices bear most upon Maréchal and de Boeldieu and upon the escape. We learn that in their various attempts to escape, Maréchal always disguises himself, whereas de Boeldieu, while he will bear the "smudges" of garbage cans, laundry baskets, and the like, and the more abstract humiliation of "making oneself small," as he says, will never disguise himself. (Nor does he take a part in the musicale.) But he refers to the coming escape at Wintersborn as a performance for which a rehearsal has been provided, and he himself is the central performer—playing in a grotesquely un-Boeldieu-like way upon a fife (for which instrument he has a horror, as we learn earlier). If I understand the film properly, these inversions (they are virtually innumerable) are a context for the realities (ironic, it is true) of death and freedom which the two heroes achieve, but any kind of adequate explication must be deferred.

So much praise has fallen to the artistry of this film that I hesitate to add more. Symbolic of its fidelity to observable life is the uniform Gabin wears as Maréchal—Renoir himself once wore it as a pilot in World War I. But everywhere the authentic background detail (to which Renoir paid very close attention) converts to meaningful participation. One thinks of the ubiquitous "no passage" signs; the con-

trast of the random, casual prisoner formations and the strict marching of German soldiers in the background; the poster of prison regulations which stands between Maréchal and de Boeldieu during their last good-bye. But more important than the profusion of this detail is its freedom from seeming "made" or set up: the film is a model of relaxed, harmonious style.

When a cast has fulfilled, as this one has, everything its director could ask, one can only praise or compare performances in terms not strictly just to the actors. Thus, the rightness of Gabin's performance does not quite overcome my sense that he is, by comparison with von Stroheim, a bit dull. Once, on the way from the cow shed to the farmhouse, he takes up a hatchet and sinks it cleanly farther into its stump. This little bonus of vitality is worth the rest of his "art" combined—it *is*, in fact, his art: an aura of good-natured, robust nonchalance, capable of real but limited sensitivity. And Fresnay, perfect as he may be, chooses or executes a perfection which cuts him off from too much. It is really von Stroheim, converting the Prussian mask into a register of extraordinary range, from crude disdain to the most delicate anguish, whose performance shows the greatest depth and control.

Renoir's gift for compositional beauty, usually absorbed in revealing the players at their best, adds real meaning to the film. The framing device of doors and windows so familiar in all his work has special significance in a context of escape and illusion. Trying, as he is, to state a truth about human possibility in terms which would be betrayed by dramatic intensity, he finds in the camera's steady revelations a wonderful resource. Perhaps the finest example is the series of compositions at the farm. After the claustrophobic density of the Wintersborn walls, and the perilous implications of its windows; after the bleak, shapeless exposures of the flight through the mountains, the shelter and freedom of the domestic life, multiplied with one invention after another of door and window composition, is transposed almost into that other dimension "where ask is have, where seek is find, where knock is open wide."

Erich von Stroheim

PETER BOGDANOVICH

An Interview with Sidney Lumet

Lumet was a child actor on Broadway, appearing in such plays as MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS, DEAD END, *and* THE ETERNAL ROAD. *After the Army, he did some off-Broadway directing, then in 1950 moved to television, where he has directed hundreds of shows, including such two-part "spectaculars" as* ALL THE KING'S MEN *and* THE SACCO-VANZETTI CASE. *On the New York stage he has directed Shaw's* THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA, *Arch Oboler's* NIGHT OF THE AUK, *and Camus'* CALIGULA. *His four films, which have all been made on the East Coast, are* TWELVE ANGRY MEN *(1957),* STAGE STRUCK *(1958),* THAT KIND OF WOMAN *(1959), and* THE FUGITIVE KIND *(1960). Lumet is one of a group of young directors trained in television and stage work (Mann and Ritt are two others) who have been looked upon as likely to bring a new directness and sophistication to film. While the contributions of these men have not measured up to early expectations, their attitude toward film remains an interesting one. The following interview has been somewhat abridged for publication.*

Could you say something about the problems of making FUGITIVE KIND?

They were always the original ones that came up in rehearsal or in the initial discussion of the script which we were all aware of—Tennessee [Williams], Anna [Magnani], myself, Marlon [Brando]—which was that the boy's character disappeared over the last half of the picture. This was true of the play [*Orpheus Descending*] as well. And constantly the problem was how to activate him, how to make him a driving force in the picture, because it is *Orpheus* descending, and it's very hard to do *Orpheus Descending* without Orpheus.

Wasn't there anything Williams could do about that?

He wanted to. His problem was that he started off wanting a play about Orpheus, and dramatically it's always a fuller thing for him to write a woman protagonist—his great parts have been women's parts. Whatever solutions I'd come up with would not work for Tennessee, and you can't force a situation, you know, it has to fit organically into what he had in mind and into what flows easily for him to write. And that we never found, and to me it's the failing of the picture. I love the picture, I think it's got some remarkable things in it and some of his most beautiful writing. And thematically it's, to me, the finest of his pieces—thematically. I'm not talking about the dramatic completion of it.

Do you rehearse extensively before you start shooting?

Yes, I like to rehearse a minimum of two weeks before I shoot. Now that was another problem—Anna has never rehearsed, she's never

Photographer Boris Kaufman (with cigar) and director Sidney Lumet shooting with Marlon Brando in THE FUGITIVE KIND.

done a play. I like to stage it before I start shooting, and it was physically impossible for her to work with a table that was supposed to be a counter, with two chairs supposed to be a door—she literally could not visualize a set. The sheer theatrical process is an alien one to her, so as a result some of the subsequent problems that came up normally would have come up in rehearsal.

You have directed extensively on television; what are the biggest differences you found between directing for films and television?

Scale. It's the difference between working on a 21-inch canvas and a 75-foot canvas, and that's a tremendous difference. That doesn't mean that there aren't things that can work in both—there's a certain level of drama that works in everything—but directorially it's a shift in the eye; it's a shift in the instruments, the tools that you use to focus dramatic attention and so on. And it's also a difference internally—for instance, I've seen some Shakespeare on TV and it's been disastrous. I wonder if the sheer physical size of the screen isn't something that automatically rules out tragedy, for example. In other words, maybe TV is irrevocably stuck with drama, melodrama—one may never be able to do genuine tragedy on TV.

Then you must be against the showing of movies on television.

Yeah, it's incredible. It's one of the reasons I don't think pay-TV is going to be the panacea that the Hollywood people think it's going to be. Take a picture like *Red River*—now, I

know, nonsense story-line—it's a superb film. Cinematically it's an extraordinary piece of work. And what [Howard] Hawks did in terms of the reality of a cattle drive, it's, to me, on the level with what [John] Ford did with *Stagecoach*. But you see it on television and it's just shots of cows going by—it's pointless, it's meaningless, it seems as if it's overlong, its majesty is lost.

Now what are the differences you found in directing for the stage and movies?

To begin with, they're even farther apart than television and motion pictures. To me, far more things can be interchanged between television and motion pictures than between theater and motion pictures. The theater, for all its attempts at realism for the past thirty years, is a totally unreal medium—its essence is really poetic rather than literal. The screen *can* become poetic but, God knows, the majority of the good work has been devoted to literal and realistic, representational art. So it's an enormous difference—the difference between poetry and prose.

What have you found to be your main obstacle in film work?

For myself the main obstacle is the set-up, the film in America. The financial set-up, the method of making motion pictures, and the method of distribution is one that *conspires* to defeat freedom and good work. And I suppose it's the age-old complaint, there's no solution that I know of. I know every once in a while somebody just takes a camera and goes off into the street, but what if you had a piece that doesn't belong in the street? What if your piece needs a sumptuousness and a sensuousness as part of its dramatic meaning? And, you know, documentaries and semi-documentaries are not the only method of work in film. And as soon as you get past that level, financially you're caught in a miserable situation. *Twelve Angry Men* cost $343,000, which is ridiculously cheap, but that's a rarity; it had one set, twelve actors, and a very tight shooting schedule of twenty days.

Many fine directors—Huston, Wilder, Bergman, Welles, Kubrick—either write their own screenplays or collaborate extensively with others on scripts. To date you haven't done either; do you think you'd find it more satisfying to work on scripts rather than just do the best you can with material you are given?

It's not "either/or." I *can't* write. And I have such respect for writers—I don't understand how two writers collaborate, for instance—so that the method for myself is one simply of letting them do their work, then going *back* into work in terms of whatever specifics are needed, whether it's structural or dialogue. On *Fugitive Kind*, for instance, there was a good deal of re-writing between the original draft and what wound up on the screen.

Did you have a say in that?

Oh, yeah. And the working procedure was that Tennessee and Meade [Roberts] brought in the first draft, then all of us together talk, talk, talk, talk, talk—back, another draft, talk, talk, talk, talk—back, another draft—I think it was the fourth draft we used.

Boris Kaufman was your photographer on every film except STAGE STRUCK; *how large do you feel is his contribution when an evaluation of the final work is made?*

Well, Boris is a rarity, because there are loads of brilliant technical people—and he *is* brilliant technically—but his real artistry comes through in the fact that I don't know of another cameraman who has the sense of dramatic interpretation that Boris has. When Boris and I have worked together there's never been any instance where we haven't done something outrageously new—though they don't jump out at you in the films, thank God. The camera becomes *another* leading actor. There are two basic philosophies —and traps—that I think directors fall into: one of well-just-let-me-lay-back-and-just-show-what's-going-on, just-let-me-*record*-it, or the converse, the shooting-through-the-crotch, and gimme-that-eyeball-being-in-the-front school. They are both fallacious because the camera—like everything else in a piece—has to relate to what's going on dramatically. You have to cast your camera the way you cast an actor.

Many critics either eulogize the death of Hollywood or constantly refer to the great

From the opening sequence of THE FUGITIVE KIND.

dearth of talent out there. What do you think are the reasons for the cultural desert on the West Coast?

This is gonna sound spooky—I think it goes back much farther than Hollywood. That place has no reason for being. It seems to me—as far as I know—I'm not the most erudite person in the world—but all the great centers of art have been centers of *other* things. They've either been a geographical center of the country or they've been a seaport—whether it's been Venice, Florence, Rome, London, Paris, New York, Berlin—they've had other functions; the life of the place has been connected to the main stream of life of that nation, of those people, and art came as a flower of that. Now, Los Angeles [laugh], I'm sorry, it's not a seaport, it's lousy land for farming, it's got no reason for being. Right now it's got aircraft factories, and maybe in 500 years aircraft factories'll be a reason for having a city. But up till now there hasn't been. It seems to me that it's extremely difficult for any creative work to latch itself on to an unorganic place. I think it's interesting that San Francisco's always had the artistic excitement—certainly in terms of literature and painting—Los Angeles never.

They're isolated in Hollywood, in other words.

Yeah, I feel that in order to get some sunlight they went to a completely dead spot. And it's interesting because all the directors that I respect have gotten away from there as fast as they could. Zinnemann hasn't made a picture in Hollywood I don't think in five years, Gadge [Elia Kazan] hasn't made a picture in Hollywood in seven years. [George] Stevens has, and I think it's showing in the work.

How would you explain then the great films that have been made in Hollywood, say in the 'twenties and 'thirties?

When you hire the most talented people alive—literally—assembled from all over the world, to work there, of course you're gonna have some good ones. And also good work is possible *any* place. I don't mean that Hollywood kills work, I just think it makes it tougher to do good work.

Now that the autocracy of the major studios is over, do you think the independents have raised the level of films in America?

No, because basically they're the same guys who just didn't have a chance when the studios were tight and strong. With all due respect and affection for United Artists, they're not risking a bloody thing; you still come into UA with a star versus a budget. And it is basically the same procedure at Metro. [Sam] Spiegel, every once in a while—because he'll produce a winner like *River Kwai*—is allowed to try something offbeat. But he knows full well that he has to keep returning financial winners. I know I'm very pressured by this. I hope *Fugitive Kind* makes a lot of money because none of my pictures have made a lot of money and I *need* one. I know my employment will be directly affected by it. So it isn't really independent production—nobody gets together and says, "Hey, lets make a movie about . . ." What's basically happened, I feel, is that because of financial reasons the actors have begun to dominate the market completely, and that's a good move only because as long as it's a roulette game I'd just as soon see the people who are actually spinning the wheel get the largest share of the

dough. I don't think it's accomplished anything creatively. I think most of the actors who kept saying, "Oh, God, if I ever have my own independent company, boy, will I do good stuff . . ." have turned out the same crap that Louis B. Mayer used to do—only not as well.

Do you think there is a cinematic movement in America coming to compete with the French "New Wave"?

No, I don't. I hate to be pessimistic, I don't at all. Reggie Rose and I've been trying for a year and a half to get done a piece that he wrote, a brilliant piece called *Black Monday*, which is the story of a Southern town on the first day of integration of schools. And we're just not gonna get it done, it's that simple. Out of the very nature of the subject matter, it's gotta be big. The financial problem is getting extremely severe now in terms of getting money to do a picture. I think, by the way, that in five years it's going to be absolutely marvelous, because we're going to have financing the way plays are financed: a bunch of people get together, put up money, and you rise or fall with the quality of the piece.

What do you think are the advantages or disadvantages of wide screen, CinemaScope, stereophonic sound, and the like?

I think they're ridiculous, I think they're pointless, I think they're typical Hollywood products. And typical Hollywood mentality, because the essence of *any* dramatic piece is people, and it is symptomatic that Hollywood finds a way of photographing people directly opposite to the way people are built. CinemaScope makes no sense until people are fatter than they are taller.

Why then do serious directors like Kazan or Stevens choose to work in CinemaScope?

They don't choose, there's no choice. When Stevens does a picture for 20th Century-Fox he *has* to shoot in CinemaScope. On *Anne Frank*, he fought for six months trying not to shoot it in CinemaScope and then had to. Spent all his time with the art director trying to figure out beams and girders to cut down the sides of the screen, and how to isolate what he wanted.

What film-makers, if any, have most influenced your work in movies?

I don't think any. I have great respect for about, I guess, seven or eight directors—Jean Vigo, Carl Dreyer, René Clair, De Sica, Wyler, Zinnemann.

Having been an actor, what do you think a stage performer finds most difficult in adjusting to pictures?

Probably the toughest problem is for him to keep a knowledge of the point of development or the point of transition that his character is at because of the out-of-sequence problem and the working in small sections. So that the growth, the tiny motivating rivulets that go into the big stream of the entire character, tend to get lost and he tends to become general and act attitudes, because his concentration is scattered and he doesn't quite know where he's at. It's one of the reasons I like the rehearsal procedure so, because it gives him a very clear idea of the sweep of the man. On every picture except *Fugitive Kind* the last four days of rehearsal were run-throughs just like a play or a television show.

Do you think the recent loosening of the Production Code has really helped Hollywood films toward attaining greater maturity?

Oh, no, they're just exploiting it for box office. William Wyler's films have always been mature whether he could say "bastard" on the screen or not. You know, it's like CinemaScope. They're using it so that they can start putting on the screen some of the things they've got in the ads.

Almost every director is occasionally exposed to withering critiques of his work, and it would be interesting to know what a director would answer, what he thinks when he reads such a notice.

There's just nothing you can do because you're talking from such completely different frames of reference, you know, you just gotta let it go. And some of the greatest significances as well as some of the greatest attacks are attributed to complete accidents. On *All the King's Men* I read a review which loved the show and which called me a genius because in the first scene when Willie Stark was on his way

up, talking *to* the people, I'd shot reactions of the crowd in the stand, the wildness of the faces and so on—and then in the second part, which came on a week later, when he'd been in power for six years, he was making an outdoor address and I played it in the rain with umbrellas—visually it was quite exciting—and how wasn't this marvelous that on his way up he was related to the people and looking them in the eye, and here he was now like standing over their graves and they're covered with umbrellas. The reason for it was very simple—I used up all the money for extras on the first show and on the second show I needed a crowd of fifty and I could only afford twenty people so I gave them umbrellas which spread everybody out [laugh]. So, go figure.

Complete freedom granted, would you rather work in films, television, or the theater?

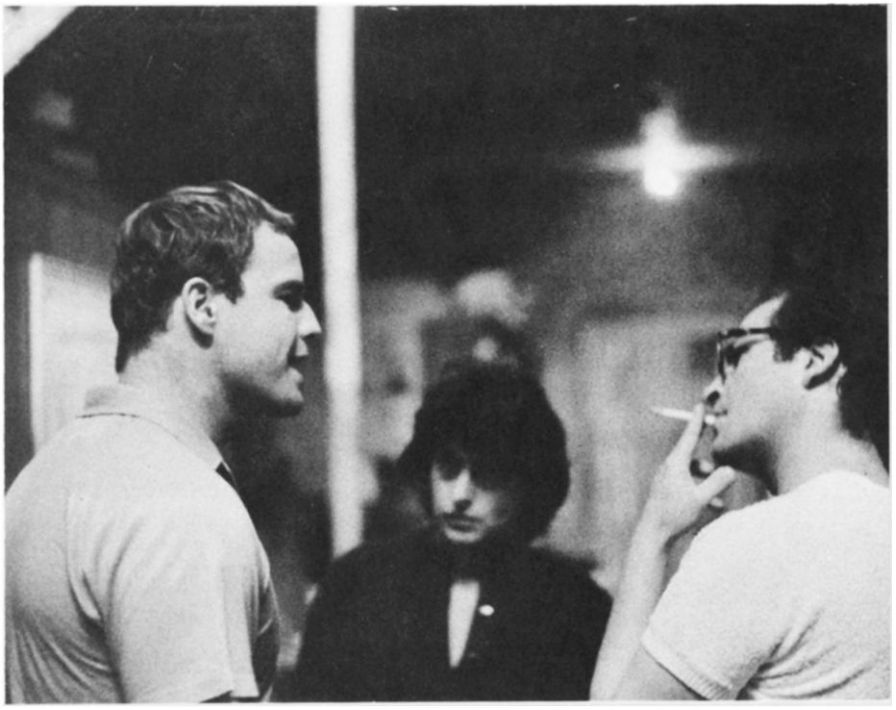
I never want to give up any one of them. I guess I'd spend the majority of time in the movies simply because it takes the longest. I mean, to me the ideal set-up would be a picture a year, a play a year, and about three months of television a year—because each one gives you such a shaking-up for the other, they all help one another *because* the problems are so totally different.

Joseph Mankiewicz has been quoted as saying that he fails to see any basic difference between the theater and the movies; what would you say to that?

Well, I don't agree. He should do a play again and see.

What do you think leads a director to say a thing like that?

I haven't the remotest idea. People say strange things in interviews, myself included. I'm always horrified by them when I read them back.



Marlon Brando, Anna Magnani (out of focus in center) and Sidney Lumet—during the shooting of THE FUGITIVE KIND. *[Photo: Sam Shaw]*

The Festival Scene, 1960

Although some of our readers will be familiar with the recent film festivals from accounts in other publications which appear more frequently, we present below reports on the festivals of Berlin, Karlovy-Vary (Czechoslovakia), Venice, and London, concentrating on critical accounts of the most interesting films from each but also giving a general sketch of the atmosphere for readers who may not have access to earlier coverage. (Similar treatment is given the San Francisco Festival: reviews of films shown at San Francisco may be found in the review section, and comment on the festival as a whole appears in the Editor's Notebook.)

CYNTHIA GRENIER

Berlin, Karlovy-Vary, Venice

Certainly 1960 has given film festival followers a rough year. Not that each festival did not turn up at least one or two remarkable films, but they left an impression of scatter, and one became acutely conscious that there are always too many inferior pictures included in the competitions—often for reasons far removed from their aesthetic worth. Cannes came off the best ultimately [see *Film Quarterly,* Summer 1960] with its length—three weeks—being its principal sin.

The tenth Berlin Filmfestspiel and the twelfth Karlovy-Vary Mezinarodni Filmovy Festival should be discussed together; both, although nominally cinema events, serve quite overtly as propaganda weapons in the ideological struggle between the Western and Communist worlds. Each festival is industriously used by its organizers and some of the major participants (the United States in the case of Berlin, and the USSR for Karlovy-Vary) to help influence people and make friends—usually of those from Africa and Asia. This results in the presence of a large number of exotically clad folk who are heavily publicized. Their films, however, automatically lower the artistic level of the festival. The first Thai or Mongolian feature film, for instance, has little more than a passing socio-ethnographic interest for the film critic. But each festival carries a large share of these usually sincere but inept efforts for the sake of public relations or propaganda.

Naturally enough the United States vigorously supported the Berlin Festival, particularly since the Motion Picture Export Association was irked over past treatment at Cannes and Venice and hoped to demonstrate its power in this area by making the German event outshine the other two simply on the basis of heavy American participation. Eric Johnston, Gene Kelly, Cary Grant, Jo Van Fleet, and Tina Louise were flown in for glamor. The U.S. Information Agency presented a series of old American film classics and a fancy exhibit on the history of animated cartoons at Amerika Haus. And, to be fair, it should be noted that the United States had a better than average national selection of films in the competition, consisting of Kramer's *Inherit the Wind,* Kazan's *Wild River,* and Disney's *Jungle Cats.*

Geneviève Cluny and Jean-Pierre Cassel in LES JEUX DE L'AMOUR, *"a pleasant piece of fluff" directed by Philippe de Broca.*

Golden Bear top prize went to Spain's *Lazarillo de Tormes* of Cesar Ardavin. There was much talk of hanky-panky between the jury and the Spaniards, the latter reportedly being desperately determined to cop a Grand Prize for their country at some film festival this year. A twenty-man delegation wined, dined, and hard-sold the jury throughout the festival.

The Spanish film is a faithful recounting of a famous sixteenth-century picaresque novel with good costumes and an excellent use of period architecture and landscapes. But the casting of a plump, nasty child actor in the lead ultimately spoiled the film.

Second prize Silver Bear went to the French New Wave comedy, *Les Jeux de l'Amour* (Games of Love), made by Chabrol's former assistant Philippe de Broca. A pleasant piece of fluff, it recounts the problems of a girl trying to get her lover to convert his status to that of husband, but it hardly seemed like festival, let alone prize material. The film does have one major asset in the presence of a highly inventive young comic actor, Jean-Pierre Cassel; at the rate he is filming these days, he should be an international star in about a year's time.

France went on to garner the prize for best direction with *A Bout de Souffle* (Breathless) by pale, dark-glassed 26-year-old Jean-Luc Godard, formerly of the *Cahiers du Cinéma* gang. Already tremendously successful in France, the film was thrown together with hand-held camera, improvised dialogue, sketchy script, and has a thoroughgoing home-movie look about it. Possibly its success is due to the novelty of people never having seen such a poorly made film on a public screen before.

French New Wave favorite Juliette Mayniel received a prize for her performance in a German film, *Kermes,* by Wolfgang Staudte. The remaining prize went to the United States for Fredric March's performance in *Inherit the Wind.*

The public received all these awards with polite applause, as it had all the films. The Berlin public was surprisingly polite and unresponsive throughout the whole festival, in fact.

The OCIC (Catholic Film Office) and the FIRPRESCI (International Film Critics) awarded their prizes, for the first time in their mutual history, to the same film, *The Angry Silence* from Great Britain. This brought on the first and only ovation, and a wild one by the standards of other festivals.

For critics and public alike had tagged this independent British production by Richard Attenborough, Bryan Forbes, and Guy Greene—respectively actor, scenario writer, and director—as the probable Golden Bear. The story of a worker "sent to Coventry"—given the silent treatment—for not joining in a wildcat strike was simply done, well shot, with brilliantly accurate, realistic dialogue.

Coming right on the heels of the Berlin Festival, Karlovy-Vary despite its location behind the Iron Curtain (a fact one is forcibly made conscious of by the three-hour wait at the border while the train is searched with a terrifying thoroughness) surprises by being a beautifully organized, admirably functioning affair. The town, about two hours from the West German border, is famous for its waters, and is small and pleasantly Edwardian in character. All the festival activity is centered in two large hotels on a small square split by a pretty, rippling river.

The general level of films shown was distressingly and consistently low with far fewer exceptions than Berlin, but there was an extraordinarily live atmosphere which gradually grew during the two weeks and more than

made up for the poor quality of the pictures. This atmosphere was largely created by the presence of a sizable number of young filmmakers from both East and West. The term "Nouvelle Vague" was rampant, even among people from the USSR and other countries of the Soviet bloc who had never seen a single New Wave film. (Those in the Soviet bloc who had seen some examples of the New Wave—*Les Cousins, Les 400 Coups, Les Amants*—were pretty disturbed by the lack of uplift and virtuous morality to which they are accustomed in their films. French leftist critic and historian, Georges Sadoul, tried to reassure them in the daily Open Forum discussions by saying that these young directors could be considered as serving a kind of apprenticeship now, and in time might come into the progressive camp. He observed that their pessimism was probably temporary and that progressive critics should help ease their passage into the progressive camp. Sadly, there was no one present from the New Wave to comment on this interesting suggestion!)

The Czech official entry, *Smyk*, by 27-year-old Zbynek Brynych, surprised almost everyone by being a radical departure from the traditional forms of "socialist realism." The story line was pretty tricky, not to say downright confusing, even to Czechs. A bitter young Czech goes West, gets a plastic surgery job, learns spying to the tune of the Colonel Bogey march, and returns to his native land as a complicated clown-spy in one of the fanciest circuses ever filmed. Visually it looked as if young Brynych had pulled out all the stops: wild camera angles, plunging shots, the works. Sometimes it seemed pretentious, but on the whole one was left with the definite impression that the man had talent. In any case, the whole freewheeling style was very unorthodox indeed considering where the director came from.

From Smyk, *by Zbynek Brynych.*

The picture brought on a discussion of what was socialist realism, and whether the time had come to alter the term or its definition since, clearly, a film like *Smyk* no longer fitted the classic definition. Everyone pushed at this with great interest and energy, but ultimately never came to making any concrete statement on it.

Apart from *Smyk* about the only other film of interest was the Soviet entry, *Seriozha*, by two young directors, which won the Great Crystal Globe—first prize. Thanks to a genuinely appealing youngster who was surprisingly inventive and subtle for a 6-year-old, the rather simple story of a little boy growing accustomed to his new stepfather came off pleasantly and painlessly.

Curiously, *Bridge Over the River Kwai* was shown three times during the festival and had a tremendous success. It was played in an open-air theater seating 3500. Two of the three nights it rained. The people just wrapped blankets around themselves, pulled sheets of plastic over the blankets and huddled under umbrellas. The surrounding hillside was filled with people, most of whom couldn't see the screen, and could only listen to American voices which they couldn't understand. Buses brought people from 800 miles away. A reaction like that to one of our films is impressive and a little frightening. It shows how terribly hungry people like the Czechs are to get a look at American films, which haven't been seen in Czechoslovakia for more than ten years.

The big fireworks of the festival for most people came when a young Polish scriptwriter, Alexander Rylski, adjusted his hornrims on his nose and stated calmly to some two hundred movie people and journalists in the morning Open Forum that he didn't know about them,

but he himself hadn't seen a good Soviet movie in years, and that Soviet concepts of human nature tended to be far too simple for his tastes. You could feel the shock waves going right through the audience.

Next morning the head of the Soviet delegation, white-haired long-time movie-maker Mikhail Romm, took the floor. Quivering with fury, he first described Rylski's film, *The Last Night,* shown the night before, as the banal, third-rate work of a hack. (Unfortunately the Pole's film seemed interesting but gave little in translation.) Romm seemed particularly wrought up because young Rylski hadn't been sorry Soviet films weren't good. "He didn't even express the wish they might improve!" he fumed.

This session led right into a Polish press conference held in a fuddily ornate bar. No one paid much attention to the sandwiches and slivovitz being passed around when Rylski got up to comment on Romm's attack. He straightened his yellow leather jacket, smiled: "I don't see why Mr. Romm wants to put this discussion on a political basis. For me, capitalism and socialism are not barriers separating art forms. A film is good or bad. Not socialist or capitalist. A bad socialist film is just as bad as a bad capitalist film." The Yugoslavs and a little group of American, French, Belgian, and Swiss journalists broke into enthusiastic applause. Everyone was talking at once.

This whiff of free speech seemed strangely intoxicating. Even those who clearly were the most orthodox were excited, and many of the Czechs started asking the Poles question after question: the role of the people toward art, existentialism and Marxism, foreign films in Poland, why did Polish films have so many unhappy endings? With poise, lucidity, and wit the Poles expressed their ideas and defended their positions. Covertly many an admiring glance was given them by the representatives of other Iron Curtain countries. We were actually witnessing the impact of free speech. Most of the people there responded to it like parched souls being offered water.

Afterwards—the conference ran on for nearly four hours with everyone completely forgetting to go to lunch—western journalists asked the Poles whether they mightn't risk getting in trouble, once back home, for their outspokenness. "Do you think we're Czechs, East Germans, or what-have-you?" they asked. "We're Poles. It's not the same in Poland. Nothing will happen to us, and we'll be allowed to go to other festivals. Don't worry about us." And one believed them.

The Venice Festival, which followed on the heels of Karlovy-Vary, wound up with one of the biggest, noisiest, and most heartfelt demonstrations ever witnessed at a film festival. The announcing of the Golden Lion first prize to France's André Cayette for *Le Passage du Rhin* touched off a stamping, hooting, whistling, screaming twenty-minute protest which completely drowned out the reading of the other awards. The elegantly clad Venetian audience chanted in loud rhythm "Vis-con-ti, Vis-con-ti," the name of the director they felt was being done wrong. The American, Polish, English, Argentinian, and Soviet members of the twelve-man jury in an unprecedented move publicly disassociated themselves from the decision of their confreres. Even more surprising, Soviet juryman Serge Bondarchouk, a talented actor and director himself, issued a statement to the press charging that the awarding of the prize to the French director was "an unimaginably unjust act." This seems to have been a real case of artistic integrity on his part, as it is inconceivable that *Rocco and His Brothers,* the Visconti film supported by Bondarchouk, could ever be shown or approved of in the USSR. As a final touch, director Visconti and his producer scornfully refused the special jury prize offered them in consolation.

Although the festival end was exceptionally stormy, the whole event seemed to be under something of an evil star from the start this year, being held in the shadow of the Olympic Games and being boycotted by most of the Italian movie industry. The boycott came from the fact that earlier this year long-time and popular festival director Floris Ammannati had been ungracefully kicked upstairs to head the

Charles Aznavour in LE PASSAGE DU RHIN.

Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome, and Emilio Lonero, a Christian Democrat and secretary of the Catholic Office, had been named his successor. This change in direction was reportedly instigated indirectly by the present pope, who had been made unhappy by such festival selections as France's prize-winning *The Lovers* shown when he was Cardinal of Venice a few years back.

Director Lonero, a neat, nervous little man, tried and ultimately failed to please or reconcile either his Christian Democrat supporters, his left-wing opponents, or the general public by selecting a curious mixture of vaguely mealy-mouthed uplift films together with a collection of works by noted Italian leftist directors. The majority of the festival films ran from simply unmemorable to downright mediocre.

The most interesting film of the festival was unquestionably Luchino Visconti's *Rocco and His Brothers,* promptly hailed by critics as one of the best films of one of the greatest living directors [for an account of Visconti and his work, see *Film Quarterly,* Spring 1960]. A magnificent grand opera of a film running three hours and twenty minutes, *Rocco* has plenty of faults, but despite them it is a superb example of Visconti's work.

On the night of its showing, one day before the closing of the festival, *Rocco* provoked something of a major outburst. The story, about five brothers and their mother who emigrate from their native farm in Calabria to Milan, has moments of almost literally unbearable violence. A long, graphic scene of rape followed by a painfully realistic fist fight between two of the brothers not only set off a wave of protest whistling from the hall, but inspired at least two lengthy impromptu speeches delivered by outraged members of the audience while the film continued. The reaction to the rape scene, though, was positively subdued compared to that to the murder on a muddy river bank. One felt each of fifteen knife blows sink into the victim's flesh. Screams of "*Basta!*" went up all over the theater. The scene is probably too realistically violent to be kept in when the film goes on general release, but it evidenced the skill and mastery of a great director.

Rocco is rather special also in that it is a remarkably overt homosexual film. Even quite unsophisticated members of the audience were struck—and shocked—by the homosexual content of the picture. True, the film reflected a kind of Michelangelo-esque homosexuality rather than the limp-wrist variety, but it is still a little unusual to encounter it in a mass art form. The three women of the story are treated with contempt and/or hatred—pretty Claudia Cardinale is shown as a kind of cow who entraps one of the brothers into marriage and fatherhood; French actress Annie Giradot as a prostitute who loves two of the brothers is treated to rape and murder in such a manner that one feels that through her all womankind is being attacked; the mother, played with a fiercely lupine vigor by Katina Paxinou, is a smotheringly possessive matriarch—loved and hated by her sons. All the brothers are remarkably handsome young men, and several scenes between them at moments of high tragedy are shot in a curious way revealing intimacy and passion; these, if isolated from the context of the film, could read as positive love scenes. Of the cast Renato Salvatori as brutal brother Simone, who sinks down into the gutter as his brothers prosper, is easily the best. (He is also the only one of all the brothers who appears unequivocably, irrevocably heterosexual.) Title brother Rocco, played by the young French matinee idol Alain Delon, seems rather too pretty to become the champion boxer that the plot requires him to be.

Spyros Focas, Corrado Pani, and Katina Paxinou in Visconti's ROCCO AND HIS BROTHERS.

Very few people unqualifiedly admired the film but just about everyone on the eve of the prize-giving agreed it was the uncontestable Golden Lion. The French film which beat out Visconti on his native soil was, singularly enough, not popular with the Italian public or the French press. About the only wholehearted supporters of *Le Passage du Rhin* were the German critics—hardly surprising, as the general purport of the Cayette film seems to be that during the last war the simple German village folk were pretty decent people. The only bad German in the film is a Nazi party member, easily identified because he always slips on his swastika arm band before slapping around French prisoners of war.

Apart from *Rocco* only two other films really caught the attention of the critics and public, and neither was in the official competition. (It might be observed in passing that both *The Apartment* and the British entry *Tunes of Glory*, starring Sir Alec Guinness and John Mills, were well received, but both were quite predictable as standard commercial successes.) Shown in the afternoon Information Section, John Cassavetes' *Shadows* tremendously impressed European critics even though most of them were unable to follow the unsubtitled dialogue. *El Cochecito* had the rather interesting distinction of the Spanish Government's having refused to allow it to be entered as the official Spanish entry in the competition. During the festival its young director (plump, bearded Marco Ferreri) and his assistants conducted a simple but immensely effective campaign of contacting all the 600 members of the press with daily letters, accompanied by detailed discussions of their production problems and difficulties. An old man yearns to have an electric wheel chair so he can belong to the friendly circle of chair-bound paralytics, but his son and his family refuse to indulge this expensive whim and plan to send him to the old people's home. The old man pours a can of rat poison into the family soup, killing them all off. When the Guardia Civil finally catches up with him on the lonely road in his wheel chair he only meekly asks as they head back to Madrid, "Will they let me take it to prison with me?"

It is interesting to note that the version of the film shown in Spain has the family recovering after a stomach washing. Altogether *El Cochecito* has fine ironic vigor, some marvelously satiric touches, excellent acting. It is rather like a long, healthy version of a sick joke. At festival's end the FIRPRESCI—international film critics jury—awarded it its prize.

Ultimately, perhaps, the number of film festivals must be brutally reduced. More festivals, unfortunately, do *not* mean more people seeing good films. On the contrary, they usually mean more people being made too aware of the bad films in the world, which are pushed to public attention through the festivals. If world cinema can't produce more first-rate films, then it may prove best to consolidate the top films for one or two prestige events which will do credit to the art form, and provide a market place for the commercial interests which turn out for Cannes and Venice. The other hopefully competitive events may be marvelous for national egos and for the roaming film critic, but probably they should follow the summary and noncompetitive pattern set by the London festival.

DAVID STEWART HULL

London

The London Film Festival, now in its fourth year, can rightly be called the "festival of festivals." During its three weeks Londoners are able to see the most interesting films of the Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Vancouver, Edinburgh, San Sebastián, Moscow, and Poretta Terme festivals held earlier in the year. In the relaxed atmosphere of the National Film Theatre, one is able to view these prize-winners in a more objective light than is usually possible at the other, more hysterical festivals.

During the period of the Festival, the programs, three daily, are open to the public at a slightly advanced price, but regular members of the British Film Institute are allowed a period of priority booking at the usual rate, the most expensive seats selling for a little over one dollar.

Twenty-seven films were screened during the 1960 Festival, and a more interesting selection would be hard to imagine. While some films one would like to see were not available (*La Dolce Vita, Kagi, A Bout de Souffle*) we did see uncut prints of such controversial works as *L'Avventura, Rocco,* and *The Virgin Spring* previous to public, and possibly mutilated, release.

As was frequently pointed out, 1960 was a year of triumph for the Italian cinema, which seems to have come back to the fore after a decade of unhappy decline. The French New Wave has seemingly returned whence it came, if indeed it existed in the first place. Although the making of predictions is a notoriously dangerous affair, the Russian entries were of such high quality this year that it looks as though 1961 might be a Russian year if the present trends continue.

If this fourth London festival contained one virtually undisputed masterpiece, it was plainly *L'Avventura,* by Michaelangelo Antonioni. The technical and artistic beauty of the film had even the most sophisticated of British critics breaking out in loud praises, and the National Film Theatre will present a retrospective program of Antonioni films early in 1961. Antonioni was to be present for the first showing of his film in London, but at the last minute sent a telegram saying the film had been mysteriously "sequestered" in Italy, obliging him to stay. Certainly the charge of "obscenity" is preposterous, for though *L'Avventura* is a completely amoral film, it does not fill any definition of "obscenity." It does not seem to be clear who is in charge of the persecution of the film, but the Catholic Church is playing a vocal part against both *L'Avventura* and *Rocco.* There *are* some rather subtle anticlerical references in the former film, but one would hardly expect the Church to draw attention to them. The love scenes in *L'Avventura* are reasonably explicit, but hardly more startling than those in the average American film today, and certainly less sensational than in some of the latest French and Italian productions which seem to be of no interest to censoring bodies.

The case of *Rocco e i suoi Fratelli* is a slightly different matter. Visconti is a social critic whose protests are hard to ignore. *L'Osservatore Romano* immediately put *Rocco* on its list of "excluded" films, in company with *La Dolce Vita.*

The story of *Rocco*'s reception at Venice has been recounted in the preceding article. Suffice it to say here that the film is a nineteen-reel experience that one would not care to go through twice. *Rocco* is worthy of great respect, a powerful and often unpleasant work, but it is very difficult to have much affection for the film or any desire to return to it again. The last hour has structural flaws, and it is hard to see why Rocco makes his girl friend return to his no-good brother Simone; from this point on, the

viewer's belief in the story is fatally weakened.

Yet the film *is* impressive, and despite the crudities of Nadia's violent rape and later brutal murder by Simone, one feels that perhaps the life of these unhappily replanted people is just as violent and brutal as these scenes would indicate. One can only hope that American audiences will have the chance to see this film in its full length, and that the great interest that it will certainly create will cause someone to release Visconti's earlier *La Terra Trema,* in many ways a prologue to *Rocco.*

With *Morte di un Amico* withdrawn at the last minute, Mauro Bolognini's *Notte Brava* found itself in rather formidable company among the Italian entries. This in many ways was unfortunate, for in any other year, *Notte Brava* would receive far more attention. The story concerns a group of *vitelloni* and their adventures, mostly illegal, in a beautifully photographed Rome. The ingredients of the story (oversexed post-teens, prostitution, robbery, brutal violence, and homosexuality, plus fashionable boredom) should prove popular at the box office, but such a mess hardly makes a good film despite moments of brilliance. Bolognini has a peculiar habit of shooting important scenes at such a distance that the participants are almost buried in the landscape, making the spectator even less interested in these characters than he would be ordinarily. The cast is headed by Laurent Terzieff, an extremely popular young actor who seems in imminent danger of falling asleep at any moment.

The Russians, sticking to more orthodox subject matter, submitted three films of striking quality, giving an interesting cross section of recent trends in Soviet film-making, which is obviously far more interesting than Jay Leyda would lead one to believe in his recent *Kino.*

The first film was Grigori Chukhrai's *Ballad of a Soldier,* which was also seen at Cannes and San Francisco. This viewer will turn in a minority report and call it an unconvincing and mawkish essay in the worst style of Soviet war films. It was particularly discomfiting to see this essay follow Chukhrai's *The Forty-First,* admittedly a much less ambitious and serious

work, but a far more convincing film. However, both audiences and critics at London found *Ballad* very much to their taste.

Ivan Pyriev's *White Nights,* based on Dostoevsky's novella, was a charming and personal work which rather predictably failed to make much of an impression on the British audiences, which are almost physically repelled by cinematic sentiment, even of the most honest variety. Despite the chilly reception from the majority of viewers, it is hard to deny the charm of Pyriev's re-creation of the misty St. Petersburg atmosphere, filmed with a quite proper studio artificiality which creates the dreamy feeling of the original book. A particular mention should be made of the breathtakingly beautiful color photography of Valentine Pavlov and the wonderful use of background music adapted from the works of Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, and others.

On the debit side, the film itself is constructed on a formal day-by-day basis, which, while neatly functional, breaks into the lyrical mood of the composition as a whole.

The natural question arises of comparison with Visconti's earlier film on the same subject. Surely, however, the two films are both valid in their widely different approaches. Ludmilla Marchenko is not as accomplished an actress as Maria Schell, but the others in the Soviet version win hands down, particularly A. Popova as the wonderful, blind grandmother.

As thoroughly Russian a film as this *White Nights* will probably never be popular in the West, for its leisurely pace and gentle senti-

ments are not tailored to the taste of audiences accustomed to stronger screen fare. But to those who love Dostoevsky and the atmosphere of his ghostly St. Petersburg, and to those who are not so sophisticated as to reject sentimentality completely, *White Nights* will be a memorable experience.

The best of the three Russian entries was *The Lady with the Little Dog*, an adaption from Chekhov seen earlier at Cannes. It is not an exaggeration to call this film a masterpiece, and I suspect it may take its place in the future among the all-time great Russian films.

Its director, Josef Heifitz, is well remembered for his powerful *Baltic Deputy*, and is definitely, as Sergei Yutskevitch remarked in his delightful introduction to the film (unfortunately miserably translated), "a member of the older generation of Soviet film-makers." Indeed, it seemed at times as if one was watching a silent film, for Heifitz has caught the delicate half-world of Chekhov's short story, an elusive atmosphere that resists the intrusion of human speech. The original tale couldn't be simpler: a couple meet in Yalta (both are already married), fall in love, return home—he to Moscow and she to a dreary provincial center—and what began for him as a flirtation turns into real love. Their brief and increasingly difficult meetings become the only thing of importance in their lives.

Heifitz had the incomparable good luck to get the great Andrei Moskvine (Gorky trilogy; *Ivan Part II*) as his photographer, and in his sensitive hands the tone of the tale moves from the burning whites of Yalta to the dreary grays of the snow-covered North, the drab world of frustration and boredom. Alexei Batalov, nephew of the famous silent actor Nicolai, steps directly from the pages of the story as the doctor-hero, although one wonders why he was made up to look like Chekhov. The enormously difficult feminine role is portrayed by Ya Savina, fresh from the university in her first film part. Heifitz apparently worked miracles with the young lady, whose natural talents seem rather limited at the present time despite a curiously

Ya Savina and Alexei Batalov in LADY WITH A DOG.

beautiful face. The rest of the cast is unbelievably good, particularly the bug-eyed actor playing the heroine's servile husband.

But the strongest point of the film is the director's complete control over this atmosphere of boredom and frustration, this world of decaying nobility wasting away days in drinking, dancing, and gambling. And in the middle of this artificial world, a lonely clarinetist pipes a melancholy tune in a hotel courtyard as white snowflakes fall into a gray world, a single brief image so perfect that it brings a lump to the viewer's throat.

The French submitted four films, but only one seemed to continue in the powerful spirit of last year's entries: *Moderato Cantabile*, the work of an English director, Peter Brook. Adapted from a story by Marguerite Duras (of *Hiroshima*), the film proved the most controversial of the festival; one thought it either a small masterpiece or an irritating failure.

Brook wrote: "What interested me in *Moderato Cantabile* was the story in which on the surface a woman meets a man, sees him a few times, and then parts with him. Looked at from the point of view of a small town, nothing could be less scandalous: she gets a tiny bit drunk and a bit distracted at a dinner party, and she is seen once by workmen in a crowded bar, and that's all. But if you follow the inner life of these people, this is the most gigantic, violent happening in their lives . . . total, vast, definitive, tragic and violent."

The film emerges as an exercise in technique as perfect as seen today on any screen. The viewer becomes drawn into the story almost against his will, and each scene increases the hypnotic tension building to the pitiful and tragic conclusion. *Moderato Cantabile* is a love story in which the lovers never kiss, a situation which would defeat a less brilliant director before he could begin. Yet working with Jeanne Moreau and the lesser-known (in America) Jean-Paul Belmondo, Brook has produced the most engrossing and personal cinematic document in many years. Every image is caught with almost magical skill: a child bringing branches to his mother in a frosty forest, a provincial piano lesson, a spectral dinner party. True, there is a letdown at the end of the film, and *Moderato Cantabile* is too personal a work to be accepted at once, but its spell is so powerful that it seems likely to gradually build an enormous following.

Claude Chabrol, maker of *Les Cousins*, would be well advised to withdraw *Les Bonnes Femmes* from circulation at once if he wishes to preserve the high opinion of his talents one has had up to this point. This little tale of four girls working in an electrical appliance shop is so badly handled that it is embarrassing and downright painful to watch. The audiences, quite properly, hated it.

The fourth French entry was François Truffaut's *Tirez sur le Pianiste*, which this reviewer regrettably did not see. The reception it received was quite favorable, and Truffaut has seemingly retained his position as the finest of the young French directors.

Going more or less alphabetically through the other noteworthy films by country of origin, the Argentine director Leopoldo Torre Nilsson scored strongly with his *Fin de Fiesta*, apparently to be called *Blood Feast* in its American release. Although audiences in the United States have been introduced to this talented young man only recently through the far earlier *Casa del Angel* (known as *End of Innocence* in New York showings), he will certainly be recognized as a formidable figure in the future. *Fin de Fiesta* is a powerful study of political corruption in Argentina of the early 1930's as seen through the eyes of the grandson of a ruthless political boss. The carefully controlled mood and sensitive photography put one in mind of certain films of Pabst and Bergman.

Greece was represented by Michael Cacoyannis' completely baffling *Our Last Spring*, filmed in nearly unintelligible English. It is the only motion picture in this viewer's memory in which the post-screening discussions were devoted to trying to figure out the sense of the story, without even touching on the inadequacies of script and acting. It is a particular shame that such a botch should have been made out of Cosmas Politis' powerful novel *Eroica*,

EL COCHECITO: *Jose Isbert on left.*

and Walter Lassally's beautiful photography could have been better used on something else. There are moments of great beauty, particularly the funeral games on the beach, but these scattered incidents do not make an even adequate film.

Buñuel's *The Young One* is disappointing, not even as interesting as the same director's curious *Fievre Monte a el Pao*, a muddled but intermittently fascinating film, the last screen appearance of Gérard Philipe, now in general London release. In *The Young One* Buñuel at times appears to be satirizing himself; scene after scene of senseless sadism appears with monotonous regularity. A man eats a live crab, a raccoon kills chickens in loving close-up, the twitching death of a rabbit is carefully recorded, a nymphet squashes a large spider (in close-up), and the "hero" steps in what appears to be a bear trap. The acting almost matches the script, and a grating score assaults the ear. Unquestionably it will do well at the box office until *Lolita* comes along.

The single Polish entry was a 1959 comedy called *Bad Luck*. The unfortunate hero of the story is played with great skill by Bogumil Kobiela, whom viewers will remember as the mayor's secretary in *Ashes and Diamonds*. Andrzej Munk's direction is highly stylized, and although the film frequently misses fire, there are some memorably funny moments, notably at the beginning. The script has been praised for its none too subtle social criticism, with everyone on the receiving end from Pilsudski to Stalin. Unfortunately, a good many of the jokes are lost on a non-Polish audience.

A new production group called "Films 59" provided the two Spanish entries and demonstrated that there is some life in the Spanish film industry after all. The films themselves provide an accurate picture of certain trends in the thinking of young Spanish intellectuals, a kind of morbidly perverse joy that reflects a sick society all too clearly. *Los Golfos* is another *vitelloni* film about some particularly unsympathetic young thugs who rob in order that one of their members can have a go at bullfighting. The "hero" fails miserably, supposedly reflecting the failure of the individual lives of these hooligans. The film is cold and unemotional, stark and unpleasant. The final bullfight sequence, in which the animal is brutally butchered by the unskilled young man, is all too likely to be cut by censors (or distributors); without it the film is completely senseless.

The other entry was *El Cochecito* (*The Wheel Chair*), certainly the blackest comedy in recent memory. It concerns the adventures of a perfectly healthy old man who wants a wheel chair so that he can cavort around the countryside with his crippled friends. When his family blocks his wish, he quietly poisons them and almost gets away with his crime. The humor will appeal to those who find Tod Browning's *Freaks* to their taste. That the film is even slightly bearable is due largely to the performance of José Ibert as the old man, a virtuoso piece of acting in the great tradition.

The United States was represented by *Flight*, an embarrassing short feature, and *Studs Lonigan*, a fresh and most original film. James T. Farrell is reportedly furious over the screen treatment of his book. However, if one disregards the original source, Irving Lerner's film stands up very well and shows clearly the hand of a master craftsman working under less than optimum conditions. The major fault of the film is the leading actor, who stumbles through the role with deplorable clumsiness. Yet Lerner's careful direction minimizes these faults and manages to make Studs a fascinating character. A striking Weill-ish score by Gerrald

Goldsmith adds the proper note of hysteria to the proceedings.

Lerner was present at the screenings of the film, which was received with great enthusiasm by large audiences already familiar with his lavishly praised *Murder by Contract*. One hopes that *Studs Lonigan* will be received with the seriousness it deserves when it is shown generally in the United States.

One of the highlights of the entire festival was the screening of a complete subtitled print of Jean Renoir's *La Règle du Jeu* (1939). The film had been seen here in April and proved the highlight of a special French season. The new subtitling would seem to indicate the possibility of American release and it will be a treat worth waiting for when it finally arrives.

The Art Film and Its Audiences: I

The problems of distribution and exhibition faced by films which do not fit into ordinary industry patterns were discussed in the Summer 1960 issue of FILM QUARTERLY *by a distributor, an exhibitor, two film-society officers, a film-maker, and a critic. As that discussion established, and as anyone who looks into the matter soon discovers, such films (for which no really satisfactory term exists, and which we thus call by the usual name of "art films") do not reach their proper potential audiences in any satisfactory way. Good films sometimes do not get distributed at all; if they do get a distributor, they may not be booked widely; they may be neglected or misunderstood in the press; they may be badly publicized; and too often, thus, they do not receive the attendance they deserve. This vicious circle was described in vivid terms in the earlier discussion.*

The article beginning on the next page is the first of a series dealing in positive terms with programs of action which may help break this unfortunate pattern and bring more new films to the people who wish to see them. In the next issue we will present a report on steps being taken as a result of the recent Antioch College symposium, including plans for an American Film Institute and an association of art theaters. Also in preparation is a case study of what has been probably the most consistently successful and quality-minded art house in the country, the Berkeley Cinema Guild.

PHILIP CHAMBERLIN

Allies, Not Enemies

COMMERCIAL AND NONTHEATRICAL EXPERIENCE ON THE WEST COAST

In Los Angeles recently, one art-house exhibitor has spent a considerable part of his time organizing opposition to alleged "competition" of film programs sponsored by local film societies and universities. He has protested what he has called the unfair advantage which nonprofit and tax-supported institutions have in film exhibition. As a businessman and taxpayer he feels himself in the position of one forced to subsidize his opposition. His arguments have been heard before in various parts of the country throughout the life of the film-society movement, and in many cases they have successfully inhibited development of nontheatrical screenings on anything like an organized basis. The exhibitors, in these cases, feel that any dollar spent at a film society is a dollar lost to their box office.

Because arguments of this sort are having some success and because film societies and universities have a key role to play in expanding and improving art-film distribution, it has become necessary to establish a perspective and advance a few facts for the record.

I would like to propose two assumptions with which we can make sense of facts, notions, and guesses about art-film distribution.

(1) *University or film-society programs should be made up primarily of motion pictures which local art theaters cannot or will not run.* In most cases, this is precisely what we find happening. Universities, certainly, have no business in show business. Their obligation is to educate, to open new doors, to offer what is not otherwise available to the academic and surrounding community. Most film societies function in the same way, but with smaller numbers. Both provide an opportunity for the study and appreciation of outstanding motion pictures. Some of these films have had their first run and deserve another screening. Others have too small a box-office appeal for the art-house circuit but are important nonetheless. Still others are serious short films—which have almost completely disappeared from the commercial theaters. Finally, there are films which have not yet succeeded in winning a release. These are the films which offer universities and film societies their greatest potential for creative leadership; a potential which is just now on the brink of exploration throughout the country.

(2) It will be readily conceded that a business in our society must make a profit or disappear. Nevertheless, *art theaters should be encouraged to show a wider variety of good films than they now do, and to avoid showing shabby films simply for a quick dollar.* Also, to maintain a consistent policy, art theaters should stay away from films which are currently on the screens of neighboring general-run houses. Most art houses have a potential repertoire far in excess of what they imagine. More knowledge of films combined with a consistent policy can save many an art theater from the pinch it now feels.

As I hope to make clear, a number of factors tend to bring such policies into effect in quite a natural way in any case. And since empirical observation suggests that each film has, within the range of any given promotional campaign, its own audience, coöperation between theatrical and nontheatrical agencies should always work to the advantage of the art theaters.

Here are a few examples of film society–art house coöperation to illustrate how a hissing and spitting posture is by no means necessary:

The only art theater in one large West Coast town has been coöperating with the university in presenting an international film series each semester for the past six years. The university rents the theater for $75 each evening of the series and puts on two performances, at 7 and

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9 p.m. During the first season, average attendance stood at five hundred; now it has quadrupled and performances are sold out in advance. The average cost of admission for the series comes to about one-half the regular theater price but only one feature and one short are shown rather than the customary two features and cartoon.

On the face of it, the theater owner seems to be holding a rather stumpy straw because the rental fee includes projectionist and full house staff. Yet let the owner's own reasons speak for his policy:

(1) The university program brings hundreds of people into his theater who do not usually attend. These people become acquainted with the theater and notice the regular bill. Many of them ask to be placed on the theater's mailing list.

(2) The association with the university brings prestige and creates the impression that the theater management is sincerely interested in art films—which is true.

(3) The owner discovers at least one or two films in every series which prove to have strong appeal for his regular patrons. Since these films have passed the test, so to speak, the owner can safely book them for a run of his own. Very often as a result of a university screening, the word gets around town that such-and-such a film was a rare experience, and it does excellent business—far better than it might have done without the fuse-lighting preview.

(4) A full house means a larger concession sale—although art theater audiences do not buy as much candy, pop, and popcorn as do the patrons of commercial houses.

In Seattle, Washington, commercial exhibitors have been resentful for years of University of Washington attempts to show films. At one point the University was actually forced to discontinue film programs or risk curtailment of state funds, so active and hostile had the theater owners become.

Recently, however, sanity has seemed about to triumph, thanks to the initiative of a progressive executive of Sterling Theatres and the head of Adult Education at the University. The lines of agreement worked out by these two gentlemen and their respective organizations run in the right direction: Well in advance of any announcements, the University submits to the exhibitors a list of titles from which its final program will be drawn. The exhibitors thus have a chance to veto any films they are likely to run themselves. (This has the laudable function of forcing the University to avoid its most dangerous pitfall—showing films which are soon to be shown at a local art house—as has sometimes been the case in Berkeley, California, which has several very active art theaters.) Also, the University will not undercut local admission prices—a perfectly reasonable plan where auditorium facilities and projection are comparable.

The theater owners, furthermore, would prefer to see the University establish admission by series ticket only. There are, of course, many economic and educational advantages to such a policy and the booking of films is also simplified and enriched. *Series-ticket admissions should be the usual policy for universities and film societies once their programs are established.* This is one of the signs of a serious educational endeavor. During the build-up period, though, single-showing tickets should be available for those who are curious but don't want to risk the higher cost of a series or society membership.

The most encouraging sign among the Seattle theater owners, however, is their offer to look for ways of underwriting any deficit the University of Washington might incur—a clear indication that they understand the possibility of audience development through coöperation with the University.

Early in 1960, a new film society sprang up in Santa Barbara, California. Attendance was impressive and a howl of "unfair competition" immediately went up. This time, though, it was not the theaters who spearheaded the attack, but their friends the merchants.

The films were being shown in the high school auditorium. Some of the film society's officers were employed by the local board of education. Whether or not this was connected with the prompt speculation about the suita-

bility of other auditoriums, I do not know, but in any case help suddenly arrived from an unsuspected quarter. A theater manager appeared on the scene with an offer of assistance and assurances of genuine interest in the society's program. He volunteered to help acquire films and to promote the film series with a special trailer, posters, advertising, and other standard devices. Since conditions for projecting in the high school auditorium were somewhat less than perfect, the switch seemed to be better for everyone. The theater received a generous percentage of the receipts, the society's hassle with portable projectors was eliminated along with merchant opposition, and the society is now institutionalized in the community with a policy of twenty-five showings per year.

The case of Santa Barbara also points up the many advantages of 35mm operation, too seldom understood by American film-society officers. Theater owners will almost always thaw out when a plan is presented for screenings to be made on a coöperative basis, particularly if it is proposed to utilize their theaters on a slack night—early in the week or just before a marquee change. Print quality and projection are invariably better with 35mm and program planning from 35mm sources is generally more satisfactory despite the greater number of distributors one has to keep up with. Films on 35mm are often cheaper, too, especially if one's audience numbers more than two hundred. The ideal, of course, is to have auxiliary 16mm equipment for films not available on 35mm.

San Diego, California, provides one of the best examples of coöperation among different types of film operations. Until this year, San Diego had one art theater and one film society. Then, almost overnight, two more film societies began operating in the area. One was formed on the La Jolla campus of the University of California and the other ran an impressive series in the La Jolla Art Center, much as it had in Pasadena, Beverly Hills, Canoga Park, and Santa Monica.

At this point, the owner of a second-run commercial house in San Diego approached the University of California for assistance in planning and promoting an art policy for his theater. He simply was not making money during the early part of the week and resolved to try anything, even art films, from Monday to Thursday. After an exploratory meeting, it was agreed that the film societies could be of great help to the exhibitor because of their understanding of the local situation in relation to the art film. The theater owner received help from the societies in the form of mailing lists, program suggestions, and information for his mailing piece. At no time did the film society people ask for compensation for their services, nor did they receive any. The theater owner soon adopted an art policy exclusively, appended the term "fine arts theater" to the name of his establishment, and now manages to show some first-run features.

The foregoing "case studies" serve to indicate that film societies and universities *can* be of value to the art house operator in a variety of ways ranging from a source of knowledge and judgments about films to more concrete suggestions for accumulating cold cash. They reinforce, moreover, the experience of British and Continental film society movements in using theaters for their showings, with the happy participation of the exhibitors.

Most American exhibitors hold an atomistic theory about audiences, which discourages the development of a reliable, regular audience by a theater and is thus in any longer run sense economically self-defeating. We know from many examples such as the Berkeley Cinema Guild or the Ridgemont Theater in Seattle that a consistent policy of serious programming is bound to expand the art-film field in any community whether advanced by a public theater or a private film club. But not enough research has been done which bears on art houses, film societies, and museum and university film programs. We don't know enough about the composition of audiences, about attendance patterns, and about ways in which certain kinds of motion pictures affect film-going. Within the past few months, however, film society and university people in southern California have circulated a number of questionnaires which turned up some rather interesting information. While the results should not encourage easy generalizing and scarcely qualify as legitimate research:

(1) A survey of physical facilities on the West Coast showed that 12 film societies, 7 universities, 4 film clubs, 1 museum, and 6 libraries all agree on the inferiority of their locations to nearby art theaters. Only three of those questioned believed their auditoriums were superior, but even these rated their projection as "decidedly substandard." Evidently, thus, audiences feel that something is derived from the films which the art houses are not supplying. Granted that some prices are lower and that occasionally pressures extraneous to the films themselves are brought to bear, these various agencies generally cannot be competing with the theaters in any other sense or they would lose out. Hard seats, poor projection, small screens, dim and yellow images, chronic propensity to be behind schedule, and lack of house staff and conveniences would soon destroy nontheatrical audiences if they could see the same films elsewhere.

(2) In a representative sampling of approximately one thousand people, one-half of a large UCLA series audience and 61% of the Santa Barbara Film Society members say they attend public showings of motion pictures less than four times per year. The remainder describe themselves either as art-film devotees (over fifteen films per year) or, as with a tiny minority, "attend irregularly" or "occasionally" (five to ten films per year).

If these figures are even approximately accurate, the competition argument is without foundation. "Less than four films per year" sounds like the reluctant father who gets cudgeled into taking the family to the drive-in every so often and swears never to go again. This man doesn't attend often enough to be worth competing for.

On the other hand, the art-film devotee probably goes to everything that sounds halfway promising. Here, the issue is not competition, certainly, but how to produce more people like him and how to keep showing enough good films.

The really significant response comes from those who attend irregularly or occasionally. They are the subject of competition: persons who cannot attend all of the art films in their area and must, therefore, choose which ones they'll see. One university and one film society find that these are not in their audiences in sufficient numbers to matter (the average is 8%).

(3) Who make up the nontheatrical audience? (We regret we have no data on the art-theater patron.) The questionnaires show that a majority are teachers, doctors, engineers, and other professionals. Sixty-five per cent have attended college, thirty-five per cent have professional degrees. Eighty per cent "value the films highly," nine per cent "somewhat," and eleven per cent failed to check the point on their forms. Eighty-two per cent want to attend another series of similar films.

(4) Why do people attend nontheatrical showings? What draws an audience despite physical limitations and no choice of alternate nights? We guess it is a combination of factors: convenience (though some drive very long distances to attend), snob appeal through association with a university, museum, or society (though many are frightened off by the same factor), far more information in the brochure than theaters provide (which convinces some they should attend but others that they should not), and more chance of learning about the film through introductions, program notes, and discussions (which, again, are intolerable for many who just want to enjoy the film.)

In the last analysis, though, it is probably the films themselves which draw the audience. And so we come full circle—for the nontheatrical films are, or should be, precisely the films that theaters cannot or will not run. The available repertoire of the screen is too vast and too rich for competition to be the disruptive factor it is sometimes thought to be. It will be a tragic turn of events for the commercial exhibitors as well as the world of the film if irrational warfare between noncommercial and commercial showings is allowed to destroy the very process by which new audiences can be created. The basis for a mutually beneficial truce exists. It remains for forward-looking exhibitors and nontheatrical groups to put it into effect.

Film Reviews

Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe

(Picnic on the Grass) Written, directed, and produced by Jean Renoir, for Pathé. Distribution: Kingsley International. With Catherine Rouvel and Paul Meurisse.

In film criticism we perhaps think too much in terms of the *oeuvre* of Dreyer, Visconti, Bresson, or Bergman, rather than of *Joan of Arc, La Terra Trema, Pickpocket,* or *The Naked Night.* This is no doubt because of the generally accepted fallacy of consistency, which is expected in our society not only in a person's work but also in his life. How demanding and inhuman this criterion remains is brought out by the bafflement of even our most astute critics when confronted with a work which doesn't seem to "fit." How quick we are to decry the artistic decline of a man whose work does not emulate previous successes! We speak of the freedom not now allowed the film-maker; but we ourselves attempt to shackle him with bonds indescribably tougher.

One of the reasons for this approach is our limited knowledge of the man behind the work. Film-makers are not, by definition, talkers or writers, and we must, of course, continue to rely mainly on their works for knowledge of them. But with a little effort it is possible to find other than filmic references for the ideas of the Rossellinis and the Fellinis, the Hustons and the Kubricks, and it seems to me that such research is essential in understanding the real meaning of any important film.

There are, to be sure, some men who are not only in the front line of really important film-makers, but have also been able, over the years, to express themselves in other media or at least become known as persons to the extent where an effort should be made by all who take writing about film seriously to understand first the man and then in this context the films. Bergman has been accorded this courtesy lavishly, as have Rossellini and Stroheim before him. But one who deserves it more, perhaps, has continued to be judged on principles far from his own.

The best example of the strictures our critics have put on Renoir is the silly treatment accorded *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe.* No attention whatsoever is paid the director, except as the fabricator of a "product." Those of our critics who see farthest have remarked on the obvious connections with *Partie de Campagne*; others have, at best, found some meaning in Renoir's attacks on organized technocracy. Only Hollis Alpert among the more widely circulated critics (*Saturday Review*) has done the film any kind of justice at all in "allowing Mr. Renoir to have his day in the fields."

Briefly, this last theatrical feature by Renoir concerns the attempt by a natural country lass to fulfill a natural desire: that of having a baby. The visitations of a salesman having proven futile, she rallies to the cause of a professor advocating artificial insemniation for all of humanity, who is also running for the presidency of Europe with this notion as his platform. To him it means the solution of the world's social problems; to her, wish-fulfillment. She enters his employ to be closer to the test tubes, but eventually her desire is granted without resorting to them.

In the course of what for lack of a better term must be called the "action" of the film, we are treated to much extrovert cavorting alfresco, and to the most frenzied, mad, mythical, and comical orgy yet filmed. The film utilizes every recognizable symbol to catch a mood with a few frames only, thus using clichés in the most creative sense. Reminiscent in its social commentary of Tati (as it is in its use of color to underline its attack on The Machine), it goes far beyond the one-dimensional *Hulot* to a point where *what* is said is so much part of *how* it is said (instead of the traditional reversed approach) that we can take the "messages" as side effects and become part of the thing itself.

For those who see in the 1863 Manet painting, from which the title is derived, the essence of natural peace, it may seem sacrilegious to

Paul Meurisse and Catherine Rouvel in Renoir's LE DÉJEUNER SUR L'HERBE.

have the two so closely associated, but it seems to me that this is a limited view of Manet. There is no doubt that the painting is relevant in appraising this film, but this is simply Renoir's view of it. (The film was shot at "Les Collettes," where Jean Renoir's father, the painter Auguste Renoir, spent the last years of his life.)

Renoir has some basic beliefs about life which he applies in his film work, of course, but first and foremost he avows "I am not consistent." And then, "Man changes with the outside world" and "Art should be practiced in connection with human reality." Also that "to be a great artist you must first of all be a child" and that nature becomes that which the artist sees. Specifically, he has been preoccupied in recent years with the decline in individuality caused by the advancement of technology and has found some solace in his realization that the "northern spirit" of suppression and sterility is giving way, slowly but surely, to the "southern spirit" of laissez faire, slow beauty, acceptance instead of conquest of nature, and nonconformism—the true humanism of man. Shirley Clarke, the experimental film-maker, upon seeing *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* said, "This film could only have been made by a person of sixteen or of sixty." Yes, this *is* a child's film—the film of a true artist, and the film of a man.

Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe involves figures symbolizing (perhaps!) various aspects of all men. Unconquered by all onslaughts, supreme in her joie de vivre, earthy, voluptuous, radiantly beautiful, and utterly beguiling is Catherine Rouvel, Renoir's new discovery, who embodies his spirit. Cleverly, his framework ("story") is derived from what could pass as our everyday life, and Renoir plays Oriental storyteller in involving us through our own apertures. What finally "occurs" is as unimportant as continuity, theme, montage, focus, and all the other rigidities of movie-making. At the same time the film is abstract, in the sense that a painting is an abstraction of nature, and it is unmatched in some areas: color, frame compositions, stylized acting (Paul Meurisse, as remote from what one expects of the *diable* of *Diabolique* as can be imagined, excels), and above all in feeling, in that overriding emotional quality which only the really great films have: in conveying the presence of its making.

For some time I have been maintaining that films should not be "seen" but "experienced"; that unless something happens in the viewer's bowels as a result of his exposure to the work, the film has failed. The cerebral "experience" of *The Seventh Seal* or *The Virgin Spring* leaves the viewer as cold as the maker, whereas the unique force of Wajda, Resnais, Welles, Ray, and—more than any—Renoir is their ability to utilize the mind simply as a passage, to play with our standardized perceptions and to force us to let them through—to the depths of our being, where words or meanings give way to a more direct communication which is the true language of art.

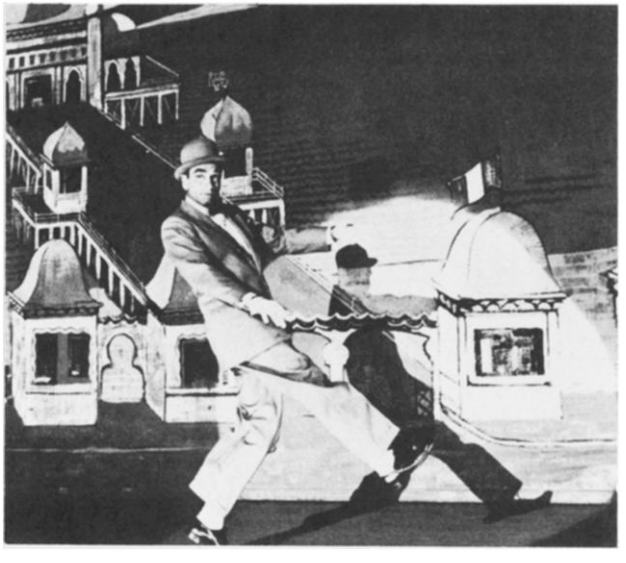
One great pity for a film of such importance is the fact that the subtitles have been confined simply to transmitting the story line—none of the finesse of the Provençal dialogue, none of the fine tuning come across. The titles (not by Herman G. Weinberg!) are filled with inanities, where the *dialogue* is filled with life. Here is a film which will supply ammunition to the advocates of dubbing—surely a Renoir-supervised dubbing job would have done more justice to the maker's intention than this secondhand sabotage. *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* is a unique film—a seemingly effortless pleasantry, impressionistic and yet surreal, full of the unexpected as life is, almost facile in impact but lasting in the perturbations it causes. It is in the true sense a demanding film, but it demands nothing of us save to be ourselves.—GIDEON BACHMANN

The Entertainer

Directed by Tony Richardson. Screenplay by John Osborne and Nigel Kneale. Producer: Harry Saltzman. A Bryanston Film, released by Continental. With Laurence Olivier, Brenda da Banzie, Joan Plowright, Roger Livesey.

"We've troubles enough as it is without politics," is the exasperated complaint of Phoebe Rice, wife of Archie the Entertainer, in the film which John Osborne and Tony Richardson have made from Osborne's play. In the microcosm of theater the comment might have been taken as a resounding irony, poignant testimony to the inability of these carefully chosen characters to understand that they are living out a moment in the shabby destiny of the British Empire. As it is delivered in the film, a throw-away amid the naturalistic clatter of pots and pans, door-slams, and domestic acrimony, the line means exactly what it says, and anyone who hears it may be excused for grunting in agreement. Argumentative references to colonialism and the welfare state keep intruding like pages from another script, and only those who may have been forewarned of Osborne's intentions, or seen the play, where presumably they were more clearly focused, will have any notion that this uninteresting little vignette about the fall of a cheap vaudevillian who has a son killed in Suez and a daughter attending protest meetings in Trafalgar Square is in fact a symbolical drama of bleak political decline. The rest of us may or may not be entertained by Laurence Olivier as the Entertainer and by some consciously grim exposures of the seaside resort which is his working milieu, but as for all that other business, what's the Prime Minister to him?

Laurence Olivier in THE ENTERTAINER.



Olivier's is a "virtuoso" performance pretty high up on the hog; in it, as in the film as a whole, it is difficult to separate the intentionally phony from the phony intent. Olivier's eye-rolling cajolery, Osborne's shout-wail-and-whimper dialogue, Richardson's tilted angling and jump cuts all share a confidence man's expertise, distributing effects all over the film's surface without meaningfully differentiating between the sham that is portrayed and the truth it conceals. The climax of Archie Rice's career is one of those classic moments when the gaudy spell is broken and the masker is unmasked. He talks about the performer he might have been, about a model performance he once witnessed: ". . . an old—Negress, singing her guts out . . ." (This is a paraphrase; the actual lines are much worse.) Then tragedy breaks through the roof—his son is dead. And while the other characters freeze in an endless moment, Archie leans his tired head against the proscenium of the empty theater and, in a thin wail, intones the blues: "I don't care where they bury mah body . . . 'cause mah soul's goin' to God." It would be granting an unprecedented sophistication to Mr. Osborne, and, for that matter, to Mr. Olivier, to interpret the mood of this embarrassing scene as anything but the exact equivalent of the sloppy reverence it evokes.

There are wholehearted performances by Joan Plowright, Roger Livesey, Brenda da Banzie, Alan Bates, and Thora Hird in a sort of sliding scale of parts ranging from the obligatory overwrought (da Banzie) to the unaccountably underwritten (Plowright). The high-powered talents in control seem to have collaborated on the farthest thing from their minds: Amateur Night at the Royal Court.—ARLENE CROCE

The Savage Innocents

Director: Nicholas Ray. Adaptation by Hans Ruesch and F. Solinas from the novel *Top of the World* by Ruesch. Producer: Maleno Malenotti. Screenplay by Ray. Director of photography: Aldo Tonti. Music: Franco Lavagnino. Art direction: Don Ashton. Second unit director: Baccio Bandini. Second unit photography: Paddy Carey, Ricardo Pallottini. An Italian-French-British co-production; distributor, Paramount. With Anthony Quinn, Yoko Tani, Peter O'Toole, Carlo Giustini, Anna May Wong, Kaida Horiuchi, Marco Guglieimi.

THE SAVAGE INNOCENTS: *Echoes of* NANOOK.

The Savage Innocents warrants reviewing not so much for what it accomplishes as for what it attempts. It would appear that this adaptation of Hans Ruesch's novel *The Top of the World* was intended to be a realistic portrayal of the Eskimos who live beyond the reach of the white man's civilization and of the confusion and disaster that result when the two ways of life meet—each incomprehensible to the other. In this age such encounters are inevitable, and stories of them are worth telling, and retelling. The meetings introduce conflicts which cause anguish from Indonesia to the Congo, and very little of this is being recorded on film (Jean Rouch is attempting some of it, in Africa), although it would seem that the motion picture is admirably suited to a subject which must bring together people estranged by distance and culture. Thus, when a film comes along which deals at all with the subject, especially when this is a feature aimed at a mass audience, it has a *prima facie* claim to our attention. And when it fails, as this one unfortunately does, we should try to assess the reasons for failure so that the subject area as such is not abandoned by the commercial producers.

The story falls roughly into two parts. In the first we meet Inuk (Anthony Quinn) and follow him through scenes of local color and some cultural curiosity. Inuk declines to "laugh with" the wife of a friend, but woos and wins his own, in the manner of his people. He hunts walrus, seal, and bear and chews lustily on raw blubber to convince us that he is a number-one Eskimo. His mother-in-law is introduced long enough to pass on some Arctic wisdom, before being abandoned, as is the custom, to Nanook the polar bear.

This is inherently interesting material, but it loses much of its potential effectiveness because the camera lingers over it like a spectator in a freak show rather than allowing it to remain the legitimate and naturally integrated background to the story. The comparison between Ray's film and Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* is inescapable. For all of its faults, *Innocents* attempts a great deal more than the earlier film, both in dramatic structure and anthropological insight. Ray tries to deal with the interplay of characters in some depth and is thus committed (or so he evidently thought) to the use of professional actors and actresses. Thus, although several of his scenes seem to be straight out of *Nanook*, they do not work as well, for it is one thing to have an Eskimo do what he habitually does and quite another to have Anthony Quinn and his Oriental colleagues go through the same motions.

In the second part of the film, Inuk tangles with the white man's civilization. Trekking to a trading post where he can trade fox pelts for a rifle, he is visited by a missionary. A conflict develops between the savage and the civilized innocents which leads to the killing of the missionary. This should have been a highly illuminating scene but it is, unfortunately, treated in a very cursory manner. Here, certainly, is the essence of the story and the crux of the conflict

that follows. Yet the man who is killed remains a shadowy figure. The corruptor is never known by us as well as is the corrupted.

After this incident Inuk flees north with his family and the Mounties start out to get their man. Get him they do, but in a sled accident one of them is thrown into the water, and upon being pulled out, freezes before our eyes. The surviving Mountie's hands are about to freeze also, but Inuk slits open a sled dog and saves the hands by plunging them into the dog's warm innards. Rather than abandoning his captor, Inuk decides to return him to the trading post. True to his code, the Mountie tells him that he will have to turn him over to the authorities when they reach the post. Inuk, true to *his* code, comprehends none of this. As they journey south the Mountie develops an understanding of and affection for the Eskimo and his family, so that when they reach the post his conscience gets the better of his duty. To keep them from following he insults and attacks them and runs off to report that Inuk is dead. Baffled by his behavior, the Eskimos return north.

The division of the film into two parts points up the dilemma which faces a film-maker who wishes to attack a problem of an anthropological nature. How much can he depend upon the exotic quality and folkways of his subject, and how much must he depend upon a story line? How deeply may he probe an alien character, whose language is not that of the audience, and whose culture is complex far beyond possible penetration in the conventional two hours of screen time? Is the fragile illusion of reality best established and maintained by using the native people while letting a narrator speak for them, or can an actor re-create them with greater insight? And what of the audience—are they better or worse served by being drawn into the theater by a "name" actor now playing an Eskimo, when last week they saw him as a bandit or a private eye?

Each subject will have its own peculiar problems and each audience its own demands, but if films of this type are not to be abandoned solely to the classroom, the special study group, or (in rare cases) the film festival, much speculation remains to be done on how their appeal may be widened without doing violence to the material. How is it possible to make films with the integrity and perception of, for example, *The Hunters*, but which can be seen by the large number of people the subject matter warrants, and earn enough in exhibition receipts to guarantee perpetuation of such productions?

We may note, above all, that the success of this type of film must depend largely upon how effectively is created the illusion of reality. There are two aspects to this, and two polar approaches illustrating them: one by using indigenous people, doing what they normally do, and pretending that the camera is only an innocent observer; and the other by creating a story and cinematic style that involves the audience beyond disbelief.

Innocents attempts both, and fails in both. The first section tries to establish the nature of the uncontaminated Eskimo, but it gives us no real insight into their way of life, in spite of an occasional attempt through Disneylike narration, and the portrayal of Eskimo customs makes them seem merely bizarre. Yet to show the human validity of customs that seem strange to us should be one of the prime concerns of such a film. And this is not just for social or anthropological reasons, *but in order to generate the kind of interest called box-office appeal.* The relationships between people of alien cultures are as interesting as those between people in our own and, if we can be made to understand them, they should be as entertaining.

There are also technical problems in *Innocents* which remind us that what we are seeing is not real. The sets, the process screen, the traveling mattes are by and large well handled, but we are not really fooled. The anonymity, for American audiences, of most of the actors and actresses works in their favor, but despite his excellent acting Anthony Quinn will be remembered as not always having been an Eskimo. The music is atrocious.

All this is not to say that the film is completely without merit. It is made with the high degree of technical skill we expect from modern crews

and from Nicholas Ray, and much of the location photography is magnificent. Although our verdict must finally be that the film falls far short of its potential, let us still hope that others will be encouraged to try their hand in this important area. Many approaches to production design and production techniques remain to be tried. Let us hope that *The Savage Innocents* will not be the last experiment in this field.

—Douglas Cox

The Flute and the Arrow

Written, directed, and photographed by Arne Sucksdorff. English commentary by William Sansom. A Sandrews Film Studio production. Distributor: Janus.

Solid, well-fleshed characters: without them, films about life in primitive society soon lose their way in a parade of surface typicalities and diffuse pictures of "the tribe." Arne Sucksdorff understands this problem. His new film *The Flute and the Arrow* shows, however, that limiting one's cast is not enough to solve it. An opening market-day panorama gives us the Muria tribe of central India, en masse. Then the camera picks out the two people who are our main concern. Riga is a young woman of inferior caste, a Hindu from outside the tribe. Ginju, a Muria, is ostracized for courting her. "In the eyes of the tribe," William Sansom's narration warns, "theirs is an unpardonable alliance." From what we can see, this quarrel with tribal opinion worries the narrator much more than the young couple. Throughout the incidents to follow—the loss of a buffalo, exile from the village, and attack by wild beasts—they alternately smile and look sad, but the happy illusion that these faces relate to the action of the story rarely seizes us. Ginju and Riga remain intractably remote.

Physically, Sucksdorff was close to his people. Fine close-ups of Ginju and Riga ornament the screen. But the width of Agascope and the hues of Eastmancolor do not help. The faces make strong portraits: but since they serve little dramatic purpose our eyes soon wander off to explore the screen's emptier half-acre, background textures of lattice, thatch, and leaves. The photography is distinguished, but slips sometimes into preciosity. In moonlight silhouette, a tiger-hunter crouching with drawn bow on the branch of a tree makes a startling design; but it has also a studied elegance quite out of place. The film's lingering delights are all pictorial: vast perspectives of soft-toned rice fields under black ridges of monsoon clouds; a small boy, alone in the forest, sun dappling his wondering face. But they are few, and too soon passed. The clouds dissolve into a shattering stereophonic storm; a leopard waits for the boy.

Leopards are common. In the space of little more than an hour we see ten clashes with unruly cats. And it is here, in the handling of the relationship between the world of men and the enclosing jungle that *The Flute and the Arrow* contrasts most sharply—and astonishingly—with *The Great Adventure*. The farm household and the forest animals of the Swedish film were mutually indifferent. In *The Flute and the Arrow* jungle and village are passionately hostile. A constant war is set up between Muria and wild beasts and other matters are reduced to mere intervals in the fray. The leopards are Indian, but it is not only in a physical sense that they are worlds apart from the lynx of *The Great Adventure*. The lynx personified an amoral universe. In *The Great Adventure* we had the pathos of a Nature indifferent to life and death: in *The Flute and the Arrow*, replete with wicked "tyrants" against whom, at the time of the hunt, the people "rise in revolt," we have the bathos of stock jungle melodrama.—Roger Sandall

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Films from the San Francisco Festival

In the following section we review, at the lengths which seem appropriate, a group of films shown at the recent San Francisco Festival. We had hoped also to review EL LAZARILLO DE TORMES *(Little Guide of Tormes), a new and reportedly quite good Spanish film. However, by one of the inexplicable and idiotic quirks of the Festival, our assigned reviewer was denied admittance to the showing, and could only have covered it by paying the ridiculous admission price of $10 charged for that evening. It seems to us foolish to humor Mr. Levin on such matters. If he is running a festival, as one outraged film-goer was heard to mutter, he should run a festival. One of the necessities, we must evidently point out, is to make it possible, and conceivably even easy, for serious film critics to see the pictures.*

Ballad of a Soldier

(Ballada o Soldate) Director: Grigori Chukhrai. Scenario: Valentin Yoshov and Chukhrai. Camera: Vladimir Nikolayev and Era Saveleva. Music: Michael Zyv. Mosfilm. With: Vladimir Ivashev, Zhanna Prokhorenko, Antonia Maximova, Nicolas Kriutchkov, Evgeni Ourbanski.

There is no longer any reason to believe that the Russian cinema is so confined by governmental or party restrictions that authentic works of individual artistry cannot be made. Grigori Chukhrai's second film, *Ballad of a Soldier*, is an emotional film of exceedingly fine craftsmanship, unforgettable acting, and lasting effect upon a spectator. It aims to defy the entire concept of war, certainly, but in this very simple story of a peasant youth sacrificed in anonymous combat after briefly encountering first love's joys and agonies, there is an undeniable indication that in Chukhrai Russian cinema now has its counterpart of Autant-Lara.

The theme of youth and love in wartime, thwarted by the surrounding conflict, is also that of Chukhrai's first film, *The Forty-First*, but in *Ballad of a Soldier* the director is less concerned with visual picturization. In the former work, color photography contributed a beautiful but oddly travel-documentary look to the narrative; the latter is in black and white but with a sense of poetry and pictorial excitement totally in contrast with the techniques of the first film.

Collaborating on the screenplay with Yoshov, Chukhrai kept the primary purpose for making the film to make his characters emotionally compelling and to create, out of a simple story, some awareness of the pity involved in human encounters when one cannot take hold of life and experience it fully because of war. The irony of the film strikes us with great power almost immediately. We see a long, white-dusty road winding endlessly through fields of wheat, and a woman watching the road. A voice on the sound track tells us impassively that this is a mother watching for her son. We are told that he lies dead far away, honored as the unknown soldier, and then we see the soldier's last days. Immediately, backward into time, we are thrust upon the battlefield where the hero, nineteen-year-old Alyosha (Vladimir Ivashev), panics when he and another soldier are attacked by some German tanks. When his companion is shot, Alyosha flees in terror across the battleground, pursued by a tank. The camera moves along swiftly into this bizarre chase, quickly cutting from the figure of the boy to the juggernaut, rising omnisciently above the field to give us some sense of the futility and fear in the episode itself and, as Alyosha continues running across the flat land, the camera in following him suddenly turns upside down for a few seconds.

Having caught the extent of Alyosha's wild confusion, the inverted image pulls us relentlessly into that final moment of desperation which makes Alyosha stop and singlehandedly destroy the tank with several accurately placed missiles. The incredibility of this sequence is eliminated by its artistry, and one knows at this point that the camera will be neither predictable nor static during the remainder of the film.

This brilliant prologue to the main story—which covers Alyosha's journey from the front to his mother's farm in Svortsov for a brief leave—heightens the sense of ironic inevitability that overshadows the entire work. Despite its moments of humor, its momentary contentments, its revelations of the tenderer side of human nature, *Ballad of a Soldier* is sardonic tragedy.

Alyosha quickly evolves from the frightened boy on a bomb-scarred earth to a boyish soldier-hero on a picaresque journey. The kindly General, touched by Alyosha's simple desire to repair the roof on his mother's house, is shown as one of those gruffly sentimental Tolstoyans, and it is amusing to realize that the Russians see themselves as Hollywood sees them when it comes to high military officials.

Ivashev is brilliant as Alyosha. In his face lie the hesitant passions of adolescence; his expressions, uncalculated, by turns cruel or yearning, convince the spectator of extraordinary talent. As, little by little, Alyosha's leave is peeled away because of his acts of kindness to people along the way home (an embittered amputee whose masculine ego makes him loath to face his young wife again; a young girl traveling alone to a city near Svortsov) he faces home-front adultery and senile curiosity with equal maturity. Ivashev's reactions, particularly when he is lying to the old man about his soldier son, exhibit Chukhrai's ability to get the actor to hold an emotion and place it before us at will.

Alyosha's growing love for the shy and apprehensive young virgin, Shura (Zhanna Prokhorenko), is magnificently shown to us by the camera. The stirrings of innocent sensual love are counterbalanced by camera glances at passing glimpses of sky, seen from the grimy boxcar in which the youths are traveling, by steel-sharp etchings of some stairways over the railroad tracks, the billows of smoke curling against the silhouetted iron railings, or by the tenement building on Semenov Street, where a little boy wafts soap bubbles down the stair well, and Shura reaches out to catch them.

The artful use of close-ups of Alyosha and Shura, softly dissolving in and out, as the soldier and the girl stand facing each other on the train, gently bewitched by their desires—all of this is a triumph of camera narration. The young people part without a kiss, and quite at the last moment Shura discloses that her remarks about returning to her fiancé were untrue. Like Alyosha, she will be alone. Already regarding Alyosha as a tragic hero, one begins to ache at this moment—one watches helplessly, and Chukhrai understands that this will occur; he wishes to underscore the terrible consequences of life or love held in abeyance, the irrevocability of time and destiny. For the first time in the film, one *must* identify with Alyosha, and, of course, the suspense builds from here toward the last memorable sequence: Alyosha's meeting with his mother.

A bombing of the train not only dispels Alyosha's recurrent memory of Shura walking disconsolately out of his life, but leaves him with only a few hours before he must return to the front. He finds no one at home when he arrives, and he starts to leave. Then, after a tremendous heightening of emotional tension, making us fearful that the mother will not be able to race across the fields from her harvesting in time to catch Alyosha, the screen is deliberately struck into silence as the soldier falls into his mother's embrace. This becomes a very powerful and moving experience—humane, unsentimental, and true.—ALBERT JOHNSON

Ein Mann geht durch die Wand

(A Man Goes Through the Wall) Directed by Ladislao Vajda. Scenario: Istvan Bekeffi and Hans Jacoby. Camera: Bruno Mondi. Music: Franz Grothe. A Kurt Ulrich film. With Heinz Rühmann, Nicole Courcel, Rudolf Rhomberg, Rudolf Vogel, Peter Vogel, Hubert von Meyerlinck, and Hans Leibelt.

Comedies based on true whimsy are rare these days: our own comedies tend to be either situational or slapstick; those imported from England are predominantly satirical; the relatively few Italian comedies that we see are combinations

This brilliant prologue to the main story—which covers Alyosha's journey from the front to his mother's farm in Svortsov for a brief leave—heightens the sense of ironic inevitability that overshadows the entire work. Despite its moments of humor, its momentary contentments, its revelations of the tenderer side of human nature, *Ballad of a Soldier* is sardonic tragedy.

Alyosha quickly evolves from the frightened boy on a bomb-scarred earth to a boyish soldier-hero on a picaresque journey. The kindly General, touched by Alyosha's simple desire to repair the roof on his mother's house, is shown as one of those gruffly sentimental Tolstoyans, and it is amusing to realize that the Russians see themselves as Hollywood sees them when it comes to high military officials.

Ivashev is brilliant as Alyosha. In his face lie the hesitant passions of adolescence; his expressions, uncalculated, by turns cruel or yearning, convince the spectator of extraordinary talent. As, little by little, Alyosha's leave is peeled away because of his acts of kindness to people along the way home (an embittered amputee whose masculine ego makes him loath to face his young wife again; a young girl traveling alone to a city near Svortsov) he faces home-front adultery and senile curiosity with equal maturity. Ivashev's reactions, particularly when he is lying to the old man about his soldier son, exhibit Chukhrai's ability to get the actor to hold an emotion and place it before us at will.

Alyosha's growing love for the shy and apprehensive young virgin, Shura (Zhanna Prokhorenko), is magnificently shown to us by the camera. The stirrings of innocent sensual love are counterbalanced by camera glances at passing glimpses of sky, seen from the grimy boxcar in which the youths are traveling, by steel-sharp etchings of some stairways over the railroad tracks, the billows of smoke curling against the silhouetted iron railings, or by the tenement building on Semenov Street, where a little boy wafts soap bubbles down the stair well, and Shura reaches out to catch them.

The artful use of close-ups of Alyosha and Shura, softly dissolving in and out, as the soldier and the girl stand facing each other on the train, gently bewitched by their desires—all of this is a triumph of camera narration. The young people part without a kiss, and quite at the last moment Shura discloses that her remarks about returning to her fiancé were untrue. Like Alyosha, she will be alone. Already regarding Alyosha as a tragic hero, one begins to ache at this moment—one watches helplessly, and Chukhrai understands that this will occur; he wishes to underscore the terrible consequences of life or love held in abeyance, the irrevocability of time and destiny. For the first time in the film, one *must* identify with Alyosha, and, of course, the suspense builds from here toward the last memorable sequence: Alyosha's meeting with his mother.

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Rudolf Rhombert as the painter and Heinz Rühmann as Herr Buchsbaum in A MAN GOES THROUGH THE WALL.

of satirical and situational; and who else produces comedies? From Germany, a nation never notorious for its sense of humor, we would hardly have expected the sardonic *Rosemarie* or the firmly mocking *Aren't We Wonderful*, much less a whimsical comedy. Yet such exactly is *Ein Mann geht durch die Wand.* The film, produced in Germany with German actors, is not, however, an entirely German production: its director is Ladislao Vajda, a Hungarian, and the script is based on a story by the Frenchman Marcel Aymé.

The success of whimsy depends on the creation of one genuinely and originally absurd premise, which we are made somehow to accept; the sensitive and not overdone working out of its consequences, at which we must be amused; and, perhaps, the creation of appealing characters, with whom we can sympathize. In this film we find all three of these essentials.

The story is that of Herr Buchsbaum (we never learn his first name), a petty clerk in the government Revenue Office. Frustrated by a tyrannical new boss, by a seductive waitress whose husband menaces him, and, worst of all, by a pretty French widow who moves in next door to him, Herr Buchsbaum feels that he is "up against a wall." (He says as much to his old professor.) Then suddenly Herr Buchsbaum is given the miraculous power to go through walls! From here on, the film explores the possibilities of this situation: Herr Buchsbaum, sticking his head through the wall of the boss's office, gets his revenge by terrorizing the authoritarian boss into grovelling insanity. He walks through a row of shops, stealing a pencil in a stationery store in order to write a message in a jewelry store (signing it "Superman") to tell the proprietor that he has stolen a diamond necklace. He walks out of his prison cell and into the police commissioner's apartment to get more comfortable bedding for his cell cot. These situations are predictable, but they are nicely handled and not stretched out to the point of tedium. The technical effects are adequately produced—only once do we see a gummy wall give way slightly to Herr Buchsbaum's penetrating finger.

In the character of Herr Buchsbaum, Heinz Rühmann, who is best remembered here as the "Captain from Köpenick," plays a polite, gentle little man who would like to be a big man, but who is so embarrassed by his sudden talent that he goes to see a psychiatrist to find out what is wrong. (He is given tranquillizers.) Rühmann here is every bit as much in character as he was in the role of the blustering Captain. Nicole Courcel, as the pretty neighbor, is not impressive as an actress (she does not really have much of a part), but she has a fresh-looking face. The minor characters are superbly cast, and with them a note of satire enters the film. There is Herr Buchsbaum's painter friend (played by Rudolf Rhomberg), whose only comment to Herr Buchsbaum's pathetic outpourings is a request for a loan; the boss, Herr Pickler (played by Hubert von Meyerinck), is a caricature of the hysterical tyrant, whose eventual insanity we accept gratefully. In contrast to his "misfortune" is that of Herr Fuchs (Rudolf Vogel), a pathetic boot-licker who becomes Pickler's favorite. When Fuchs reveals to the rest of the office staff that the reason for his boot-licking is his poverty and his wife's ill-health, a jarring note of realism is inserted. Because Fuchs is truly pitiable and because we do not despise him in the same way we despise Pickler, he does not fit in with the tone of the rest of the picture. The object of satire must remain one-dimensional, lest we sympathize with him.

But it is Buchsbaum, the little man who wants to be a "superman," who gets most of our sympathy. He, too, is one-dimensional: but his dimension is kindness. It is because of his kindness that Buchsbaum gets into trouble with Pickler in the first place: he is demoted because he is incapable of writing discourteous letters. It is kindness that gets him into jail (he will not let his innocent painter friend be falsely arrested); and his kindness—of course—earns him his reward at the end. Herr Buchsbaum *attempts* to be wicked and selfish. Mistaking his neighbor's doctor leaving her apartment for a lover, he decides that decency does not pay, and that the only way to win a woman is with money and jewels. This is the reason for his stealing the diamonds; but even this theft he commits for her sake, and when she is frightened at finding the diamonds in her apartment, he takes them back and drops them through the ceiling of the store. He also returns the huge parcel of bank notes which he has stolen from a vault. Herr Buchsbaum is really incapable of doing evil or unkindness; and we are therefore happy to see our expectations confirmed at the end, when Herr Buchsbaum wins the young widow after all and is chosen as the new boss of the office, since his courteous letters have had the best results of any. Human kindness must, after all, be rewarded by human compensations; and to his relief, Herr Buchsbaum loses the ability to walk through walls.—HARRIET R. POLT

Romeo, Juliet, and Darkness

Ceskoslovensky Film. Director: Jiri Weiss. Script: Jiri Weiss and Jan Otcenasek. Photography: Vaclav Hanus. Music: Jiri Srnka. With Ivan Mistrik, Dana Smutna, Jirina Sejbalova, Blanka Bohdanova, Jiri Kodet, Eva Mrazova, Karla Chadimova.

Surely not another boy and girl torn apart by the engines of war? Well, yes, but stop. There are ways of doing this, *Ballad of a Soldier*'s way, for one, that leave you more conscious of a firm hand on the cutter's scissors than of any irreparable loss. Jiri Weiss' way is to put the lovers in a world so closely observed that the cutting edge of its meanness is all around them. This is no "poem," not only tender at the center but soft all over. When there is lyricism, the tinny tinkle of the prosaic is never far off.

Take one remarkable scene. The boy has hidden the Jewish girl in an abandoned storeroom. Nearby, in the same house, people are sleeping, getting and spending, trying to keep going. Outside the German trucks go by and the loud-speakers, silent now, may bleat again at any moment. Inside the room, the boy, who can only see her at night, asks the girl, "Shall we go dancing tonight?" Clumsily, they begin to dance, the dance becoming a waltz, picking up speed until the room is whirling around them. And then, in that whirl, the two figures are revolving through an open sky, laughing but apart, each in his separate arc. The pace slows down, the room comes back, the boy stumbles on a bucket, tries to embrace the girl, and she breaks away. Love doesn't come all at once, and while it grows, the practical, the petty, meanness in the sense of both cheapness and cruelty, closes in on them.

There isn't a trace of symbolism or conclusion-drawing in any of this. Dana Smutna, the girl, doesn't look Jewish, and if she weren't so beautiful, the boy might not have fallen in love with her. His feeling is quite a different thing from the kindness he gives the Jewish family leaving for a concentration camp at the film's beginning. He watches, with the rest of the tenants, as they go off with a wheelbarrow over the cobbled street, joltingly followed by the camera. He makes no political gestures; it is the unwitting villains, the witless, the Nazis themselves, who look through the person to find the label. Late in the film, when the girl is discovered, there is still hope for her. Despite the scrambling for food, the mother's sharp-eyed bookkeeping that makes her remodel a cast-off dress for the sluttish new tenant, in the face of the pressures that make a sympathetic teacher recite a eulogy to Heydrich, these people are still decent. It's only when the girl's Star of David strikes them blind that they dismiss her from the company of "good Czechs" and see her

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only as a threat. Once she's out of the way, they can get on with the things that matter—hemlines, margarine, examinations, pets. Through cutting sometimes as abrupt as Bardem's in *Death of a Cyclist*, Weiss makes a complete break between the boy's "normal" life and the time he spends with the girl, and Ivan Mistrik's gifted playing makes him, not a different person, but more of a person, in the storeroom. In one scene, a silly girl chatters at him and suddenly he sees her but hears only the loudspeaker and the danger it implies for Hanka alone in the storeroom. In another, the trollop tries to make love to him, and a moment later Hanka's bare arm takes a pitcher of water from him in an image of startling purity.

The film is full of accidents, of objects, none of them standing for something else but all of them taken for what they are and heightened, sometimes unbearably. For once, a bird is not a symbol of the unfettered spirit; while the girl is being hunted, this one chirps at a level too shrill to be borne. The script by Weiss and Jan Otcenasek is beautifully constructed, taking full advantage of the mystery story's despised technique of the "plant." The guinea pig left by the departed family is later attacked by the collaborating whore's dog. A seized student's drafting tools are offered to a farm woman for food; refused, they turn up on his empty desk following his execution, and, after an awkward silence, the teacher makes his oration. The apartment house itself has an iron gate that everyone takes for granted; once the girl has walked through it, it's locked and the boy can only beat against it, crying "I won't allow it!"—one of the most poignant curtain lines ever heard in a film. For the final scene takes place, in time, seconds before the one that opened the film. The storeroom is empty, and a wind blows through it, ruffling the pages of the girl's book. An anti-climax? Perhaps, but if we saw another person now, with that familiar reminder that life, after all, goes on, we could only ask, "Why?"—Joseph Kostolefsky

Dana Smutna as Hanka in
Romeo, Juliet, and Darkness.

Macario

Director: Roberto Gavaldon. Clasa Films. Scenario: B. Traven. Camera: Gabriel Figueroa. With Ignacio Lopez Tarso, Pina Pellicer.

Macario is based quite faithfully on a story by B. Traven, who wrote *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*—though, if you missed the credit titles, you would never know it. The story is a somewhat insipid one concerning a poor woodcutter, whose discriminating charity is rewarded, by Death, with certain powers of healing the mortally sick. Macario (the woodcutter) offends the powers of the church, is hounded and captured by the Inquisition, escapes, pleads with Death for a reprieve and is refused. (In the final scenes Death is presented as presiding over a cavern full of candles, each of which represents a human life. Macario's candle is burning low and he snatches it up and runs away; but there's not much you can do with a candle stump, and the woodcutter dies.)

Despite Figueroa's camera work, *Macario* is lusterless, and its images are curiously without power; they set up no reverberations. Indeed, the film is evocative of Mexico only in the way it would have been if made by MGM, using a company of imported actors. The flaw is surely in the scenario, which has no pungency whatsoever: it is not so much simple as superficial. To put it another way, the simplicity resides not in the peasants' view of life, but in the commercial writer's view of peasants. Along with *White Reindeer* this reviewer finds it to be one of those legends we doubt were ever legendary.—R. H. Turner

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See You Tomorrow

Directed by Janusz Morgenstern. Produced by Film Polski. Screenplay by Cybulski and Kobiela. With Teresa Tuszynska, Zbigniew Cybulski, and the students of the satirical theater, "Bim-Bom," in Gdansk (Danzig).

Polish young theater people as seen in SEE YOU TOMORROW *(Teresa Tuszynska, center)*

This film attempts the sort of thing films usually don't. Through the tale of a student theater director's longing for the lovely capricious daughter of a wealthy French diplomat, it seeks to construct a strange cinematic fairy tale with somewhat poetic overtones and at the same time show the inner life. The method is a very special one, introduced by a device which is used again in the ending: the narrator is shown, alone in his theater, speaking his dreams to a puppet used in some of the acts. If it is not a complete success, the film nonetheless must be lauded for an unusual and difficult style upheld most of the way.

From the very beginning we are led to expect, by the student narrator, a "certain kind of tale," and the camera is suddenly catching water by moonlight as we still hear his voice on the soundtrack saying, "Sometimes we want to be away from others, not because we don't desire their company, but because we love them too much." The same water by day is a city canal by which, abruptly, inexplicably, he meets the girl he spends the rest of the film either pining for or chasing after. A morning tennis date the following day proves a bust (he is a miserable player) and sets the mood for a good deal of what comes after: she practically deserts our Romeo to flirt gaily with fawning males nearby, at which point the hero departs, but not without having had delivered to her a puppet, which also provides her with an address where she can reach him.

From there on the chase leads through intimate theater performances, melees in girls' dorms, and a few quiet romantic interludes sandwiched between more outrageous and marvelous scenes; running on the beach or being their completely natural, unadorned, scatterbrained selves in church or museums. By a turn of corner or whim the girl, played sparklingly by Miss Tuszynska, is either there or not there, his or no one's or everyone's. Zbigniew Cybulski, whom we know as the Jimmy-Dean-type Resistance fighter in *Ashes and Diamonds*, played the part of the director somewhat ambiguously. His Jacek was by fits and starts nervous or in absolute command of his art in the theater, a bumbler to the extreme or possessed of a subtle sensitivity and fertile imagination. None of this was inappropriate to the conception of the character, but because (and here we speculate) it was so much like the real-life Cybulski (much was made of the fact that he is actually the director of the self-same theater in Poland), it did not seem to fuse here in an effective way. Cybulski played the part with occasional deep understanding and tenderness, and he played it colorfully: too colorfully.

Still, if it is anybody's film, it is his. He both makes it and breaks it, having himself a field day with this one, and having had, one suspects, more to do with the over-all conception and tonal effect of the film than anyone else. The girl's fine work tends to get lost in this powerful exhibition of a single personality. It is unmistakably Cybulski who creates, maintains, and changes almost at will the moods of superficial longing for social status and identity and the more personal and profound longing for sexual and emotional companionship. Both play a part

in his interest in her and in the film's essential continuity and lyrical overtones. The best scenes are those that take place during one afternoon date, when they laugh and carouse on the beach, joke and pout in church (where they go through a mock wedding ceremony), and kiss sweetly under a merchant's awning before an assembled crowd gathered for shelter near the church. There are also some very fine scenes in the theater, where unusual puppet shows and revues are performed nightly.

There is enough humor to balance the absurdity and sadness of Jacek's position: he sees she is not "tuned in" to him a good deal of the time she is with him, he sees she is a silly, hopeless 18-year-old at times, but her charm and gaiety and vitality have put him into a state where it doesn't matter. In the end, because she is not speaking his language and he was listening to his own, they do not see each other on the night before she is due to leave with her family. Back in the theater, where he hasn't set foot for two weeks (squarely in the middle of rehearsal) he tells the end of the story to his puppet, adding, "That's the way such stories are supposed to end, *n'est-ce pas*?"

Jacek is, of course, both poet and fool. We must admire Cybulski's effort to bring to the screen the kind of irony usually best done in fiction. For its unusual style and conception and for its convincing air of honesty and truth, not to mention the difficult portrayals asked of two relative newcomers to the screen, *See You Tomorrow* may prove to be a lasting addition to the film repertoire.—NORMAN C. MOSER

Era Notte a Roma

Director: Roberto Rossellini. Scenario: Diego Fabbri, S. Amidei, B. Rondi, and Rossellini. Camera: Carlo Carlini. Music: Renzo Rossellini. With: Giovanna Ralli, Sergei Bondarchouk, Leo Genn, Peter Baldwin, Renato Salvatore, Hannes Messemer.

[*A Night in Rome* replaced *La Dolce Vita* at the Festival at the last moment.] Though the title could be mistaken as an introduction to glamor, it merely indicates (as the Italian title better suggests) that in 1943–44 there wasn't too much light in Rome: Germans and Black Shirts regulated the lives of its people. Rossellini once more has brought forward the subject of the Second World War, to which he has devoted the best of his efforts since 1944: *Open City, Paisá, Germany Year Zero, Europe '51.* (Even *Generale della Rovere,* of last year, shows Rossellini delving into the ugliness of war.) How justified is his insistence on the subject? How probable is a second success after the overwhelming truth and sharpness of *Open City*?

The plot of *Era Notte a Roma* is a complex one, moving from the Tyrrhenian village of the opening, shortly after the Armistice of September 8, 1943, to Rome. There we follow the hazards confronting three Allied soldiers—an American (Peter Baldwin), an Englishman (Leo Genn), and a Russian (Sergei Bondarchouk). They are hidden by an alluring, dark Roman girl (Giovanna Ralli; she won the best-actress prize for this role) who is active in the black market though her fiancé (Renato Salvatore) is a young Communist playing hide-and-seek with the Fascist police. When she discovers that the Germans will shoot anyone who gives refuge to prisoners, she is terrified and wants to get rid of them at once. Ultimately, on Christmas Eve, they attempt to steal down the block to a partisan arms factory, where the Russian stays (he is later killed by the Germans) but the other two return, and later complications set in concerning the girl's relations with the Englishman, who finally kills a sinister, crippled former priest who pursues her; as she sits petrified by the immensity of these events, the Allies enter Rome and the crowds cheer in the streets.

All this is rendered, in the nearly three hours of the film, in a manner that can only be called prolix—though long, and complicated, it does not provide real profundity or detailed inquiry into the characters' development. Not that the director's intentions weren't good or sincere (though one might suspect that he capitulated to the temptation of imitating his better self),

in his interest in her and in the film's essential continuity and lyrical overtones. The best scenes are those that take place during one afternoon date, when they laugh and carouse on the beach, joke and pout in church (where they go through a mock wedding ceremony), and kiss sweetly under a merchant's awning before an assembled crowd gathered for shelter near the church. There are also some very fine scenes in the theater, where unusual puppet shows and revues are performed nightly.

There is enough humor to balance the absurdity and sadness of Jacek's position: he sees she is not "tuned in" to him a good deal of the time she is with him, he sees she is a silly, hopeless 18-year-old at times, but her charm and gaiety and vitality have put him into a state where it doesn't matter. In the end, because she is not speaking his language and he was listening to his own, they do not see each other on the night before she is due to leave with her family. Back in the theater, where he hasn't set foot for two weeks (squarely in the middle of rehearsal) he tells the end of the story to his puppet, adding, "That's the way such stories are supposed to end, *n'est-ce pas*?"

Jacek is, of course, both poet and fool. We must admire Cybulski's effort to bring to the screen the kind of irony usually best done in fiction. For its unusual style and conception and for its convincing air of honesty and truth, not to mention the difficult portrayals asked of two relative newcomers to the screen, *See You Tomorrow* may prove to be a lasting addition to the film repertoire.—NORMAN C. MOSER

Era Notte a Roma

Director: Roberto Rossellini. Scenario: Diego Fabbri, S. Amidei, B. Rondi, and Rossellini. Camera: Carlo Carlini. Music: Renzo Rossellini. With: Giovanna Ralli, Sergei Bondarchouk, Leo Genn, Peter Baldwin, Renato Salvatore, Hannes Messemer.

[*A Night in Rome* replaced *La Dolce Vita* at the Festival at the last moment.] Though the title could be mistaken as an introduction to glamor, it merely indicates (as the Italian title better suggests) that in 1943–44 there wasn't too much light in Rome: Germans and Black Shirts regulated the lives of its people. Rossellini once more has brought forward the subject of the Second World War, to which he has devoted the best of his efforts since 1944: *Open City, Paisá, Germany Year Zero, Europe '51.* (Even *Generale della Rovere,* of last year, shows Rossellini delving into the ugliness of war.) How justified is his insistence on the subject? How probable is a second success after the overwhelming truth and sharpness of *Open City*?

The plot of *Era Notte a Roma* is a complex one, moving from the Tyrrhenian village of the opening, shortly after the Armistice of September 8, 1943, to Rome. There we follow the hazards confronting three Allied soldiers—an American (Peter Baldwin), an Englishman (Leo Genn), and a Russian (Sergei Bondarchouk). They are hidden by an alluring, dark Roman girl (Giovanna Ralli; she won the best-actress prize for this role) who is active in the black market though her fiancé (Renato Salvatore) is a young Communist playing hide-and-seek with the Fascist police. When she discovers that the Germans will shoot anyone who gives refuge to prisoners, she is terrified and wants to get rid of them at once. Ultimately, on Christmas Eve, they attempt to steal down the block to a partisan arms factory, where the Russian stays (he is later killed by the Germans) but the other two return, and later complications set in concerning the girl's relations with the Englishman, who finally kills a sinister, crippled former priest who pursues her; as she sits petrified by the immensity of these events, the Allies enter Rome and the crowds cheer in the streets.

All this is rendered, in the nearly three hours of the film, in a manner that can only be called prolix—though long, and complicated, it does not provide real profundity or detailed inquiry into the characters' development. Not that the director's intentions weren't good or sincere (though one might suspect that he capitulated to the temptation of imitating his better self),

but obviously the angry impulse, the desire to testify, defend, and celebrate, so tangible and convincing in *Open City* and *Paisá,* are now gone. This change is understandable: men *do* change, even if they don't or *shouldn't* forget; hence, they reëxamine the past with different eyes, they have learned new things which make them able to render their past in a different language.

But in comparing the early and late Rossellini, one immediately sees that the central trait of his art—his bare neorealism—has been transformed into a semirealistic style of evocation tinged with literary flair. Even his black and white now seems brownish and grey. And he is thus led into what are both historical and artistic mistakes. So, for instance, food and wine are consumed in easy plenty in *A Night in Rome.* The dimness of electric light or the total absence of light is not indicated; the cruelty of winter, without heat or proper clothing, is far too mildly depicted. Though Giovanna Ralli has lovely shoulders and looks well in a black slip, no Roman girl in a cold room would have lounged around in that costume.

But the more serious mistakes have to do with the over-all conception and realization. If *A Night in Rome* was to reëstablish the feeling of utter oppressiveness, of choking limitedness in which a human being found himself during the German occupation; if the lives of the three prisoners confined to the attic were to come forth with the total incapability of movement that they must have experienced; if that section of Rome was to vibrate with the hectic animation of those days, when communications were scarce, telephones rarely functioned, mail and papers came sporadically, food was never sufficient, and people disappeared one after the other; then it is almost completely a failure.

In spite of these and other errors, *A Night in Rome* succeeds in keeping and projecting a sense of dignity. This is achieved through acting, setting, and photography that, if not exceptional, are always good and expressive. A special word must be reserved for Leo Genn, who displays a vast range of perceptions, intuitions, inventions, all very well linked with the specific dramatic situation. His attempts with the language, for instance, or, more often, his mimicry, are always convincing without being histrionic; there is, in fact, in all his interpretation, an immense understanding of the character, the place, the time. Giovanna Ralli does her job well, though her make-up and costumes are often against her. She is to be particularly praised for her veracity in portraying the change that takes place in the girl after her fiancé's death.

Visually the film has no remarkable merits, though the roofs do succeed in acquiring a sort of vibrant quality as if conspirators themselves. A true magic note, however, is struck when the three prisoners, after having spent their first night in the attic unaware of its location, discover the monuments of Rome from the window and realize where they are. This is done economically, unpretentiously, unexpectedly—as reality itself takes hold of us.

A Night in Rome, then, with its *tough life* does constitute an interesting replacement for the *Sweet Life* of Fellini; it is, however, more so in its intentions than in its realization.—Letizia Ciotti Miller

A Stranger Knocks

(En Fremmed Banker Paa) Director: Johan Jacobsen. Scenario: Finn Methling. Camera: Ake Borglund and Johan Jacobsen. Music: Eric Fiehn. With: Birgitte Federspiel, Preben Lerdorff Rye. Flamingo Film Studio.

It is difficult for us to know quite what to expect from Denmark's studios. There is of course Carl Dreyer, but his works of grey psychological religiosity and Nordic severity contrast sharply with Erik Balling's beautiful film, *Quivitoq,* and Johannes Allen's recent study of adolescent unrest in Copenhagen, *The Young Have No Time.* Despite the undeniable visual polish of all Danish films we have seen, they seem to be intensely preoccupied with introspective questions of free will, sexual behavior *vs.* the accepted codes, religious beliefs, guilt

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and retribution, etc. The stories strive for strict honesty, and are presented almost starkly and unemotionally. In Johan Jacobsen's *A Stranger Knocks,* the problematic themes mentioned above are finely distributed through the screenplay and, since a love story is at the center of the action, the approach seems intentionally detached, creating a disturbing *romance noire.*

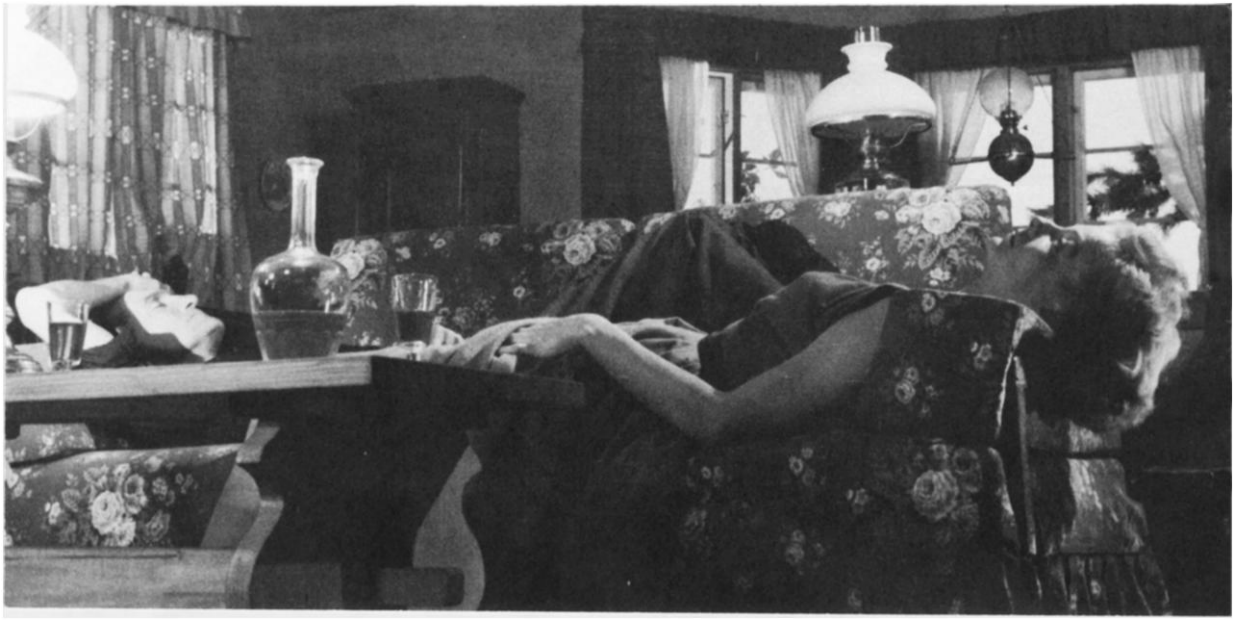
The film moves slowly and deliberately into another cinematic experiment in postwar love-tragedy: it is not as symbolically treated as the Polish film, *The Last Day of Summer,* but is linked to it in mood. Vibeke (Birgitte Federspiel) is a young widow, living alone in a beach cottage on the coast. Her husband was tortured and killed during the Resistance by Hitler's Danish collaborators. When a strange man (Preben Lerdorff Rye) wanders in out of a storm, Vibeke gives him shelter, and, after a day, the two become attracted to one another. The man responds to Vibeke's physical beauty and desires, and the lovers soon yield completely to their passions. This idyll, lasting about a week, ends in disastrous violence. The man is not only a fugitive from justice, but he is the torturer and murderer of Vibeke's husband. Upon discovering this, she shoots him.

The simple development of intimacy between the lovers and the atmosphere evoked by Jacobsen's wintry-looking beaches, bristled forests, and damp, rainy countryside, give the film a foreboding quality, although Eric Fiehn's score is unfortunately banal. Good and evil are intertwined in human passions, guilt is lived with and implacable. A little surprisingly, one feels that in Denmark the nightmare of past wartime deeds lies just beneath the surface of contemporary life.

Vibeke's recognition of her demon-lover (by a tattoo on his arm, once described to her by an escaped witness to her husband's murder) comes during an abandoned act of sexual intercourse, and her scream of anguish is merged with her cry of ecstasy. The frankness of this sequence, which utilizes a sexual climax as the moment of dramatic crisis and revelation, has never been equaled, and for the American spectator, at any rate, the scene is startlingly explicit. In contrast to that celebrated *fleur du Malle, Les Amants,* Jacobsen's film is a direct antithesis of romanticism.

The dénouement is unsatisfactory: Vibeke asks forgiveness of God and her dead husband, kneeling on a scraggly hillside with the planks

A STRANGER KNOCKS: *Preben Lerdorff Rye and Birgitte Federspiel.*



of a wooden bench forming half a crucifix. The weakness and rather absurd tidiness of this is not enough to spoil the power of *A Stranger Knocks,* however.

The performances of the two leading players are superb, though one may doubt that Rye has the sort of attractions which would so quickly move the woman from loneliness to lust. This is partly a matter of presentation, for the camera and musical score immediately define him as an untrustworthy "heavy." Birgitte Federspiel, however, in her manner and appearance, convinces the spectator that tragedy's weight may be carried lightly upon the shoulders, and she evokes a dark, deep side of feminine nature which embellishes this film with a pronounced quality of conviction.—ALBERT JOHNSON

Black Pearls and *Be Good All Your Life*

BLACK PEARLS (Crni Biseri) Director: Tomo Janic. Scenario: Jug Grizelj. Camera: Eduard Bogdanic. Music: Bojan Adamic. With Severin Bjelic, Franjo Tuma, Milivoje Jevremovic, Rajko Jovanovic.

BE GOOD ALL YOUR LIFE (Legy Jo Mindhalalig) Director: Laszlo Ranody. Scenario: Jozsef Darvas. Camera: J. Bedel. Music: Endre Szervanszki.

Both these films are about boys: the "black pearls" are inmates of a reform school on a small Adriatic island, and "Be good all your life" is the message of a mother to her poor 12-year-old son studying on scholarship at Debrecen, a Hungarian provincial town. In treatment, however, the films are wholly dissimilar.

Black Pearls is an oversimplified account of the means a new headmaster chooses to win the love and respect of these rapscallions: granting that his methods are telescoped, they are, nonetheless, psychologically valid. The boys themselves, led by Milivoje Jevremovic as Sasa, and Rajko Joanovic as Dzo Le Noir, are a suitably heterogeneous and unglamorous lot. ("Mother," queries a village boy, "are those pioneers?")

Severin Bjelic brings credibility to the somewhat overidealized pivotal role of the headmaster. The scenario is pat, but quite absorbing. Tomo Janic's direction is sometimes obtrusive, sometimes too cute and sentimental, yet well-paced and calculated to maintain attention. The music (Bojan Adamic) is alternately circus-like and melodramatic and altogether unsuitable. As the narrator cautions at the start, this is a pleasant film about an unpleasant subject, and its value is no higher—and certainly no lower—than good entertainment.

Be Good All Your Life is different in every way. The outside problems, the "plot"—i.e., the gradual crushing of a talented boy by the events of a lost lottery ticket, a mix-up in a love affair (not his), his distractedness at school, and his subsequent condemnation by the Disciplinary Committee—are too loose, too peripheral, and not convincing, but the unraveling of a young boy's soul and the almost surreal presentation of the world as he sees it are done through superb photography by J. Bedel and an excellent musical score by Endre Szervanszki, presided over with love by director Lazlo Ranody, and acted believably all around, especially by Laci Toth, a marvelous young actor who shiningly and simply portrays the 12-year-old Misi Nyilas.

The director and the scenarist would have us focus wholly on this fragile boy, with the china face and the wide, round eyes, so that we once again experience our own youthful frustrations —the poetry stealthily written, the young girl secretly adored, the little bird furtively protected, the secret society formed with oaths and undying loyalty, the sense of falling farther and farther behind, out of step with the world.

If praise is to be accorded careful craftsmanship, expert use of cinematic technique, and perspicacious insight into younger humanity, then this film deserves the highest praise. But if, after all, drama is Action, this film for all its many merits fails to become an irresistibly forceful work.—KENNETH J. LETNER

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Mein Kampf

Directed by Erwin Leiser. Produced by Tore Sjoberg.

According to the San Francisco International Film Festival brochure, most of the footage in this Swedish documentary was taken from Russian material—"long and delicate negotiations secured the prints." *Mein Kampf* contains much fascinating material, a good deal of it unavailable in this country, or available only in the vaults of the Library of Congress. The film covers the history of the Third Reich, with some still photographs of Hitler's early life.

The most interesting scenes include Van Der Lubbe's trial, the trial of the conspirators after the attempt on Hitler's life in July 1944, and some telephoto close-ups of blond youths which must be presumed to have come from Leni Riefenstahl's legendary *Sieg des Glaubens* or *Tag der Freiheits* [see the Fall 1960 issue of *FQ*]. Unfortunately, the footage devoted to the indescribably horrible existence of the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto during the war eventually becomes so overwhelming as to vitiate the effect of the film as a whole.

It is unfortunate that the film's producers overlooked the existence of newsreels of Hitler's 1924 trial (re-edited by the Nazis, with a commentary, in 1930), and the memorable newsreels of Horst Wessel's funeral from *Blutendes Deutschland* (now available, with a fictional re-creation from *Hans Westmar*, from the Museum of Modern Art Film Library). *Mein Kampf*, despite its unbalanced structure, will remain for many years a fascinating document, of the greatest interest to students of history, even more than to the student of film propaganda.—CHRISTOPHER BISHOP

Book Reviews

Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality, by Siegfried Kracauer. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960. $10.00.)

Kracauer's extraordinary book is, or ought to become, the bible of neorealism. It is the most elaborate and carefully worked out theoretical book on film to appear since Spottiswoode's *Grammar* (published in 1935); and it summarizes, thoroughly though not eloquently, the view of film which has been dominant for some decades and came to its climax in postwar Italian film-making.

This is not, of course, the only basic theoretical view that can be taken of the film as a medium. But it is the most powerful, ramified, and useful so far devised; and it rests upon a long and honorable tradition of film-making. Though its days may perhaps be numbered, Kracauer's contribution in codifying it more coherently and explicitly than has ever been done before is a major one. And the book's practical usefulness, as a focus of film thought and a handy sort of landmark, will surely prove immense.

Everyone with any interest at all in film must read the book; and there is little reason to give any extended account of its contents here. Its general position is, however, that film is not an "art" in the usual sense, but rather a means of seizing on what Kracauer variously terms "the flow of life," "camera-reality," and the like. The good in films arises when the film-maker realizes this and subordinates himself to this peculiar nature of the camera; the bad arises when he tries to incorporate "artificial" techniques or ends more proper to the stage, novel, and so on.

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Nothing that Kracauer says along these lines is new, so far as I can determine; it is familiar doctrine, to which hundreds of writers have made contributions in the past. In Kracauer's hands, however, it takes on a substance and form never before attained. And there are odd surprises. Those who do not know the Kracauer who wrote *Orpheus in Paris* (a biography of Offenbach) will be amazed at his gentle handling of the film musical, surely the most artificial of all film genres. And countering the rather dogged argumentation of the book (it is hard reading, no question about it) one finds delightful asides which, though they never display really wicked doubts, at least demonstrate that the author's concern for theory has not dimmed his delight in the medium. Every reader will probably groan as some favorite film goes through the Kracauer meat-chopper; but the results are almost always acceptable. (There are, however, a certain number of factual errors in the book, which seems odd considering the long period it was in preparation.)

The troubles with *Theory of Film* seem at first glance minor. Its use of examples is somewhat cursory and general, for instance. Well, one might think, so it must be in a book attempting to provide a real theoretical overview of the film. Yet on second thought, one suspects that if Kracauer had attempted to deal in real detail with *even one film* the entire theoretical balance of his argument would have been put in serious jeopardy. Not fatal jeopardy, to be sure: in its basic lines, its fundamental assumptions, the theory is a useful and workable one. But, obviously, it is not *general* enough; and, not paradoxically at all, its theoretical limitations become apparent precisely through the way in which Kracauer handles the actual fabric of films.

He speaks many times in phrases like "the camera's ingrained desire for indefinite rambling." (He sounds sometimes like Dziga-Vertov, but more often like Zavattini.) And in a general way we all know what this means: we like, these days, things that seem real; and if the camera seems to capture the real unawares we are especially pleased.

Is the epistemological and aesthetic issue contained in the above term "seems" a trivial or academic one? I think not: on it, I maintain, arose not only a watershed in philosophy but one in film history as well. And observe what Kracauer does in this connection. After the above-quoted phrase, he goes on to illustrate by saying: "In *Limelight* Chaplin knowingly avoids such a finale [an "ultimate solution"]. He concludes with a shot which reintroduces the flow of life: the camera moves away from the death scene in the wing toward Terry who is performing on stage."

Good. Now a man who had never written a shooting script or watched carefully the actual production process might say that the camera movement in this scene can be construed as "indefinite rambling." (The familiar ending of the Tramp pictures is a similar case.) But surely it is anything but indefinite and anything but rambling: it is, in fact, articulate, purposeful, *artful*.

And after finishing Kracauer's book one becomes uncomfortably aware that his method of argument has this consistent defect: so anxious is he to believe that all filmic virtue springs from nonart, from nonformativeness, from submergence in the world, that he cannot bear to look closely at any given scene. For indeed, even in the hands of the early Rossellini, every given scene has some kind of form; it is not an accident. It *is* part of the "indefinitely extended" world, linked to all that world by visible and not so visible links; but it is only a part. And the ordering of the relation between that part and what we please ourselves to think of as the whole is precisely the province of the director who creates the film. And to understand how this ordering is accomplished requires very detailed analysis.

In sober fact Kracauer's aesthetic scheme is too simple to cope with the actual strategies of film artists—or even with the most extreme programmatic neorealist statements, such as Zavattini's proposal for *Italia Mia*, through which elements of control and artifice peep in every paragraph.

It seems to me that the real and extraordinary virtues of the film spring precisely from the tension *between* their tendency to seem inert, part of the great indefinite web Kracauer writes of, and their created form. It is this dialectical play of order and chaos that provides filmmakers, in an enormous variety of ways, with the energy that makes of film a potential art form. Kracauer, by concentrating so intently on one side of this counterpoise, inevitably neglects the other; yet without it his side would soon cease to interest us.*

I do not mean to imply that Kracauer is against "stories" and the like; and his classification of story types is a useful one. But he is edgy about such matters, and largely confines himself to saying (there is a certain amount of redundancy in the book) that those akin to the flow of life are good, while those which deal in drawing rooms or the prearranged emotional dance of the stage are bad. True. But what of the exact ways in which the potentially good materials are handled? Here we find ourselves on our own again; Kracauer gives us the word, but does not make it flesh. (Sometimes almost literally: of *Brief Encounter*—which he likes—he notes that it "clearly shows that films with a contrived intrigue may well be episodic in spirit." And his discussion of the Roman prostitute episode in *Paisan*, while surely correct in its conclusions, is curiously insufficient in relying on dicta such as "All these chance occurrences defy chance.")

Kracauer's work is thus in one sense an admirable and largely conclusive book: it lays down the line on the film and reality in a general way. Few, even of those most interested in new theoretical developments, would deny that much of this general position must be retained. *Theory of Film* is indeed a landmark. But like all landmarks it raises the question "Where do we go from here?" The direction is known, I think, to no one. But perhaps we must start by regaining some of the ground which Kracauer has given up. Surely it is not necessary, as he does, to abandon those realms of experience from which poetry, fiction, and art have drawn in the human past, in favor of what he likes to call "actuality." These are concessions which, on the record of Bergman, Fellini, Kurosawa, Resnais, Buñuel, film has no need to make. But of the strategies of these men we still have almost everything to learn, and perhaps *Theory of Film* will do its greatest service, in the long run. by reminding us of this.—

ERNEST CALLENBACH

The Three Faces of the Film: The Art, the Dream, the Cult, by Parker Tyler. (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1960. $6.95.)

One's first reaction to the film criticism of Parker Tyler, of which this volume is a collection, is almost inevitably on the level of style. He is a complicated writer, as any dip into the book will show:

"If it was true in 1950, it was probably meant to be true now. Yet one opines that this allegation, on the corollary evidence, is, and was, false. Real murder has taken place within the professional colony of Hollywood as elsewhere in the world, but exactly because of that fact, discretion forbade that the rough stuff of *Sunset Boulevard* should bear any tangible resemblance to it."

In this case, as in most of Tyler's contributions to film criticism over the years, what he is saying is more often than not perfectly sound. But readers feel that he is trying to make film criticism seem like a more esoteric affair than it really is. Neophytes in film criticism sometimes conclude that Tyler is an obscurantist; old hands sometimes conclude that he plays foolish games.

Such reservations noted, however, one must recognize that Tyler is acute, usually to the point, and concerned with aspects of film art that receive far too little attention from other

* I explored this issue as it appears in questions of documentary structure in "The Understood Antagonist and Other Observations," *FQ*, Summer 1959.

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Tyler also writes art criticism, and some of the erudition he doubtless deploys to advantage in that field does not seem altogether apt in the film connection. But this is easy to forgive: if he sees more ramifications than are there, too often other critics do not see the ones that *are* there.

Ideally Tyler's book should be read in conjunction with Kracauer's. Both men have ideas; both write seriously. Both are crotchety writers, as perhaps anyone must be to write film criticism these days. And both have a maddening knack of formality, of self-consciousness, which is probably a reflection of a hidden fear all film critics have: that they might better be spending their time at something else. They can both be pretentious and woolly, and like all of us they do not think hard and clearly enough. We do not yet have the urbane, wise, candid, direct critic who will write weekly (or quarterly!) of films as V. S. Pritchett, say, writes of fiction. But maybe we are getting to the place where he would find readers if he came along.—ERNEST CALLENBACH

Kino, a History of the Russian and Soviet Film, by Jay Leyda. (New York: Macmillan, 1960. 32 pp. plates. $9.50.)

Jay Leyda's monumental study of the Russian film has been eagerly awaited for many years by students of the cinema, whose appetites had been whetted by the bits and pieces that appeared in various books and journals. Now that the work has at last made its appearance, *Kino* proves, for the most part, to be well worth waiting for.

The author arranges his material in well organized chapters, more or less year by year, including material of a general historical nature as well as that purely cinematic. To this reader, the most interesting part of the book is the section devoted to the prerevolutionary cinema, a subject that had been little explored until this volume. Although some may ask if it is worth spending over a quarter of the book on this period, it nonetheless makes fascinating reading, and is certain to raise considerable curiosity about these early films, which would seem to be far more advanced than might be casually assumed. Leyda also gives Leonid Andreyev his proper due as champion of the new art form in a period when it was hardly fashionable to be one. There is also an often humorous section on Tolstoi's clashes with the infant industry. Looking over the names of the prerevolutionary actors and actresses, one is again impressed at the number that became popular stars in Europe and America in the next decade.

The rest of the book has its ups and downs. In such a lengthy study, certain facets of the subject are certain to interest the author more than others, but if a few chapters are weak, one, "Witnessed Years, 1934–1937," is superb. During this period, Leyda studied film technique in the Soviet Union, met most of the leading cinema figures of the time, and was in Eisenstein's unit during the making of the ill-fated *Bezhin Meadow* at Armavir. In this chapter, the author handles his material with consummate skill, providing interesting material on a most confusing period. His reminiscences of Eisenstein are fascinating, but even more so are his reportings of the squabbles behind the scenes, the inevitable battles of creativity with bureaucracy.

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There is particular interest, too, in Leyda's account of the rise and fall of Boris Shumyatsky, a powerful portrait of a sinister figure which helps to explain some of the capricious changes in Soviet film policy during his regime.

While the "big three" Soviet directors have been discussed elsewhere in detail, and are also covered quite thoroughly here, it is a pleasure to find information about other masters, particularly Abram Room, whose *Bed and Sofa* Leyda brought to the United States.* This neglected figure is fast finding his proper place among the most important and interesting of Soviet directors.

On the debit side, it is frustrating to note the lack of more detailed information on films that have not had much discussion in the West: *Lieutenant Kije* is an example, for it must have been a better than average film if it stimulated Prokofiev to write one of his most sparkling scores. It would have been more rewarding to have included further discussion of such unknown works than to dwell at such length on already familiar material.

Another weakness of the book is its almost complete disregard of the post-1950 cinema, which is covered in a literal "Postscript" of eight pages. Although the view is held in some quarters that virtually nothing of importance has been produced in the Soviet Union in the last ten years, a number of interesting films should have been examined here in more detail, if only because information about them and their makers is extremely hard to find elsewhere.

Kino is hardly a book that one would want to read rapidly from cover to cover, but it is so well organized and smoothly written that it is a pleasure to browse through, a little at a time. It might also be noted that the documentation is really superb, the book having been brilliantly researched.

In the long run, the most valuable feature of *Kino* might well be the exhaustive credits at the end of the book. This section gives virtually complete statistics on almost every film discussed in the book, including cast and production credits, exact length, release date, and so forth. Undoubtedly this will be an enormous aid to the film student and program-note researcher of the future.

The only other volume of similar scope is Babinsky and Rinberg's *The Soviet Film Industry* (New York: Praeger, 1955), an important work which is still useful, concentrating more on the actual mechanism of Soviet film production than on the films themselves. Together, the two books provide a complete view of the Russian and Soviet film production scenes. [For a survey of contemporary Soviet film criticism, see the comprehensive article by Steven P. Hill in *Film Quarterly*, Fall 1960.]

The photographs at the end of *Kino* are somewhat peculiar, but of great interest, particularly the carefully selected stills from prerevolutionary productions, candids of Eisenstein at work, and some of the discarded scenes from *Potemkin*. These photographs provide a valuable supplement to the written material, far more than simply the usual compilation of familiar shots.

In a long-range estimate, *Kino* will certainly be of great value as the first thorough history of the Russian cinema by a man who knows his subject better than any other Westerner. Although it has small faults, it is a staggering achievement, and one that will not be superseded for many years to come.—DAVID STEWART HULL

16mm. Terms Used in Production of Nontheatrical Motion Pictures. University Film Producers Association. (Vol. 12, No. 2 of the *U.F.P.A. Journal*; available from 1885 Neil Avenue, Ohio State University, Columbus 10, Ohio.) A glossary, or specialized dictionary, can be an important item in a profession necessitating considerable technical communication

* A copy of this masterpiece resides in the vaults of the Museum of Modern Art, apparently once intended for the circulating collection, but now mysteriously awaiting its day of resurrection. In the meantime, a duplicate print can be viewed at George Eastman House in Rochester.

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THE ALAMO. If anything were needed to prove that neither a $12 million budget nor an all-star cast suffices to make a great motion picture, John Wayne's *The Alamo* now stands as abundant proof. Indeed, given a story as heroic as any in the annals of war, Wayne's irregulars have managed to flatten it as successfully as Santa Anna's forces did the fort itself. Where one should cry in this picture, he wants to laugh; where he should feel pain, he is only embarrassed. Frankie Avalon jumps up to rock a bit with a band that just happens to be in the mission, while the Mexicans lie waiting in the dark. One can only wish they would attack, if merely to get Frankie. Wayne plays Davy Crockett. His bulk and his brute force say nothing new here except that Crockett was a sentimental stumblebum. Under the mounting strain, Laurence Harvey abandons the Carolina accent of Col. William Travis for one which suggests that he wishes he were back in that room at the top. Richard Widmark as Jim Bowie creates something of the trapped idealism of that fighter. *The Alamo* is too long, too dull, too sentimental and, at crucial times, historically inaccurate. Despite the declared budget, we sometimes see the same men being killed over again. Wayne himself writes the epitaph in one of the film's most accurate lines. "This may sound like a Bible-beater yelling up a revival at a river-crossing camp meeting, but that don't change its truth." The truth is a hard, thin one—that some good men died bravely here. Wayne's fattening diet has changed it beyond all recognition.

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more than one instance. Anyone expecting the Duerrenmatt touch should read instead his novel *The Pledge,* based on the same material, but with a twist that might have made a good movie.

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various republics have the final say about domestic films. There have been two or three cases in the last year where the Federal Censorship Commission has said "No," but Censorship boards of Croatia and Slovenia have said "Yes."

So far as I can determine, there have been no cases where films have been censored formally on political grounds, one reason being, according to Jovan Ruzić, the Secretary General of the Association of Film Producers, that the film-makers themselves are very careful on this score. On the other hand, the film producers claim that the censorship board has been prudish. On several occasions the Association has protested these rulings to the Republic Government authorities and in at least one case succeeded in over-ruling the board (in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina).

The only trouble that the Association has had with foreign films was four or five years ago in connection with the film *Humoresque,* which was banned, I gather, on grounds of indecent exposure. About three-quarters of the films shown in Yugoslavia are American films. The federal authorities complain about this in vain both on the grounds of foreign-exchange difficulties and exposure to "negative" Western ideas, but since the final decision to buy a foreign film or not is in the hands of individual enterprises, i.e., outside the government, not too much can be done about it. The government is, of course, able to control to some extent—but by no means absolutely—the amount of foreign exchange available. The popularity of foreign films and the growing domestic film industry has, however, forced the government to require that a certain minimum percentage of all films shown be Yugoslav-made. In the period 1953–1957, 16 films were co-produced by Yugoslav and foreign film enterprises. Of these, only two involved Soviet-bloc nations. Yugoslav film industry spokesmen are highly desirous of co-producing films with American companies. Thus far, there have been none, although one film, *Miss Stone,* involving the story of an American missionary kidnapped by Macedonian revolutionaries in the early 1900's, was originally worked out in conjunction with an American firm, only to have arrangements fall through at the last moment.

While direct government interference is at a minimum, there is a good deal of indirect influencing of film production. There is, as a part of the Federal Executive Council, a Secretary for Culture and Education, and each of the republics has a Council of Culture. While these have no direct authority to interfere in the making of films, nonetheless they can and do influence the amounts of funds available and if necessary could intervene if film-making were to get seriously out of hand. Probably more important are the indirect political influences through the League of Communists and the Socialist Alliance, which are broad, front-type organizations. Generally speaking, the party does not interfere in film-making from any specific ideological point of view. The party's ideological commission, however, has devoted some attention to mild criticism of the film industry generally—thus far without much effect.

The Socialist Alliance has a commission which deals with communications generally. It is able to exert influence in two ways: through its members and through the fact that the Socialist Alliance controls in some way or other most of the motion picture theaters in Yugoslavia.* There are also *activs* of communist party members in each of the film-producing organizations. It should be stressed that film organizations are run very much as artistic-economic enterprises without interference from the party organizations, but, of course, the party members try to make their wills felt as individuals, and since they occupy many executive positions, they have some success. Nevertheless, Yugoslavian films have been remarkably free of crass ideological propaganda.

Each film-producing enterprise has a Workers Council elected by its employees. The Workers Council is elected by all employees, including manual workers. There is also an Artistic Council elected by the nonmanual workers. The Workers Council is concerned primarily with financial matters. The Artistic Council decides on what films to produce, who are to be the directors and actors, what kind of salaries are to be paid them, what kind of sets are to be used, etc. These things are subject to approval by the Workers Council. This often involves conflicts between the two groups, because the Workers Council has a tendency to take a dim view of what it considers expensive artistic extravaganzas. (Local arbitration boards settle disputes if they become really serious.)

Actors and directors are considered to be free agents in Yugoslavia, as a rule not being attached to any film enterprise. They make contracts for the production of one film only. Where there is a dispute over these contracts, it is settled by a commission of four members, two of whom are named by the Yugoslavia Association of Film Producers and two by the Republic Council of Culture in the Republic where the film enterprise in question is located. Nonartistic employees belong to a union of film workers which negotiates wage contracts for them.

The average salary to a director is 600,000 dinars for a film whereas the average star earns 400,000 dinars for each role. The contracts invariably provide for increases in remuneration depending on the number of people over 700,000 who see the film, the exact amount and the exact proportion being worked out in each contract. A portion of the proceeds of sales abroad of Yugoslavian films go to the directors, scriptwriters, photography directors, etc., but *not* to the actors.

Generally speaking, the federal authorities concerned with films tend to think there are too many film-making enterprises to be economical, but since each republic decides on its own enterprises and wants to have the prestige of making it own films (even though subsidies are often required—some, however, coming from the federal government as prizes) there does not seem to be anything that can be done about this.

The field of film acting is quite overcrowded in Yugoslavia, and many of the actors protest that there is a lot of favoritism on both political and personal grounds. Generally speaking, the average star thinks that 400,000 dinars as a salary is too small. One film star I talked with received this for a seven-month period. This made her salary almost 60,000 dinars a month, which is about 50,000 dinars a month more than the average salary in Yugoslavia. The film stars have been reflecting a very split personality because the more politically indoctrinated ones have tended to imitate American stars but at the same time complain about the crass manner of American acting and movie-making generally. There are acting schools in Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana and Sarajevo and a general film school in Belgrade.

In general, thus, the situation reflects a great degree of decentralization in Yugoslavia and is not like the situation in the Soviet Union or the satellites, where there is more direct control both by the government and party with a constant emphasis and insistence on social realism. The Yugoslav film industry is not as free as it looks, but it is comparatively much freer than those elsewhere in Eastern Europe.—FRED WARNER NEAL

[Mr. Neal, author of *Titoism in Action,* most recently visited Yugoslavia in the summer of 1959; he is one of the best known American authorities on the Tito regime. At present he is teaching at the Claremont Graduate School.]

* Either owning or influencing through social management, i.e., Citizen Councils.